

PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY – MARSH VIEW 93 CENTRAL STREET

Prepared by Town of Acton Planning Department; 09/01/09

EVALUATION CRITERIA ¹	Small-Scale Project		Mixed-Use Project		Large-Scale Project	
	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
I. DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES						
Types of Housing					X	
<i>Includes a mix of unit styles and sizes</i>					X	
<i>Includes no more than 15% 3-BR units</i>					X	
Location	X		X		X	
<i>Site is in or within ½ mile of a village center or Kelley's Corner</i>	X	N ²	X		X	
<i>Site is in another Preferred Location</i>	X	N	X		X	
Mixed-Use Development			X			
<i>Includes compatible nonresidential uses</i>			X			
<i>Some or all units are upper-story</i>			X			
Density and Scale	X		X		X	
<i>For site in a Village Center or Kelley's Corner, FAR does not exceed .80</i>	X		X		X	
<i>For site outside the Village Centers and Kelley's Corner, in other locations or for large-scale projects, FAR does not exceed .25</i>	X	N ³	X		X	
<i>Height conforms to zoning</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Development comprised of approximately 12 units or less</i>	X	Y	X			
Building & Landscape Design Considerations	X		X		X	

¹ Reviewers should record their evaluation by indicating "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) for each criterion that applies to the project, based on the category that most closely fits the type of project under review.

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Buildings & Site						
<i>Building designs similar to highly-rated residences in VPS</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Buildings oriented to the street or around courtyard</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Side and/or rear parking</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Walkability: sidewalks, internal pathways</i>	X	Y ⁴	X		X	
<i>Connectivity: linked to surrounding neighborhoods or commercial areas</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>No adverse impact on historic/architectural significance (may be N/A)</i>	X	Y	X		X	
Open Space & Natural Resources						
<i>Open space at least 50% of site</i>		Y ⁵			X	
<i>Not more than 50% of open space is wetlands</i>	X	Y			X	
<i>Open space is directly accessible to residents of the development</i>	X	Y			X	
<i>Landscaping emphasizes low-water-use plantings</i>	X	? ⁶	X		X	
<i>Outdoor irrigation system is designed to conserve water</i>		?	X		X	
Site Plan Standards						
<i>Substantially conforms to ZBL Section 10.4, Site Plan Standards</i>	X	Y/N ⁷	X		X	
Public Benefits						
<i>Provides public benefits in addition to affordable housing</i>			X		X	
<i>Additional public benefits include:</i>						
<i>Pedestrian amenities</i>			X		X	
<i>Park and recreation amenities</i>					X	
<i>Contribution to a local capital improvements project appropriate to the scale of proposed development</i>					X	
<i>Contribution to Town's affordable housing fund</i>					X	
II. AFFORDABILITY PREFERENCES						

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	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
Percentage of Affordable Units						
<i>Development provides more than 25% minimum affordable units</i>					X	
<i>Additional affordable units are for LMI households</i>					X	
Income Targets						
<i>One or more units priced for households at/below 70% AMI</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Includes any units priced for households at 50% AMI</i>			X		X	
<i>Includes any units priced for households at 31-50% AMI</i>					X	
<i>Includes any units priced for households at 81-110% AMI</i>	X	N	X		X	
Term of Affordability						
<i>Use restriction will be perpetual</i>	X	Y ^s	X		X	
III. AFFIRMATIVE MARKETING & LOCAL PREFERENCE						
Local Preference Units						
<i>Offers 70% local preference units</i>	X	?	X		X	
Affirmative Marketing Experience						
<i>Team includes person/organization with prior affordable housing lottery experience</i>	X	Y	X		X	

IV. LARGE-SCALE PROJECT PUBLIC BENEFIT CRITERIA						
Project provides any of the following benefits:						
<i>Transportation management</i>					X	

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	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
<i>Traffic mitigation</i>					X	
<i>Significant contribution to local capital improvements fund</i>					X	
<i>Significant contribution to Town's affordable housing fund</i>					X	
<i>Provision of additional affordable units in off-site locations</i>					X	
<i>Donation of developable land to the Town for affordable housing, community facilities, other public purposes</i>					X	

