



Memorandum

Project: The Meadows @ Acton
263 Great Road
Acton, MA

Plans Submitted: Hardcopies - of Submittal Package

Proponent: Steve Steinberg

Architect: Peter Conant

Date of Review: 5/16/2012

To: Board of Selectman/Zoning Board of Appeals
From: Design Review Board (DRB)
Re: Review Comments on "The Meadows" 40 B Housing Project
Attendance: Holly Ben Joseph (DRB), Kim Montella (DRB), Chris Dallmus (DRB),
David Honn (DRB), Steve Steinberg (Developer), Peter Conant (Architect)

Project Description

- The project is located at 263 Great Road
- The project consists of 25 residential buildings on a long, narrow site perpendicular to Great Road, including two existing houses to be renovated (One by Habitat for Humanity), two duplex units for rental with the remainder of the buildings to be single family units for sale. The majority of the houses have two car garages. Seven of the 25 units are considered affordable under the 40B program.

Site Plan Comments

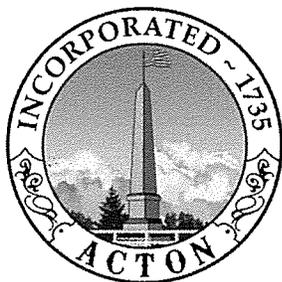
- It was noted that the site is very densely developed with side yard setbacks well below code minimums. There were numerous instances of garages from one property being 10 feet or less from a neighboring house. This density will create a wall-like appearance while driving and walking around the complex preventing views into the woods beyond. In order to alleviate this condition while maintaining the same number of housing units, it was suggested that one or one-and-a-half car garages be substituted for two car garages.
- It was suggested that the first three houses on the right side of the entry drive could be staggered (instead of the front facades aligning) to relieve the wall-like appearance noted above.

- The new unit and its driveway located adjacent to the existing house in the center of the site plan should be repositioned so that the existing house is more prominent and both units gain more privacy.
- Due to the project's density, there is an excessive amount of pavement since each house has its own driveway. It was suggested that driveways could be shared between two houses. The proponent was referred to a recently built housing project on River Street in the South Acton Historic District where this was done.
- As many mature trees should be retained as possible.
- Drainage retention basins should be reconfigured into more natural shapes instead of the rectangles depicted on the plans.
- The sidewalk shown on one side of the street was considered sufficient and aesthetically desirable.

Building Comments

- A perspective was shown by the architect that depicted numerous housing styles with multiple variations on each style. Rather than a multitude of styles, the consensus among the parties was that this size project would benefit from and be greatly enhanced by using only two basic style types-Greek Revival and Colonial. Each of these types would have multiple iterations which would make them unique such as variations on the size and type of porches, exterior materials, dormers, roof configurations, trim, colors, etc.
- It was considered desirable to vary the orientation of the gables to the street; sometimes perpendicular, sometimes parallel.
- It was noted that 6 over 6 windows would be more appropriate for the Colonial style and 2 over 2 windows for the Greek Revival style. 1 over 1 windows were noted as incorrect and undesirable. The proponent was referred to the River Street project for window suggestions.
- It was noted by KM as a realtor, that the two car garages are out of the norm for the size of the units proposed (1800-2000 SF). The volume of the two car garages inappropriately dominates the volume of the houses. See garage suggestions above. The Board appreciated that the garages were pushed to the extreme rear of the units.
- Front porches of a useful size and with sufficient architectural detail were deemed essential to create a scale appropriate for residents walking along the street, providing a semi-private buffer between the street and the front door of the house as well as promoting a "neighborhood feel".
- The proponent was encouraged to save resources by simplifying the house volumes and devoting his resources to quality windows, materials and architectural details appropriate to the style type.

