

## Cheryl Frazier

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**From:** frannyola@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 25, 2012 8:38 PM  
**To:** Cheryl Frazier  
**Subject:** bos@acton-ma.gov,rbartl@acton-ma.gov,planning@acton-ma.gov,cyork@acton-ma.gov,tac@acton-ma.gov,sidewalks@acton-ma.gov

Comments on the Acton Meadows site plan, 263 Great Road.

Transportation Advisory recommends:

--Add a pullout to allow buses to stop safely on Route 2a for the neighborhood's use but without entering the neighborhood.

--Add a grass strip between sidewalk and Great Rd.

--Add a pedestrian connection from east end of property to Ladyslipper lane and to Longmeadow Way--and connecting those two. These connections will improve the walkability of those neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Franny Osman and  
Transportation Advisory Committee

## Acton Community Housing Corporation

Nancy Tavernier, Chairman

### TOWN OF ACTON

Acton Town Hall

472 Main Street

Acton, Massachusetts, 01720

Telephone (978) 263-9611

[achc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:achc@acton-ma.gov)

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TO: Acton Zoning Board of Appeals  
FROM: Nancy Tavernier, Chair, Acton Community Housing Corporation  
SUBJECT: Acton Meadows Comprehensive Permit application  
DATE: April 27, 2012

The Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) has voted to recommend the twenty-six unit 40B proposal, Acton Meadows, located at 263-265 Great Rd. This project is a DHCD Local Initiative Program (LIP) project also known as a "friendly 40B." Acton developer Steve Steinberg and his consultant/architect Peter Conant have met with ACHC, town boards, and department heads multiple times while the project was in its preliminary design stage. There was also an information session for abutters, town board members, the general public, and multiple site visits.

Mr. Steinberg followed the pre-development process laid out in the ACHC's Guidelines for Affordable Housing Development in Acton and also the Selectmen and Planning Board's Comprehensive Permit Policy document. The pre-development work has demonstrated an extraordinary outreach effort on the part of the developer which resulted in unanimous approval by the Board of Selectmen for the LIP application and no opposition from abutters or town board members.

In an effort to bring more diversity to the development, ACHC requested that consideration be given to providing a unit for the Habitat for Humanity program and also units for the Acton Housing Authority to use for their low income rental program. Mr. Steinberg agreed to this proposal. The plan is to make the existing house at the front of the property a Habitat unit to be renovated by volunteers and sold to a family at 50% of the AMI. The two Acton Housing Authority units will be in a duplex designed to look like a slightly larger single family home. This is a deviation from a standard LIP project configuration so it presented a challenge to DHCD as the subsidizing agency. After careful review, they embraced the diversity concept and are willing to use this model for other projects in the future.

Whenever the ACHC reviews 40B developments, we always look for the redeeming features above and beyond the provision of affordable units. This development has many. First and foremost was the willingness of the developer to collaborate with the Town and to accept the suggestions for design, density, and programmatic adjustments that came from ACHC and others. ACHC and the developers have negotiated reduced density; improved the road layout

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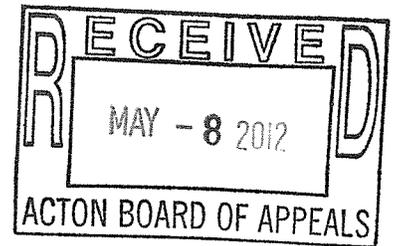
taking advantage of the topography while creating green spaces; discussed LEED certification as a standard for energy efficiency; added a partnership with Habitat for Humanity that allowed preservation of the Great Road streetscape; sited two units for the Acton Housing Authority; and confirmed minimal removal of trees and protection of environmental features. We have also looked at both exterior and interior home designs and encouraged a variety of elevations and flexible floor plans potentially reducing the total number of bedrooms.

The thoughtful quality design is a major positive. The placement of the homes in a friendly village setting, with front doors opening out on a small street, will create a neighborhood feel to the development. While this is not a designated "village" growth area per se, it is an area where an infusion of new residents will be consistent with other residential uses along Great Road and it will provide walking customers to the many commercial properties and services in the area. Another redeeming feature is the retention of the existing homes on the site rather than tearing them down. This is consistent with the town's sustainability efforts and stresses the importance of reusing and rehabilitating existing sites for affordable housing.

