

## Statement of Proposed Use

### A. Project Overview and Description

The applicant and owner, The Rumsey Hall School Incorporated (“Rumsey Hall”), seeks special permit approval to construct a new two-story dormitory building and to replace the existing Fitch House dormitory with a new academic building on the Rumsey Hall School campus located at 200 and 201 Romford Road (collectively, the “Property” or “site”).

- **Location of Project and Parcel ID Numbers:**
  - 200 Romford Road (Assessors Map 2 / Block 12 / Lot 44)
  - 201 Romford Road (Assessors Map 3 / Block 12 / Lot 6)
  
- **Acreage:**
  - 200 Romford Road: 39.57 AC
  - 201 Romford Road: 81.41 AC
  - Combined Acreage: 120.98 AC
  
- **Zoning District:** R-1 (Farming and Residential District)
  
- **Applicant and Property Owner:**  
The Rumsey Hall School Incorporated  
c/o Ian Craig, Director  
201 Romford Road  
Washington Depot, CT 06794  
[icraig@rumseyhall.org](mailto:icraig@rumseyhall.org)  
(860) 868-0535 x101

### B. Professional Team for the Project

The application materials have been prepared by an interdisciplinary team of professionals, including the following:

Legal Counsel and Authorized  
Agent/Representative:

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Civil Engineer/Land Surveyor/Traffic  
Engineer:

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West Hartford, CT 06010  
860-527-2677

Surveyor:

Curtis Smith  
Smith & Company  
247 Main Street South  
Woodbury, CT 06798  
203-263-0068

Architect for Center Dorm:

Segalla's Turn Key Housing  
P.O. Box 531  
Canaan, CT 06018

Architect for Fitch House:

KG+D Architects, PC  
285 Main Street  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
914-666-5900

### **C. Description of Proposed Use**

Applicant is seeking to construct a new dormitory and to raze and rebuild the existing Fitch House academic building.

#### **1. New Dormitory:**

To alleviate student crowding and increase faculty housing opportunities on campus, Rumsey Hall wishes to construct a new two-story dormitory building for students and faculty to be called "Center Dorm." It will be located west of Romford Road on the 201 Romford Road parcel, also known as Lower Campus, north of the existing Main House, south of the existing South Dorm, and east of the existing Campus Center Building. Center Dorm will accommodate 28 students (likely boys in grades 7-9) in 14 rooms. It will also provide two 2-bedroom apartments on one end and one townhouse on the other end, to be utilized by faculty.

Center Dorm will contain common rooms, multipurpose rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, storage rooms, and mechanical rooms, in addition to several decks. Common rooms will be located on each floor to provide common gathering spaces for students to be able to meet and congregate. Walkways, stairs and retaining walls will be installed at the front of Center Dorm connecting the dorm to existing paved areas along Romford Road and to other buildings on campus. Stormwater management facilities, site lighting, landscaping, and utility infrastructure are also proposed in support of the dormitory.

Rumsey Hall is currently cramped in terms of space for residential students and faculty. A number of rooms currently contain triples or even quadruples, which is challenging for students and faculty alike. The new dorm will alleviate student crowding, and the residences will provide increased opportunities for on-campus faculty housing and better dormitory supervision.

The proposed new Fitch House will no longer house students. As such, the likely net gain in student boarding enrollment with the new Center Dorm and new revamped Fitch House will likely be 15-20 students.

A new septic system will be installed to service the Center Dorm. We will remove part of the old septic system that is next to the new Center Dorm site, and we will expand that old septic system to replace the section being removed. Then we will install a new system across Romford Road on the 200 Romford Road parcel, also known as Upper Campus, to service the new Center Dorm building. A water line will run from the Center Dorm under Romford Road to the new septic area. The new septic system will not be located within 200 feet of the streambank of the Bantam River.

#### Height, Dimensions, and Square Footage

- Maximum total height of building: 31.13 FT
- Mean height of building: 24 FT
- Dimensions of building: 164.5 FT wide/44 FT long
- Building footprint: 6,068 SF
- Gross Floor Area of building: 12,136 SF

#### ADA compliance.

Center Dorm and its associated walkways and improvements will be fully ADA compliant.

