

**TOWN OF ACTON  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MEETING REPORT  
Room 126, Town Hall  
September 3, 2008**

**Present:** Ann Sussman (Chair), Tom Peterman (Vice-Chair), Ruth Martin, Terra Friedrichs, and Lynne Alpert. Holly Ben-Joseph arrived at 8:15.

Also present was Chris Dalmus, a prospective DRB member.

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

***Support of Historical Commission's recommendation to present at the Special Town Meeting on October 2, 2008 a vote to increase the demolition delay law:***

The HC recommends extending the current 6-month demolition delay period to 18 months. This law applies to buildings outside the historic district, but are buildings listed as any properties outside districts that are listed on the inventory of properties.

The board voted to support the HC in this recommendation.

***Meeting with Ken Sunberg to discuss proposed re-design and expansion of commercial building (Kelly's Corner) at 255 Main Street.***

Changes have been made to the original larger project which would have included both the "Sorrento" building, as well as the bowling alley building. The plan now is to enlarge the current building to 3000 sq. feet, but not to add a second story as originally proposed. Ken said that the cost for an elevator and sprinkler system were prohibitive. The roof will be raised to be a 'hip' roof. There will be increased parking added in the rear of the building, by depressing the elevation with a retaining wall. Tom asked what type of materials would be used for the wall and was told it would be 'cultured stone.'

There are plans to add a small patio area in the front of the building.

The board had the following comments and was concerned about the overall design. More specifically, the board made these suggestions:

- Could the windows as shown be improved? They seem small in relation to the entire building
- The outdoor patio has shown seems to be very small – could it be enlarged?
- The provisions for a bike rack to be added was endorsed
- Could the parking in the front of the building be limited more to increase either green space or the patio area to both increase the amount of green space and to allow a real gathering spot that invites people to come in from the street? Ken was not in favor of reducing the current parking spots in front of the building, but said he might consider removing one space. The suggestion was also made to have a walking connection to the bowling alley next door.
- Anne discussed the possibility of attempting a 'new look' for Acton buildings, getting away from the '70s' type design and use this building design to 'start a 'new language' for Kelly's Corner.
- Lynne suggested using more gables to avoid the 'strip mall' look
- Suggestion to look at one-story design of commercial buildings in West Concord

***Meeting with engineer George Dimakarakos from Stamski & McNary, and architect, Mr. Rempelakis to discuss the 133 Great Road project.***

The engineer, George Dimakarakos and Architect, Mr. Rempelakis presented their design for 133 Great Road. The existing commercial building will be expanded to add four apartments at the rear of the building, by adding a second story. This building is adjacent to Acton Toyota and has common ownership.

There will be additional parking added to the rear of the building which will be terraced. The 4 apartments will be accessed from the rear of the building, where the parking is located. There will be no changes to the existing façade.

The board had the following comments:

- concern about the awkward design
- board admitted the difficulty of improving this design without demolition of the existing building; adding these four apartments to the existing commercial building, given the site and existing style of the current building. It was acknowledged also that these changes will mostly not be visible from Rt. 2A, that only the roofline will be visible.
- suggestion that a hip roof design might be best from the street to bring light into the bedrooms with skylights instead of dormers.
- More comments about the disparity between the design of the two parts of the building: the commercial on 1<sup>st</sup> floor in front, and the residential units in the rear.
- Suggestion that roof could be ‘flattened’ and bring in skylights
- There was concern that there are more added parking spaces than necessary (although it seems that the owner of the building wishes to gain some extra parking for the Toyota dealership?). The parking places raised again the issue that the DRB wishes to recommend amending the existing zoning regulations on parking.

***Follow-up discussion about 4-unit Townhouse development at 288 Main St.***

Since the last meeting, the special site plan had been approved, and the consensus was that 1) this is a residential development and not under the purview of the DRB, (although it is in a commercial district) and 2) the development plans have been before the town for two years already and it is now too late to intervene. However, this project exemplifies why the DRB members want to amend the DRB charter to include residential projects of more than 4 units.

- There is a hearing scheduled to approve the site plan for the following Monday before the Bd of Selectmen so there is no time to make any changes to the design and as the DRB plays an advisory role only, it would like to emphasize that the dialogue on design should continue once the site plan is approved.

At the next meeting, there will be a presentation by the sidewalk committee to discuss a visual guide for sidewalk design.

The meeting was adjourned at: 9:30

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Martin