The opportunity for ACHC to partner with the Acton Housing Authority to purchase two units for their low income rental program is made possible by the developer's agreement to discount the selling price to \$125,000 for each two-bedroom unit. CPA funds will be used by ACHC to purchase these units for the Housing Authority and the Board of Selectmen has approved this expenditure. The inclusion of a unit for a Habitat family brings a richness of diversity to the project as well as hands-on community involvement in the provision of affordable housing. ACHC recently recommended that a grant of \$60,000 from housing gift funds be used to subsidize the Habitat renovation. The Board of Selectmen also approved this request.

For all of these reasons, the ACHC strongly urges the ZBA to approve the Comprehensive Permit application in an expeditious manner.

# MEMORANDUM



TO: Zoning Board of Appeals

FROM: Board of Selectmen *with Marty Serrat*

DATE: May 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Local Initiative Program Application for Comprehensive Permit  
Acton Meadows, 263-265 Great Road, Acton, MA

The Board of Selectmen supports approval of the comprehensive permit for the proposed Acton Meadows project at 263-265 Great Road in Acton. The Board formally endorsed the project in a unanimous vote on November 21, 2011.

The proposal reflects input from numerous Town representatives and is consistent with the aim of the Town's own affordable housing guidelines and comprehensive permit policy to encourage the collaborative creation of smaller-scale affordable housing developments that respect local architectural traditions, natural resources, "smart growth" principles and other Town interests. Over the course of several months starting nearly one year ago, the project proponents, developer Steven Steinberg and developer/architect Peter Conant, met with Town departments, Town boards and members of the public, conducted several site walks and incorporated the Town's perspective in modifications to the conceptual plans.

The proposal consists of 26 units on a 5.47-acre parcel encompassing a meadow surrounded by trees in an area of mixed residential and business uses. Two of the units are existing single-family residences; the developers would add 22 new single-family units and one duplex unit in a mix of traditional designs. Seven of the units, including the duplex and one of the existing homes, would be affordable, and three of the seven would serve the low/lower-income population. The development would afford a sense of privacy while at the same time being within walking distance of grocery stores and other services.

The Selectmen urge the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve the comprehensive permit application. Thank you.

cc: Acton Community Housing Corporation

## Cheryl Frazier

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**From:** Katharine Simmons [kcsimmons333@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 01, 2012 3:53 PM  
**To:** Board of Appeals  
**Subject:** Great Road development

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to express my extreme concern with the project proposed for an additional development on Great Road. I feel that the board has not adequately considered the impact on the traffic on Great Road, which is already beyond reasonable. Accidents are routinely happening in that area, people are unable to cross the road to shopping plazas, and the many children who live on and near that street are in constant peril. We claim to be a 'green town' but we are making access to Acton by foot almost impossible.

I also feel that recently housing is being approved throughout Acton which is compromising the quality of our town. The housing development near Nara Park on 27 is extremely crowded, without any thought of landscape or image. I am very distressed to think there may be more of these thoughtless and poorly planned developments in Acton.

Thank you for considering my opinion as a very concerned Acton resident.

Katharine Simmons  
7 Longmeadow Way

## Cheryl Frazier

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**From:** Amelia Fedyk [fedyk@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 01, 2012 5:26 PM  
**To:** Board of Appeals  
**Cc:** Planning Board  
**Subject:** Comments for Hearing # 12-02

Dear Board Members,

I want to comment on the upcoming public hearing on the application of 263 Great Road, LLC for approval of a Comprehensive Permit of land located at 263 Great Road. I am very concerned about traffic and safety issues associated with the proposed development. I run that area of road frequently and have witnessed several incidents where pedestrians, trying to cross the street to get to Donelan's grocery store, were nearly struck by passing cars. Additionally, once I helped a pedestrian, carrying a baby in a carrier, stop traffic so she and her baby could cross safely and it was difficult. The safety issues arise because of the heavy traffic flow and all the intersecting roads converging onto Great Road in such a small area. Strawberry Hill Road, Brook Street, Davis Road and the numerous businesses in this short stretch make it very difficult for the cyclists and pedestrians to use safely. It's difficult for motorists to navigate with the relatively high speed limit and frequent left hand turns. Pedestrians and cyclists are easily overlooked. I believe adding yet another development to this already congested and unsafe area of road would be irresponsible.

