



## MEMO

### Design Review Board

Project: 253 Main Street  
Acton, MA  
Landscape Plan dated 11/10/2008

Proponent: Ken Sundberg

Date of Review: 1/07/09

The Design Review Board has discussed the renovation and expansion of 253 Main Street with Mr. Sundberg several times over a year and understands project scope has been reduced due to the economy. The previously planned 2-story addition is now one story, but the parking expansion for the larger project remains.

At this stage, the DRB finds that the project does not meet Acton's Design Review Guidelines for Commercial Districts, unanimously adopted by the Selectmen in 2007. Nor does the project follow the calls for turning Kelley's Corner into an attractive, walkable business district laid out in Acton's many planning forums and studies, including the Kelley's Corner Specific Area Plan (1995). This document specifically recommends new development should be of the type that "reflects and reinforces the character of Acton."

The Design Review Board notes:

- The proposed building addition and renovation do not follow the traditional New England vernacular; see image below for example of New England vernacular;
- The proposed plan doubles the parking on site removing a side of a hill now covered with brush, trees and a green landscape and replacing it with asphalt;
- A large 140-foot long retaining wall, about 5 feet high will be a prominent feature of the project; no details of the type, color, of the retaining wall

were provided; it is not clear whether safety features will be provided at the top or whether they are necessary;

- No landscape plan was provided; we are unable to tell if adequate screening will be provided for the adjacent residences;
- Finally, the DRB notes, at 51 parking spaces this project has triple the number required (17) according to Bylaw 6.9.5.3; in our view it will be difficult for this project to do anything but increase the sense of placelessness and suburban wasteland the KC district is already well known for;

In sum, the DRB can not recommend this project for permitting at this stage. We have spoken with Mr. Sundberg about this important parcel several times and would be happy to meet with him again at his convenience. Mr. Sundberg was not present for this latest review which was requested by the Building Department.

The Design Review Board  
Town of Acton