Submitted by:
Design Review Board



Planning Department

TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts 01720
Telephone (978) 929-6631
Fax (978) 929-6340
planning@acton-ma.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Zoning Board of Appeals **Date:** ~~May 8, 2012~~
Revised: June 6, 2012

From: Planning Department (on behalf of the Acton Planning Board)

Subject: The Meadows at Acton – Proposed 40B Development at 263 Great Road
Revised Planning Department Staff comments

Location: 263-265 Great Road
Owner: 263 Great Road LLC c/o Steve Steinberg
Applicant: 263 Great Road LLC c/o Steve Steinberg
Engineer: Stamski and McNary Inc. 1000 Main Street Acton, MA 01720
Proposed Units: Total of 26 dwelling units (24 single family units and 2 duplex units), (1 existing single family to be renovated by Habitat for Humanity, 1 possible single family renovation by applicant)

Proposed Affordable Units: 7
New Street: N/A private drive
Land area: 5.47
Common Land: 3.3+/- acres of open space
Map/Parcel: E-5, 18 and 18-1
Zoning: Residence 8 (R-8); Limited Business (LB)

COMMENTS

Zoning

1. The applicant shall either revise the plans in order to comply with the Town of Acton's Zoning By-law requirements or request additional waivers from the following Zoning Bylaw sections:

1. Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations – Min. Side Yard Setback of 20' for **R-8**
2. Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations – Min. Side Yard Setback of 30' for **LB**

06/06/12 No further comment required. The applicant submitted an additional section for their application, stated "Local Laws and Regulations; Non-Compliance" dated May 25, 2012.

Turning Radii and Private Drive Width

1. The private road is proposed at 18ft. wide. Although the Town usually requires similar roads to be at least 20ft. wide, the proposed turning radii at the Great Road intersection and cul-de-sac easily fits the SU-30 (fire truck) turning template and seems adequate for this type of development.

06/06/12 No further comment required.

Crosswalk

1. A crosswalk from the proposed development crossing Great Road (Rt. 2A) to Gould's Plaza is strongly recommended. Currently safety for pedestrians along Great Road, a State Highway controlled by MassDOT, has long been a local concern. Mr. Steinberg has already reached out to Senator Eldridge for support in this matter. The Planning Department urges that the Town do its part to establish such a crosswalk in tandem with the proposed development, and trusts that Mr. Steinberg would be willing to provide the engineering and financial backing needed to gain MassDOT approval and to physically install it. Historically, MassDOT has been resistant to crosswalks on Great Road; therefore a concerted effort will be needed.
2. Planning recommends that project approval by the Board of Appeals should contain a condition that the applicant must provide a crosswalk on Great Road subject to MassDOT final approval.
3. The Town has sidewalk construction funds from various gifts. In the event that MassDOT requirements for a crosswalk were to become extraordinarily costly and therefore render the project uneconomic the sidewalk funds could be directed to assist, subject of course to the Board of Selectmen's approval.

06/06/12 The applicant requests the town only require that an application for a crosswalk be made within 2 years of the issuance of a Comprehensive Permit. The Planning Department feels this time period is unnecessarily long and that an application should be made within 1 year.

Things to Change/Add

1. Driveway lengths on units (G, E, K, L) are 18ft. +/- long. Garage locations should be moved further back from the private drive in order to accommodate vehicles parking comfortably in the driveway, without parking beyond the line of the sidewalk.

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant confirmed in comments submitted May 25, 2012 that they will adjust the length of the driveways on the final plan.

2. Prices noted for the affordable units are not consistent throughout the application. (Example: Form 3.16 Affordable Dwelling Units lists the projected price at \$179,000 and the Use Description form lists the projected price at \$195,000).

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant confirmed in comments submitted May 25, 2012 that the projected price of the affordable dwellings is \$179,000.

3. Note the limit of work and any existing vegetation to be retained on the plan.

06/06/12 The limit of work is noted on the plan as the property line. No existing vegetation is shown to be retained.

4. A community playground or play area is recommended.

06/06/12 No further comment required. The Applicant submitted comments on May 25, 2012 stating they will designate a play area above the soil absorption system on the final plan.