Many of the concerns I mention here have already been detailed in the East Acton Village Plan (2004). Approving the application of 263 Great Road, LLC would be in direct opposition of our Village plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kindly,

Amelia Fedyk

3 Whispering Way



RECEIVED

MAY 3 2012

Town of Acton  
Planning Department

## Memorandum

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

Plans Submitted: No hardcopies - referred to Docushare site

Proponent: Steve Steinberg

Architect: Peter Conant

Date of Review: 5/2/2012

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The DRB will not be submitting review comments at this time as the electronic plans submitted lack understandable detailing of the building elevations, and no site-sections showing the placement of the buildings on the site in relation to topography— design elements that the DRB is charged with commenting on. Rather than submitting three pages of questions requiring answers from the proponent, we recommend the proponent and his design team attend the next DRB meeting to present the project. The DRB has found having proponents/design teams meet with the DRB results in the most productive outcomes for a successful project.

In addition, the DRB did not receive hard copies of the set of drawings and it was very difficult to review the drawings on a small laptop computer screen. We request that, for the next review, a full-sized set of the drawings be provided.

Respectfully Submitted:  
The Design Review Board

## Cheryl Frazier

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**From:** pilotconant@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2012 12:26 PM  
**To:** Design Review Board; Building Department; Board of Selectmen; Nancy Tavernier; Steve Steinberg  
**Subject:** Additional Material for Acton Design Review Board  
**Attachments:** Add'l Material, Acton DRB, 5-4-12.pdf

To: Holly Ben-Joseph, David honn, Christopher Dallmus, Ryan Bettez

From: Peter Conant, RA

Re: The Meadows at Acton

Dear Members of the Design Review Board, and other as copied:

Enclosed please find additional materials that were inadvertently omitted from our filing with the Acton board of Appeal.

Included are front and rear elevations, a perspective rendering showing the proposed streetscape, and two colored computer-generated views of the homes with the different unit elevations..

Until I received your email today I was unaware of the requirement for site sections. Please let me know what other items you require that are not specifically enumerated in the Regulations for Filing a Comprehensive Permit with the Acton Board of Appeal.

Also, I would be happy to appear at your next meeting. Can you let me know when that is scheduled and what time I might be on the agenda?

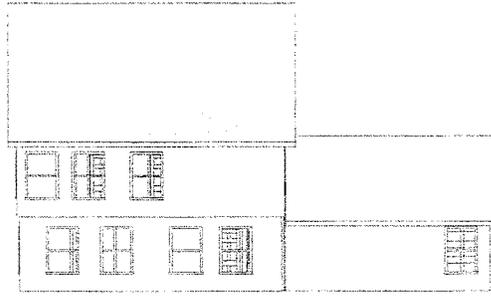
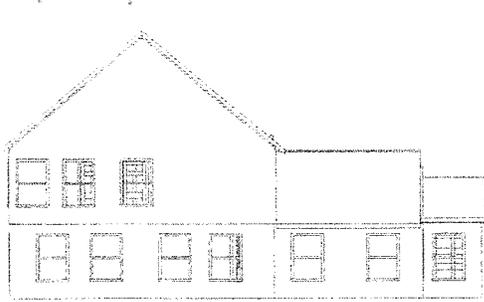
Seven "hard copies" were filed with the secretary to the Acton Board of Appeal last month, including stamped architectural drawings.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

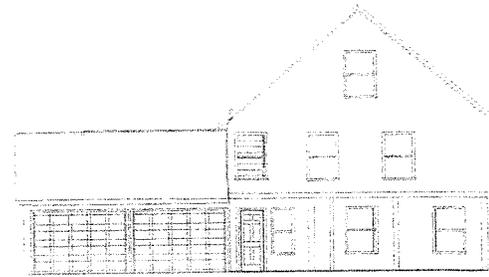
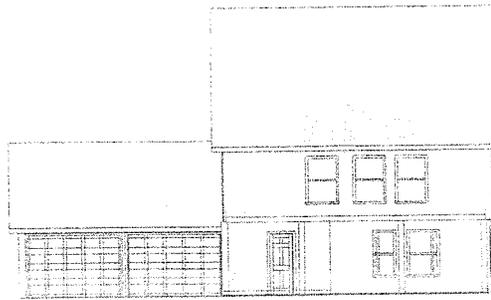
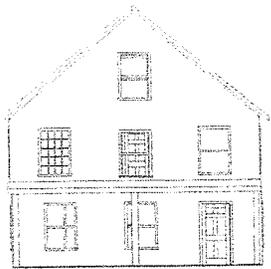
Peter M. Conant, Registered Architect

copies to: Acton Board of Appeal via Acton Building Department  
Acton Board of Selectmen  
Nancy Tavernier, Acton Community Housing Corporation  
Acton Management Corporation



