

Comparisons Of Building Heights

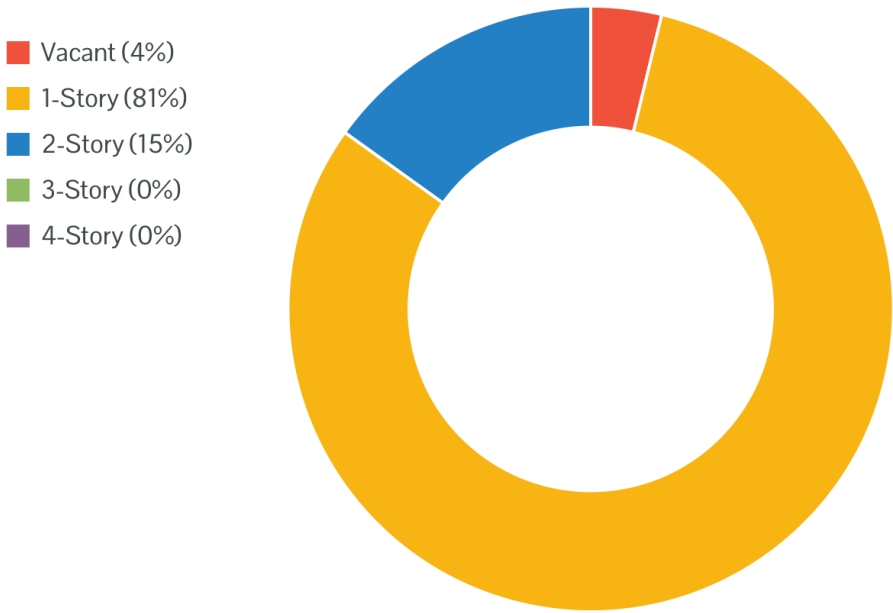
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023
To: Millbury Board of Appeals
From: Steve Stearns
Reference: **Chapter 40B Building Heights | Rice Pond Village**



The image originates from the Applicant's Chapter 40B submission and depicts a hypothetical 4+ story 65-foot 6-inch-high building (observing the fifth-story dormers) that notably doesn't harmonize with the neighboring properties or architectural typology. It's significant to highlight that Millbury has just two 4-story residential buildings, both owned by the Town of Millbury, setting a contrast with this illustration.

When assessing the proposed Chapter 40B Local Initiative Program (LIP) Rice Pond Village project concerning its immediate neighbors within a 300-foot radius (determined by the Millbury Assessor), no property exceeds 2.25 stories in height. The majority of these neighboring properties range between 1 to 1.75 stories. Hence, the incongruity of introducing three 4+ story apartment buildings comprising 192 units is evident, diverging significantly from the established character and harmony of the surrounding area. This observation is supported by data retrieved from the MassGIS database, accurate as of Tuesday, October 5, 2021. Please acknowledge that this data predates the recent completion of the 19 Canal Street Apartments, which house 59 units, which is 3-stories in height and the Applicant was granted a waiver by the Millbury Board of Appeals to exceed the height restrictions in that zoning district.

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A breakdown of direct abutter buildings by the number of stories.

Among the fifty-three (53) immediate neighboring properties of the proposed Chapter 40B LIP Rice Pond Village project, forty-three (43) stand at one story (ranging from 1 to 1.75 stories), eight (8) are two stories (ranging from 2 to 2.25 stories), and two (2) parcels of land remain vacant and undeveloped. Notably, within the 300-foot proximity of the proposed project site, there are no three- or four-story buildings of any kind.

The distances listed in the table represent straight-line measurements in miles, calculated via GPS coordinates sourced from the MassGIS database, indicating the direct distance from one building to another. These measurements do not account for travel along local roads, which, in most instances, would result in longer distances between addresses.

Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
1 Aldrich Ave	1	0.1 mi	1010
2 Aldrich Ave	1	0.1 mi	1010
3 Aldrich Ave	1	0.1 mi	1010
4 Aldrich Ave	1	0.1 mi	1010
13R Curve St	1	0.3 mi	1010

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Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
21 Curve St	2.25	0.3 mi	1050
10 Jackie Dr	1	0.3 mi	1010
13 Jackie Dr	1.75	0.3 mi	1010
14 Jackie Dr	1	0.3 mi	1010
15 Jackie Dr	1.75	0.3 mi	1040
16 Jackie Dr	2	0.2 mi	1010
18 Jackie Dr	1.75	0.2 mi	1010
20 Jackie Dr	1	0.2 mi	1010
0 Providence St (Simpson's Pond)	0	0.1 mi	4400
24 Providence St	1	0.3 mi	3160
26 Providence St	1.25	0.2 mi	1010
30 Providence St	1	0.2 mi	1010
32 Providence St	1	0.2 mi	1010
33 Providence St	1	0.1 mi	4240
34 Providence St	1.5	0.2 mi	1010
38 Providence St	1.75	0.1 mi	1010
42 Providence St	0	0.1 mi	4400
44 Providence St	2	0.1 mi	1040
46 Providence St	1	0.1 mi	0101
48 Providence St	1	0.1 mi	3100

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Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
1 Rice Rd	1.75	0.2 mi	1010
2 Rice Rd	1	0.2 mi	1010
3 Rice Rd	2	0.1 mi	1010
4 Rice Rd	1.25	0.2 mi	1010
5 Rice Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
6 Rice Rd	2	0.1 mi	1010
7 Rice Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
9 Rice Rd	2	0.1 mi	1010
10 Rice Rd	1.75	0.1 mi	1010
11 Rice Rd	2	0.1 mi	1010
12 Rice Rd	1.75	0.1 mi	1010
14 Rice Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
19 Rice Rd	1	0.0 mi	1010
20 Rice Rd	1	0.0 mi	1010
1 Thomas Hill Rd	1	0.0 mi	1010
3 Thomas Hill Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
4 Thomas Hill Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
5 Thomas Hill Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
6 Thomas Hill Rd	1	0.1 mi	1010
55 S Main St	2.25	0.3 mi	1050

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Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
66 S Main St	1.75	0.3 mi	1040
67 S Main St	1	0.3 mi	1010
68 S Main St	1.5	0.3 mi	1010
69 S Main St	1.5	0.2 mi	1010
74 S Main St	1.75	0.2 mi	1010
76 S Main St	1.25	0.2 mi	1010
77 S Main St	1	0.2 mi	1010
78 S Main St	1.5	0.2 mi	1010

Within Millbury, there exists a restricted count of buildings standing at three stories or higher. The comprehensive table below, sourced from the MassGIS database derived from the Millbury Assessor's database, enumerates these structures. It includes individual building addresses, their respective story counts, the distance (in straight-line miles) from the former McLaughlin family house at 17 Rice Road in Millbury, Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Use Code for each building.

There are only two 4-story residential buildings (owned by the Town of Millbury) and thirty-four 3-story residential buildings in the entire town of Millbury according to the MassGIS database.

Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
77 Elm St	4	0.6 mi	970C
95 Elm St	4	0.6 mi	970C
65 W Main St	3.25	1.0 mi	1050
18 River St	3.25	0.8 mi	0322
65 Canal St	3	0.4 mi	0112

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Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
6 Church St	3	0.6 mi	1050
1 Cobblestone Village Way	3	0.9 mi	112C
2 Cobblestone Village Way	3	1.0 mi	112C
3 Cobblestone Village Way	3	1.0 mi	112C
4 Cobblestone Village Way	3	0.9 mi	112C
5 Cobblestone Village Way	3	0.9 mi	112C
6 Cobblestone Village Way	3	0.9 mi	112C
7 Cobblestone Village Way	3	0.9 mi	112C
2 Elm Ct	3	0.9 mi	1040
71 Elm St	3	0.6 mi	0322
123 Elm St	3	0.7 mi	930L
7 Grafton St	3	0.4 mi	1050
9 Grafton St	3	0.4 mi	1050
11 Grove St	3	0.7 mi	1050
13 Grove St	3	0.8 mi	1050
15 Howe Ave	3	0.7 mi	1040
7 S Main St	3	0.6 mi	3222
9 S Main St	3	0.6 mi	0326
30 W Main St	3	1.0 mi	1050
38 Main St	3	0.7 mi	0322

