

NARRATIVE

The Applicant, Darien Place LLC, is the record owner of the property located at 1077 Boston Post Road (the "Subject Property"). The Applicant requests business site plan review and approval to repurpose the rear portion of the existing building from a 5,787± square foot, two screen theater to 4,350± square feet of retail space on the first floor, and four one-bedroom apartments on the second floor.

The Subject Property is located on the northwest side of Boston Post Road, 125 feet southwest of the intersection of Boston Post Road and Corbin Drive, in the Central Business District (the "CBD Zone"). The Subject Property consists of 1.457± acres of land, and the existing building is occupied by Scena Restaurant, The Verizon Store and Cafe Nero on the first floor facing Boston Post Road, CST50 Darien on the first floor facing northeast, and the Darien Playhouse Theater in the rear portion of the first floor. Posh Nail Spa & Nails and the projection room for the Theater occupy the southeast portion of the second floor.

The site includes a significant portion of a three-party shared parking arrangement with the properties at 1127 Boston Post Road (Darien Sport Shop), and 1101 Boston Post Road (Webster Bank and Inner Light Wellness). The parking lot is accessed from the southwest end of Grove Street, from the east side of Leroy Avenue, and from two driveways from Boston Post Road. Two drive-through lanes along the northwest and southwest sides of 1101 Boston Post Road exit to Boston Post Road. The building on the Subject Property is flanked by brick pedestrian ways between Boston Post Road and the shared parking lot. A trash and emergency generator enclosure is adjacent to the northeast (rear) corner of the building.

The Applicant proposes to repurpose the existing Darien Playhouse Theater to first floor retail and second floor apartments. The theater is no longer a viable business. Significant changes, including the proliferation of on-line movie streaming services, have had a dramatic effect on the viability of many traditional movie theaters. Netflix now has 167 million subscribers. In its first three months Disney Movies gained 28 million subscribers. These and other streaming services, such as Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO Max, Peacock, Apple TV+, and Quibi, have reduced the demand for traditional movie theaters. As a result, several area theaters have closed, including Garden Cinemas in Norwalk, State Cinemas in Stamford, Community Theater in Fairfield, Showcase Cinemas and Colonial Theater in Bridgeport, and Showcase Cinemas in Milford. The size of the Darien Playhouse Theater is too small to remain a viable business.

The Applicant proposes to convert the theater space to retail and apartments. The 1,400± square foot reduction in commercial floor area is the result of the conversion of first floor space to dedicated first floor entranceways, stairwells and an elevator for the proposed apartments, and the elimination of the projection room on the mezzanine level.

In repurposing the theater space, the Applicant will replace the existing, unappealing rear facade with new storefronts facing the parking lot, move the unsightly trash enclosure away from the rear of the building, add several parking spaces behind the building, and provide a more pedestrian-friendly area around the rear portion of the building.

In response to a comment made during the pre-application presentation of this project, we are providing the following table of existing and proposed uses at the Subject Property:

Tenant	Existing Floor Area	Proposed Floor Area
Scena Restaurant	2,518 s.f.	s.f.
The Verizon Store	1,404 s.f.	s.f.
Cafe Nero	2,503 s.f.	s.f.
CST50 Darien	1,561 s.f.	s.f.
Posh Spa & Nails	7,223 s.f.	s.f.
Darien Playhouse Theater	5,787 s.f.	NONE
Proposed First Floor Retail	NONE	4,350s.f.
TOTAL COMMERCIAL		
Proposed Apartment Areas:		
Apartment 1	NONE	689 s.f.
Apartment 2	NONE	670 s.f.
Apartment 3	NONE	640 s.f.
Apartment 4	NONE	875 s.f.
Common Area	NONE	
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	NONE	2,874 s.f.

Further details of the project are contained in the accompanying plans and parking study.