



132 Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111
T: 617.350.7420
www.baker-wohl.com

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 16 August 2010
TO: Kelley Cronin
FROM: Bennie Ber
RE: Response to Town of Acton Planning Department Comments
dated July 30, 2010 – McCarthy Village II

Responses Planning Department Comments

1. On the Plan, the “total open space” and “dwelling unit density” listed on Sheets A-2, C-1 and C-2 are different. The applicant’s engineer/surveyor should check and correct the numbers on all sheets.
Response: This has been corrected on all drawings.
2. The applicant needs to request a waiver from the minimum parking space requirements of Acton Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw) Section 6.3.1.1. The Bylaw requires two spaces per dwelling unit (resulting in 94 spaces for the entire property). Only 71 spaces are provided for the entire property.
Response: The Applicant submitted a memorandum to the ZBA on August 2, 2010 requesting additional exemption. A copy of that memorandum is attached to this response.
3. The applicant needs to request a waiver from the Acton Subdivision Rules and Regulations Section 8.1.7 — “adjacent street intersections along an existing and/or proposed arterial or collector street shall have a minimum centerline offset of 1000’.” The project’s driveway is located within 1000’ of both Harris Street and Nonset Path.
Response: The Applicant submitted a memorandum to the ZBA on August 2, 2010 requesting additional exemption. A copy of that memorandum is attached to this response.
4. The property is partially located in the Policy’s “Area with Poor/Limited Sustainability for Higher Density Housing” (based on habitat areas related to Will’s Hole). The property and surrounding areas have already been compromised by development. Based on the Plan, the applicant is proposing to keep a significant portion of the property as undisturbed open space. If this is accurate, and the Plan is labeled accordingly, staff believes the proposal won’t significantly compromise the habitat area.
Response: No action required.
5. In the Development Impact Report (DIR), #26, the applicant provides traffic estimates for the proposal. The estimates do not appear consistent with the

BAKER / WOHL ARCHITECTS

rates provided in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. The applicant should explain the methodology used to determine trips generated from the proposal.

Response: In the existing development, only one third of the seniors own cars and the remainder use the Senior Shuttle. Of the families in the development, the average is one working adult per household, which translates to 12 additional peak hour car trips attributable to the proposed new development. This number was doubled to provide a safety margin.

6. The Planning Department staff read the Sidewalk Committee's recommendation that the applicant make a contribution to the Town sidewalk fund for Great Road sidewalk construction. However, the property does not have any frontage along a road (it is an easement) and Town regulations discuss providing sidewalks along the site's frontage on a road. As a compromise, and so the existing sidewalk will reach more residents in the development, Planning staff recommends that the sidewalk leading from Great Road, along the property driveway, be extended to the existing duplexes on the property. In addition, it would provide a sidewalk adjacent to the mailboxes so residents have a safer place to access their mail.
Response: The project team will consider the request favorably, provided that funds are available for the requested work.
7. The application states that the project will use Energy Star appliances and that the project will be LEED-certified under the LEED for Homes program. Staff supports these efforts because they could lead to lower costs for residents.
Response: No further action required.
8. The property is located in a "Post-contact Archaeological Moderate Sensitivity area" according to the Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey Report done for the Town of Acton in 2008. The Town currently does not have any regulations in place regarding potential archaeological areas. Staff just wanted to inform the applicant and Board of this information.
Response: No further action required.
9. The handicap ramp/access area in front of Building A should be positioned in the third parking space directly across from the walkway to Building A and the handicap spaces should be located on either side of the ramp. Repositioning the ramp and relocating the spaces provides a direct route to the Building A walkway and entrance, and moves both spaces fairly close to the building walkway.
Response: The proposed handicapped ramp has been repositioned directly across from the sidewalk to Building A as suggested creating a direct route to the building from the handicapped parking spaces.
10. Pervious pavers are proposed for the parking spaces in front of Buildings A, B, and C. Why are pervious pavers proposed for those parking spaces and not others?

BAKER / WOHL ARCHITECTS

Response: *The proposed pervious pavers were originally proposed in front of only buildings A, B and C because these areas are in the location of a fill condition and provide better drainage characteristics than the parking areas for Buildings D and E. See response to Item #11.*

11. If pervious pavers are used in front of Building A, the pavers could cause problems or difficulties for persons with disabilities. The Plan should be modified to show the handicap ramp/access area paved with the same materials as used for the driveway.
Response: *The proposed pervious pavers have been relocated from the parking field at buildings A to the parking area for Buildings F. Although there is not as much of a fill condition as Building A, the parking area at Building F is a fill condition and should meet the intention of infiltrating as much stormwater as possible.*
12. Stairs lead to the entrances of Building A. Since Building A is designed for persons with disabilities, handicap accessible ramps should be located at the building entrances rather than stairs.
Response: *This has been corrected.*
13. Building A presents a fairly large blank wall to the parking lot. To provide more architectural interest and detail, and in keeping more with the Policy's Visual Preference Survey preferred designs, staff recommends a window be located to the left of Building A's front door (if you were standing in the parking lot facing the door).
Response: *This is currently being investigated.*
14. How is waste disposal handled on the property?
Response: *The property will have sidewalk trash pickup.*
15. Is any outdoor lighting located on the property and/or proposed of the site? If so please explain where and the types.
Response: *Please see drawings E0.1 for outdoor lighting locations. Lights are to be "Vanguard PROV-T5-60LED-BW" (see Lighting Plan).*
16. Because the proposal is located in between established neighborhoods, staff recommends that additional landscaping be planted to help screen the project from the neighbors.
Response: *The project team will consider the request favorably, provided that funds are available for the requested work.*
17. Staff supports the idea of a play area and recommends that the play area be constructed as part of Phase II if possible.
Response: *The project team will consider the request favorably, provided that funds are available for the requested work.*
18. The property abuts Town conservation land. A trail should be provided extending from the parking lot to the conservation land for McCarthy Village residents.

BAKER / WOHL ARCHITECTS

Response: The project team will consider the request favorably, provided that funds are available for the requested work.

19. Please see the attached project evaluation form for additional staff comments.

Response: The project team has noted the Project Evaluation Summary and will consider available cost-effective strategies to address the sidewalk and low-water use planting comments.

20. If the issues listed above are addressed, along with other staff/agency/Counsel comments, the Planning Department recommends project approval for the following reasons:

- While not within a preferred location under the Policy, it is reasonably close and near service and retail establishments and other amenities.
- In April 2009 and April 2010, the voters at Annual Town Meeting awarded the AHA with Comprehensive Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the project totaling \$400,000; showing the Town's desire for the project to move forward.
- The Policy gives preference to projects with more than (the minimum) 25% of the units as affordable and serving low income households. Typically Chapter 40B and other affordable housing projects tend to only provide 25% of the units within the project as affordable and serve primarily moderate income households. This project helps satisfy a housing need in Acton by making 100% of the units serve low income households.
- The Policy encourages a mix of unit styles and sizes. The project is comprised of two and three bedroom units and includes one wheel chair accessible unit.
- The proposed building designs and site layout appear to blend well with the existing buildings and layout. The designs are also similar to highly-rated residences in the Policy's Visual Preference Survey.
- The gross floor area ratio (FAR) of the site and for the entire property complies with the Policy's maximum FAR of 0.25.

Response: No further action required.