#### 2. **Replace the existing Fitch House with a new academic building:**

Rumsey Hall also proposes to rebuild the existing Fitch House dormitory with a new academic building. The current Fitch House is cramped and outmoded, having been built in 1900, and it is limited with regard to instructional technology. It is also not particularly well insulated and the heating system is not efficient. In addition, the current number of classrooms is limited, therefore several teachers are forced to bounce from classroom to classroom throughout their day.

The footprint of the new building will change slightly from the existing building. The south side, or rear of the building, will extend out further and the east side of building will extend into where the current patio is located. The new Fitch House will contain two stories plus the lower-level basement.

Four classrooms will be located on the first floor of the new Fitch House. This will allow every teacher to have their own classroom. The second floor will contain two, 2-bedroom apartments which will enable teachers involved in the residential program to be able to live on campus where faculty housing is limited.

The lower level will be dedicated to girls' locker rooms. The girls' teams currently do not have a facility located next to the athletic fields, so the new locker rooms will support those teams. Additionally, the lower level will contain a public restroom for spectators which currently the school does not offer.

The new Fitch House will tie into the existing septic tank system. The existing septic tank will be replaced, however, as it is 20 plus years old. Impacts to the existing system will decrease.

Height, Dimensions, and Square Footage

- Maximum total height of building: 38.39 FT
- Mean height of building: 31.78 FT
- Dimensions of building: 80 FT wide/62 FT long
- Building footprint: 3,512 SF
- Gross Floor Area of building: 8,684 SF (excludes unfinished basement areas)

ADA compliance. Fitch House and its associated walkways and improvements will be fully ADA compliant.

**C. Compliance with Special Permit Standards, Zoning Regulations Section 13.1.C.**

**1. That the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith are consistent with the objectives of the Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town of Washington, and the intent and requirements of the Zoning Regulations as such documents may be amended.**

Rumsey Hall is a long-time specially permitted school use under Section 4.4.10 of the Town's Zoning Regulations (the school actually predates zoning), and the proposed dormitory and new Fitch House academic building are important school facilities. Virtually all of the public and private schools in Town of Washington are located in the R-1 zone. Clearly, the viability of Rumsey Hall and the other independent schools in the Town is consistent with Washington's Plan of Conservation and Development. Here are some excerpts from the POCD supporting this:

“Washington has competitive advantages in several economic sectors such as education...The Town should focus on [this sector] as a base for a strong local economy and to promote job creation.” (POCD p. 18)

“Washington must leverage the presence of these private education institutions as a component of its future economic development platform. Linking these schools with their nearby villages would help create additional market support for local shops and businesses. Providing housing opportunities for educational workers would help stabilize the Town's population decline. Working with these schools on sustainable development practices would help assure the preservation of Washington's rural character as these institutions continue to grow.” (POCD p. 19)

“As a small rural community with limited areas of commercial development, Washington is challenged in how it can increase its tax base.” “Washington must create additional economic development and stimulate the economic value of existing businesses while maintaining the rural

character and heritage of the Town.” A strategy is to increase support of cultural and academic establishments. (POCD p. 21)

An issue facing the Town of Washington is that “[i]n order to compete in a difficult and increasingly global economic climate, Washington must nurture its economic base and assist existing and potential businesses.” “Washington must provide an array of services and activities that make the Town economically sustainable at the local level while enabling it to compete at the regional level.” A strategy to achieve this goal is to “[f]ocus on clusters of uses where the Town has a regional competitive advantage. Nurture Washington’s creative economy through advertising and marketing assistance; continue the open dialogue with the Town’s private educational facilities to leverage these cultural assets in sustaining the Town’s economic health.” (POCD p. 21 -22)

**2. That the location, type, character, size, scale, proportion, appearance, and intensity of the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith shall be in harmony with and conform to the appropriate and orderly development of the Town and the neighborhood and will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent property or substantially or permanently impair the value thereof.**

To remain competitive among independent schools and survive and thrive going forward, it is vital for Rumsey Hall to continue to attract the best students and make the best use possible of its property. Rumsey Hall is currently cramped in terms of space for residential students and faculty, and the existing Fitch House is old and outdated. The location, size, scale, proportion, appearance, and intensity of the proposed dormitory and the new Fitch House are in general harmony with the character of the surrounding buildings in the area, the neighborhood, and the Town, and they will not serve to blight or detract from the value of abutting residences or the neighborhood. In addition, the architectural features of the proposed dormitory and the Fitch House will conform with the existing architectural elements on campus.