5. No outdoor lighting is shown on the plan. If outdoor lighting is proposed it must comply with Section 10.6 of the Zoning Bylaw (Outdoor Lighting Regulations for Site Plan Special Permit).

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant submitted comments on May 25, 2012 stating that all lighting will comply with the Bylaw.

See additional notes/comments provided on the Comprehensive Project Evaluation Summary Chart attached below.

1. Although the project is not located within ¼ mile of a village center, it is located in an area that is characterized by a mixture of residential and business uses. Ample shopping opportunities and services exist within walking distance of the proposed project, including a supermarket in Gould's Plaza.

06/06/12 No further comment required.

2. The project consists of 26 units, it does not fit the criteria for a large-scale project, nor a small scale project.

06/06/12 No further comment required.

3. A representative plan showing a sample landscaping plan for individual lots' is suggested. Additional landscaping along the back of the lot as well as additional street trees around the cul-de-sac should be considered. It is advised that native, low maintenance plants be considered for the property.

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant submitted a Site/Planting Plan for Typical planting between units on May 25, 2012.

4. Parking is proposed inside of attached and detached residential garages. All garages are located to the side or rear of the main structure.

06/06/12 No further comment required.

6. It is strongly suggested that a crosswalk be installed from the proposed "Meadow at Acton" development to the Donelan's shopping plaza crossing Rt. 2A (Great Road).

06/06/12 No further comment required. See comment above (Sidewalk #3).

7. 265 Great Road is identified on the list of Culturally Significant Homes in Acton. The applicant proposes to renovate 265 Great Road.

06/06/12 No further comment required.

8. A Landscaping sample plan for individual lots with low maintenance plants was not specified in the application, but should be included in landscaping plan.

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant submitted a Site/Planting Plan for Typical planting between units on May 25, 2012.

9. An irrigation system was not show on the plan, if one is proposed it should be added to the plan.

06/06/12 No further comment required. In memo dated May 25, 2012, the Applicant stated the plan will either be revised to show an irrigation system or a spate irrigation plan will be provided with the final plans.

**Additional notes/comments provided on the Memorandum titled:
Supplemental Comments, Submitted from Planning Department May 11, 2012**

1. The proposed private road functionally compares to a subdivision road, therefore a list of waivers from the Subdivision Rules and Regulations should be provided.

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant submitted a waiver of the Subdivision Rules and Regulations on May 25, 2012.

2. The plan shows a proposed Lot A to be conveyed to the neighboring property. This conveyance limits the frontage of proposed Lot 3 to a total of 35.48 feet. The applicant shall either revise the plans in order to comply with the Town of Acton's Zoning By-law requirements or request additional waivers from the following Zoning Bylaw section:
Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations –minimum frontage of 200' for **R-8 and LB.**

06/06/12 No further comment required. Applicant submitted a list of waiver requests on May 25, 2012.

CC: Planning Board

Cheryl Frazier

From: Isabel Roberts
Sent: Thursday, June 07, 2012 10:27 AM
To: Cheryl Frazier
Subject: RE: The Meadows at Acton

Hi Cheryl,

The Health Dept. is satisfied with the response to the comments/concerns.

Thank you.

Isabel Roberts
Health Agent
Health Department
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
978-929-6632

From: Cheryl Frazier
Sent: Thursday, June 07, 2012 9:41 AM
To: Isabel Roberts
Subject: FW: The Meadows at Acton

Isabel,

Here you go.

Cheryl

From: George Dimakarakos [<mailto:gd@stamskiandmcnary.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 4:04 PM
To: Cheryl Frazier; Scott Mutch
Cc: Steve Steinberg
Subject: The Meadows at Acton

Cheryl/Scott,

Please see attached and circulate as needed.

George Dimakarakos, P.E.
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1000 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
ph: 978-263-8585 ext: 212
fax: 978-263-9883
email: gd@stamskiandmcnary.com