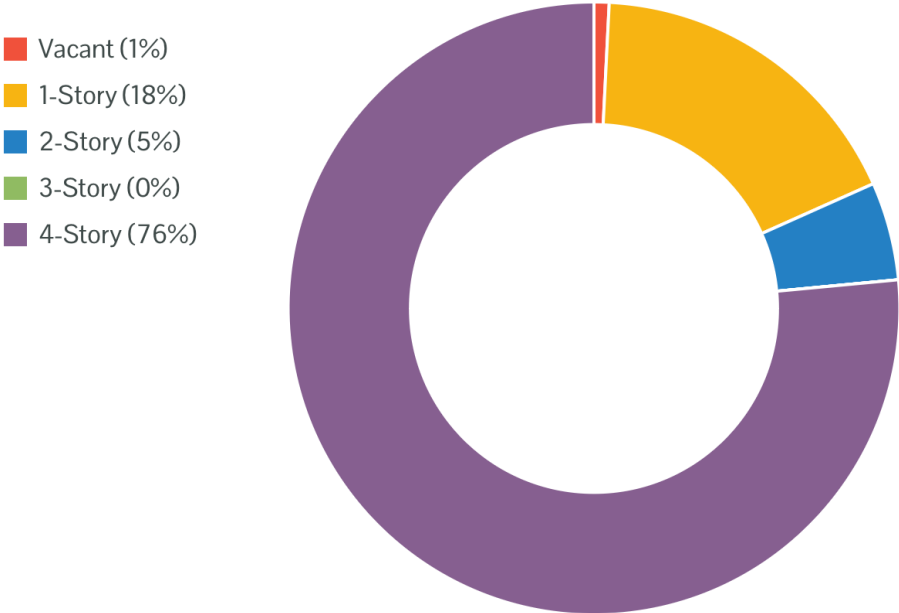
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Building Address	Stories	Distance	Use Code
95 W Main St	3	1.1 mi	4000
115 W Main St	3	1.3 mi	4000
126 W Main St	3	1.3 mi	0326
175 W Main St	3	1.5 mi	4000
54 Maple St	3	0.4 mi	1110
19 Miles St	3	0.8 mi	1040
14 Prospect St	3	1.0 mi	1040
2 Rhodes St	3	1.1 mi	4010
22 Rhodes St	3	1.1 mi	1120
17 Waters St	3	0.9 mi	1050
20 Waters St	3	0.8 mi	1110

This information was compiled from reviewing approximately 8,000 property records sourced from the Millbury Assessors database and the MassGIS database.

In conclusion, the hypothetical plan for three 4+ story apartment buildings comprising 192 apartments, put forth by Steven F. Venincasa and James Venincasa, markedly deviates from the nearby architectural style, density, building massing, scale, and integration into Millbury's existing development patterns. Please consult the Handbook: Approach to Chapter 40B Design Reviews for further details. Furthermore, the proposed Chapter 40B LIP Rice Pond Village project site falls within a Suburban II Zoning District, which imposes a maximum height restriction of 30-feet, encompassing all rooftop equipment, as per the Millbury Zoning Bylaws. Therefore, no waiver should be granted by the Millbury Board of Appeals.

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Dwelling units per story of the existing direct abutters and the proposed 4-story apartments.

The donut pie chart vividly illustrates how the proposed Chapter 40B LIP Rice Pond Village project, with its three 4+ story buildings, significantly surpasses the existing neighborhoods in multiple aspects: scale (192 vs. 53 dwelling units), height (4+ story apartment buildings compared to a median of one-story single-family residences), and elevation (approximately 50± feet higher than the surrounding area, at 394± vs. 344± feet above sea level as per MassGIS maps). Consequently, these proposed structures would stand out prominently, failing to harmonize with the surrounding landscape and architectural style, contrary to the principles outlined in the Handbook: Approach to Chapter 40B Design Reviews.

There exists precedent supporting this assessment, such as MassHousing's denial of the Medfield Meadows Chapter 40B project. This denial stands as one example, indicating the likelihood of other projects in Massachusetts being either denied or scaled back due to similar discrepancies in alignment with the surrounding environment.