



*Jetavana*  
*Temple Forest Monastery*

September 18, 2022

Dear Planning Board members,

The enclosed documents include the outline of a development plan the monastery community has been working on to facilitate the vision we described to the Temple Select Board (SB), ZBA, and Planning Board (PB) before purchasing the property in 2015. At that time receiving approval to develop the monastery in the way outlined here was a condition of purchase because we knew it would be necessary to fulfill our mission and wanted to know it would be allowed before committing donors' funds to buying such a substantial property. We were grateful to the SB, ZBA, and PB for their favorable decisions.

One reason for this approach has had to do with the fact that as a religious community following traditional Theravada Buddhist monastic principles we exist in an unconventional kind of 'economy of giving', where we do not have personal funds nor charge for any of the services we provide. As an organization we rely on spontaneous and unsolicited offerings of food, goods, and funds, and do not have any guaranteed income; nor is there any overarching organization that can provide funding or loans, etc. Therefore monastic communities in our tradition never really know how much money will be available in any given year for the development of buildings or anything else, as it all depends on whether donors wish to come forward and support a particular project at a particular time.

This was the reason we asked the PB in 2015 initially to postpone site plan review until the time arrived when we found ourselves ready to begin developing major buildings, and in the meantime asked for and received approval to build the "kutis" (small cabins) in which the monks live. Fortunately, we have been generously supported so far and have been able to proceed with a number of kutis, some extensive renovations, and the installation of a solar array. Now we are in a position to form a specific plan for the development of the monastery according to our original vision and hope to receive approval in principle for the entire plan, and, as our architect Sheldon Pennoyer will explain, apply for approval to proceed with one part of it.

Over the past eight years this vision has not changed much from the one we presented to the ZBA in November 2014, and the development plans outlined here are entirely in line with everything we had expected and sought change of use approval for back then. We hope you will agree these plans accord with the uses outlined in the ZBA decision (attached\*) and there will be no need to go back to the Zoning Board.

*\* See: "ZBA Decision for Special Exception for TFM" Note that the date was inaccurately typed at the time: it says November 20, 2016 when in fact it was November 20, 2014.*



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We also hope you might agree both that the development plan proposed here is acceptable in its entirety – at least in its outline of the buildings, their general locations, and in their described uses (precise architectural details will likely have changed somewhat when it comes time to apply for building permits) – and that it could be alright to waive or extend some of the usual deadlines involved for site plan review for some parts of it, because of the unpredictability of when donations for each stage will be received alongside our need to know, as we proceed building by building over an indefinite period of time, that we will be allowed ultimately to fulfill the plan as shown. Sheldon will describe any requests for waivers in more detail.

**Site design:** As described by our architect, the proposed site plan establishes a series of layered spaces that reflects a transition from the outside world to the world within. To minimize their impact on the land the buildings integrate into the hills following the natural contours of the site. They are designed around the existing farmhouse at 32 Derbyshire Ln. The existing timber frame barn, which is in poor condition, will be removed; we hope much of its timber frame structure can be repurposed in the new facility.

**Building design:** The proposed buildings predominantly sit within the developed area of the site. Surrounded by open fields, the “Sala” building, designed as an ‘L’, provides separation of uses: it functions as a meeting place, a communal dining facility with kitchen and reception area, while also housing a wing for office administrative use for the monastery; the Lower Level provides a separate service area with storage spaces and a locker room with amenities for resident monks. The Dhamma Hall sits on an adjacent hill, a meditative and sacred space served by accessible pathways to the surrounding campus, as well as a fire road for access of emergency vehicles which does not exceed the required 5% grade. The Laymen’s and Laywomen’s Dormitories are designed into an east facing slope, allowing access to grade at both the Upper and Lower Levels. Low, hipped roofs with overhangs control scale and provide a quiet building expression, while the use of natural materials blends the structures with the natural world. The buildings will be wood frame construction, with the exterior materials prioritizing the use of sustainable, low maintenance materials, and architectural details that will reinforce the connection to nature. Net Zero–Passive House Energy efficiency and resilience will be a major part of the design.

Thank you for your attention to this. It’s been uplifting to have received such a warm welcome from so many in the town and the local area; we feel blessed to be here, and look forward to being part of the Temple community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jayanto Bhikkhu – Co-Abbot, *Temple Forest Monastery*