**3. That the nature and location of the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith shall be such that there will be adequate access to it for fire protection purposes and other emergency services.**

Sufficient emergency vehicle access and maneuverability are provided and adjacent public roadways are not obstructed. Fire hydrants are located in close proximity to circulation routes to ensure appropriate water access in case of emergencies. Reasonable precautions against fire and explosive hazards are included in the proposed developments. All buildings are fully sprinklered and include a fire alarm system and fire extinguishers. Standpipes are provided as required.

**4. That the Town’s existing rural street network, which includes state highways and Town streets serving the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith are adequate, including without limitation, in width, grade, alignment, *capacity*, and sight lines to carry prospective traffic; that provision is made for entering and leaving**

**the property in such a manner that no undue hazard to traffic or undue traffic congestion is created; and that adequate off-street parking and loading facilities are provided.**

Neither the new Fitch House nor Center Dorm will impact the existing state highways and town streets serving the school's campus. No additional traffic will be generated, and there will be no new patterns for existing traffic entering or leaving the campus. The proposed Fitch House and Center Dorm will provide additional faculty housing thereby alleviating the need for a few faculty members to commute to campus. We are making no change to the number of parking spaces on campus, and loading docks are not necessary for the new buildings.

**5. That the lot on which the use is to be established is of sufficient size and adequate shape, dimension, and topography to permit conduct of the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith in such a manner that will not be detrimental to the neighborhood or adjacent property.**

Rumsey Hall's campus can amply accommodate the two new buildings. The proposed dormitory and the new Fitch House will be located on the 201 Romford Road parcel. The existing lot coverage for 201 Romford Road is 7.26 percent. The proposed new development will only increase the coverage to 8.21 percent. The lot coverage for the 200 Romford Road parcel will remain unchanged.

The footprint of the new Fitch House will only change slightly from the existing building and its location continues to be of sufficient size and adequate shape, dimension and topography. Moreover, the design and layout of the proposed new buildings are attractive and appropriate for the area and will not be detrimental to the neighborhood or adjacent property.

**6. That provision is made for suitable landscaping to protect the neighborhood and adjacent property with a permanent landscaped buffer of evergreens, natural topography, stonewalls, or other appropriate screening material.**

The Rumsey Hall campus is heavily wooded and well screened from adjacent properties and will remain so.

**7. That the proposed plans have provided for the conservation of natural features, drainage basins, the protection of the environment of the area, and sustained maintenance of the development.**

Both of the new building locations are previously disturbed sites, as the new Fitch House will replace an existing building and Center Dorm will be built over a portion of an existing septic system. As such, there will be minimal disturbance of natural features.

The Fitch House and Center Dorm and their natural surroundings will be maintained to the same high standard as the existing campus. In addition, both of the new buildings will have lower impact footprints and will be considerably more energy efficient than older buildings, with

low water volume fixtures, bottle fill stations and a more energy efficient appliances and utility equipment. Specifically, they will be built with;

- LED lighting throughout
- Bottom and top plate factory sealing for added air tightness
- Low volume flush and shower fixtures
- Greater R-value insulation throughout the structures
- Greater U-value windows and doors with high performance glass
- Foam sealing around the exterior fixtures and penetrations
- Exterior continuous Hi-R rigid insulation for the entire exterior of the structure
- Non-VOC interior paint

**8. That the proposed use and any building or other structure in connection therewith will not create a nuisance such as noise, fumes, odors, bright lights, glare, visual obstructions, vibrations, or other nuisance conditions at or beyond the property line.**

The site will be sensitively lighted in order to avoid adverse impacts. These academic and residential buildings within the Rumsey Hall campus will create no nuisance conditions at or beyond the property line.

**9. Blasting and/or removal of earth and indigenous rock shall be kept to the minimum necessary to accomplish any proposed improvement.**

Rumsey Hall has not historically encountered bedrock when making improvements in the immediate vicinity and as such does not expect to need to conduct any blasting in connection with this project.