



MEMO

Design Review Board

Project: 525 Main Street
Acton, MA

DRB response to comments from Tim Doncaster, 523 Main Street

Date of Review: December 17th, 2008

1. Mr. Doncaster asked to meet with the DRB to review his concerns re: the proposed landscape screening between his property and the proposed addition to commercial property at 525 Main Street; he met with the BoS on this project, December 15th, 2008.
2. Mr Doncaster presented the email from Municipal Properties Director Dean Charter to Lauren Rosenzweig of December 10, 2008. (attached) The DRB concurs with this email that Acton Zoning By-law 10.4.3.6 applies in this situation and that this by-law should be followed as a condition to issuance of Site Plan Special Permit. The DRB regrets they did not know of the by-law previously.
3. The DRB also concurs that “approval be predicated upon the applicant providing a landscape plan that complies with 10.4.3.6, drawn and stamped by a Registered Landscape Architect prior to issuance of a building permit , and that the installation be certified by the same Landscape Architect and checked by the Town prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit.” The DRB recommends that this statement be amended to the Special Permit and requests review of this plan at the applicant’s earliest convenience.
4. In further considering the adjacency of the residential neighborhood, the DRB recommends that the overall height of the new addition be more consistent with the massing of the existing building; e.g. the addition could be rotated 90 degrees within the building footprint as drawn so that the gable end faced Main Street thus presenting a much lower façade to the neighboring property which would be easier and less costly, to screen. (We recognize this might require reconfiguring of parking currently proposed.)

The Design Review Board
Town of Acton, MA

From: Dean Charter <dcharter@acton-ma.gov>
To: Lauren Rosenzweig <lrs57@comcast.net>
Cc: Scott Mutch <smutch@acton-ma.gov>; Roland Bartl <rbartl@acton-ma.gov>; 'caster523@aol.com' <caster523@aol.com>; Steve Ledoux <sledoux@acton-ma.gov>
Subject: 525 Main Street landscaping
Date: Wed, 10 Dec 2008 4:04 pm

Hi Lauren,

As we discussed earlier this afternoon, I have met with the residential neighbor directly to the south of the subject property, and he has objected to my comments about the adequacy of the buffer planting. I will also note that the Design Review Board, without my knowledge, had weighed in on the landscape plan and, so far as I can understand their comments, even their recommendations would not fully address the neighbor's concerns.

I based my original comments on the fact that there is an extensive hardwood forest located between the proposed expansion and the nearest house, albeit on land not owned by the applicant.

Upon reconsideration, I checked the Zoning Bylaw (section 10.4.3.6), and those Special Landscaping Provisions were written with this exact situation in mind: a Light Industrial District adjacent to a Residential Use. The Bylaw does not seem to provide any wiggle room whatsoever. The applicant must provide a landscape plan that includes both a low (6 foot) opaque buffer, and a higher intermittent buffer. The specifications for such a buffer are included in the Bylaw.

I suggest that the approval be predicated upon the applicant providing a landscape plan that complies with 10.4.3.6, drawn and stamped by a Registered Landscape Architect prior to issuance of a building permit, and that the installation be certified by that same Landscape Architect and checked by the Town prior to issuance of an occupancy permit.

Regards,

Dean A. Charter
Municipal Properties Director