REVIEWER'S COMMENTS

- 2 Site is about 5/8 mile from South Acton Village (and the commuter rail station) and about 7/8 mile from West Acton Village. Sidewalks exist along Central Street. The small project scale somewhat offsets the marginal location. The location is within a moderate density area as per Acton 40B Policy.
- 3 The Acton Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw) counts mudrooms and basements toward the gross floor area, resulting in a gross floor area of 3,106 square feet/ house and an overall gross floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.30 for the site. The FAR listed on Plan Sheet 2 (Master Plan) is inaccurate (0.24 FAR) because the mudrooms and basements were not counted and should have been for all the units.
- 4 The lack of sidewalk along Pine Ridge Road seems acceptable for this small 4-unit project. A sidewalk exists on Central Street. Staff would recommend that the internal pathway connecting the units to the guest parking spaces (and across Parcel A) be re-designed to loop around Parcel A. By looping the pathway, it will connect each unit to the guest parking and each other, create more useable open space in the center for homeowners, and make a nice paved loop for riding tricycles/bicycles, scooters, etc.
- 5 It appears there is more than 50% open around the houses and driveways. This is like yard space rather than dedicated open space, which seems appropriate for the setting and project scale.
- 6 Planning Department staff cannot determine whether low-water plantings are proposed. The Plan does state "consideration should be given to drought resistant grasses". Unfortunately, this statement does not require drought resistant grasses. The Board may want to consult with the Acton Water District or the Acton Tree Warden on this issue.
- 7 Where applicable, the Plan appears to be consistent with site plan standards. Subdivision/common driveway standards seem more appropriate than site plan standards in this particular setting. See "other comments" below for more information regarding compliance with the Acton Zoning Bylaw standards.
- 8 The project eligibility letter from MassHousing requires the affordable use restriction be perpetual.

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Other Comments:

- a. The side yard setbacks listed on Plan Sheet 2 (Master Plan) are different from the setbacks shown on Plan Sheet 7 (Site Development Plan). The side yard setbacks should be consistent on all Plan sheets.
- b. The applicant should consider planting some landscaping between Units 1 and 2 and between Units 3 and 4 to help provide screening and privacy between the units since windows are proposed on the ends of each unit.
- c. It appears that most common driveway standards in the Acton Zoning Bylaw (Section 3.8.1.5) would need to be waived if the project proceeds as proposed. The waiver request in Section 5 of the Application should be changed to include all of Bylaw Section 3.8.1.5. Planning Department staff defers to the Acton Fire Department and Acton Engineering Department for comments regarding access and traffic flow to/from the site and on-site.
- d. It is unclear where Pine Ridge Road will end and Marsh View Way will begin (Marsh View Way is referenced in the legal documents). It is also unclear who will maintain Pine Ridge Road if this project is built. Reading through the deeds, it appears the current property owner (Micol) and the owner(s) of tax map G-2, parcel 123-1, both have rights to use Pine Ridge Road. Does the owner of G-2/123-1 have to sign off on the proposed changes to Pine Ridge Road? This may be a Town Counsel question. Marsh View Way should be labeled on the Plans and the differences between the two access ways (and maintenance responsibilities of each) should be clarified in the legal documents.
- e. It appears the guest parking spaces (off-street parking spaces) may extend slightly into Pine Ridge Road. If so, the guest parking spaces do not comply with Acton Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw) Sections 6.2 (General (Parking) Provisions) and 6.5 (Standard Parking Dimensional Regulations) nor the Acton Comprehensive Permit Rules and Regulations Section 3.14.5.12. No waivers have been requested from these standards/regulations. Staff recommends that the Plan be modified/clarified to demonstrate that the guest parking is located entirely on the site.
- f. In the "Declaration of Common Driveway Covenant..." (Declaration) (Section 3 of the Application), Sections II(B) and VI(g) need to be revised to refer to this project; not Richardson Crossing.
- g. The appraisal for the property is \$345,000, whereas the P&S is for \$375,000. Is there an embedded 40B bonus to the landowner?
- h. In summary, this is a project that seems to fit without much needed justification into the existing neighborhood due to its small scale, moderate density, and single-family style. The biggest issues related to this project appear to be regarding access (see comments c.-e. above and any comments from the Acton Fire and Engineering Departments) and septic systems (see memo from Justin Snair, Acton Health Department, to Scott Mutch). If these issues can be resolved, this sort of 40B project is one good model that the Town might embrace for certification maintenance purposes should it ever succeed in reaching or exceeding the 10% threshold.