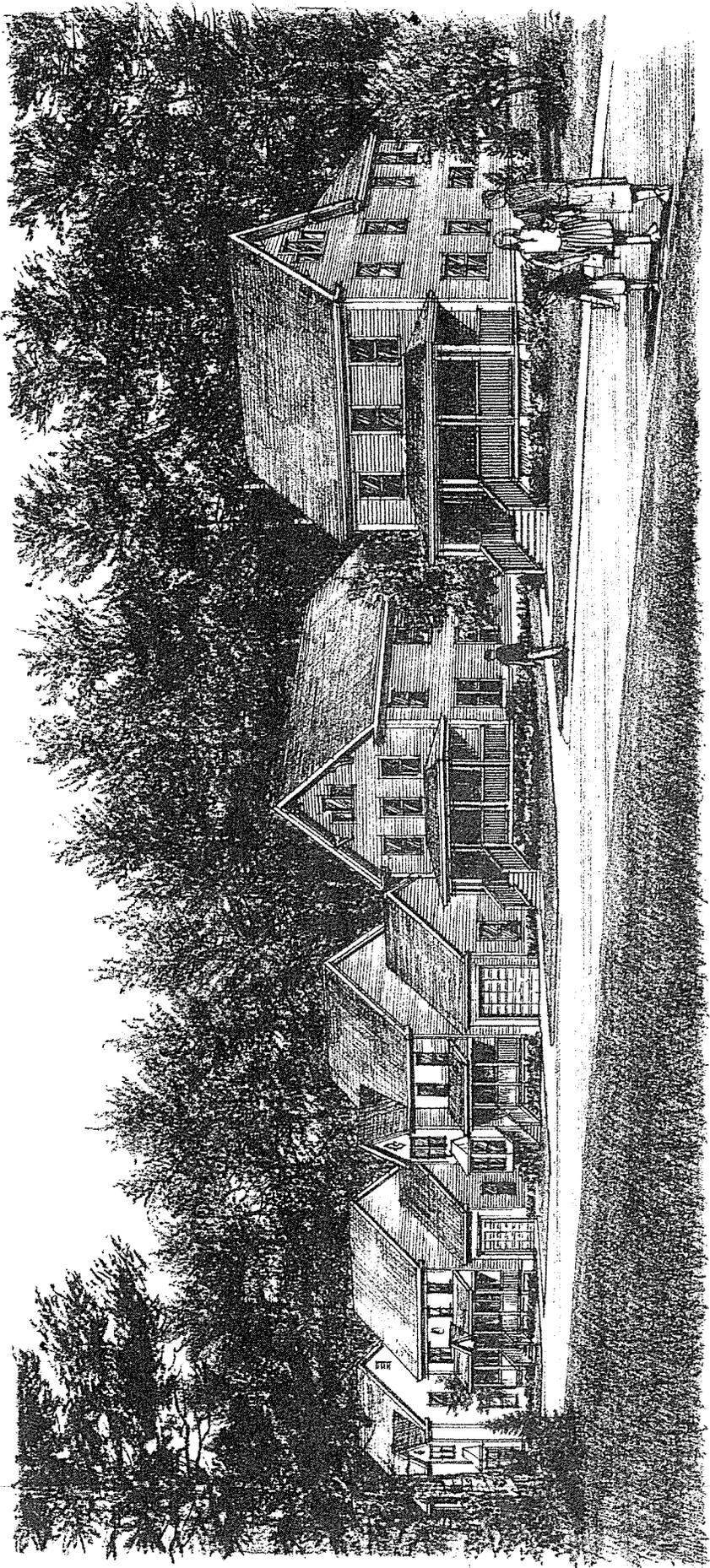
Acton Meadows

Rear Elevations, showing typical spacing between homes

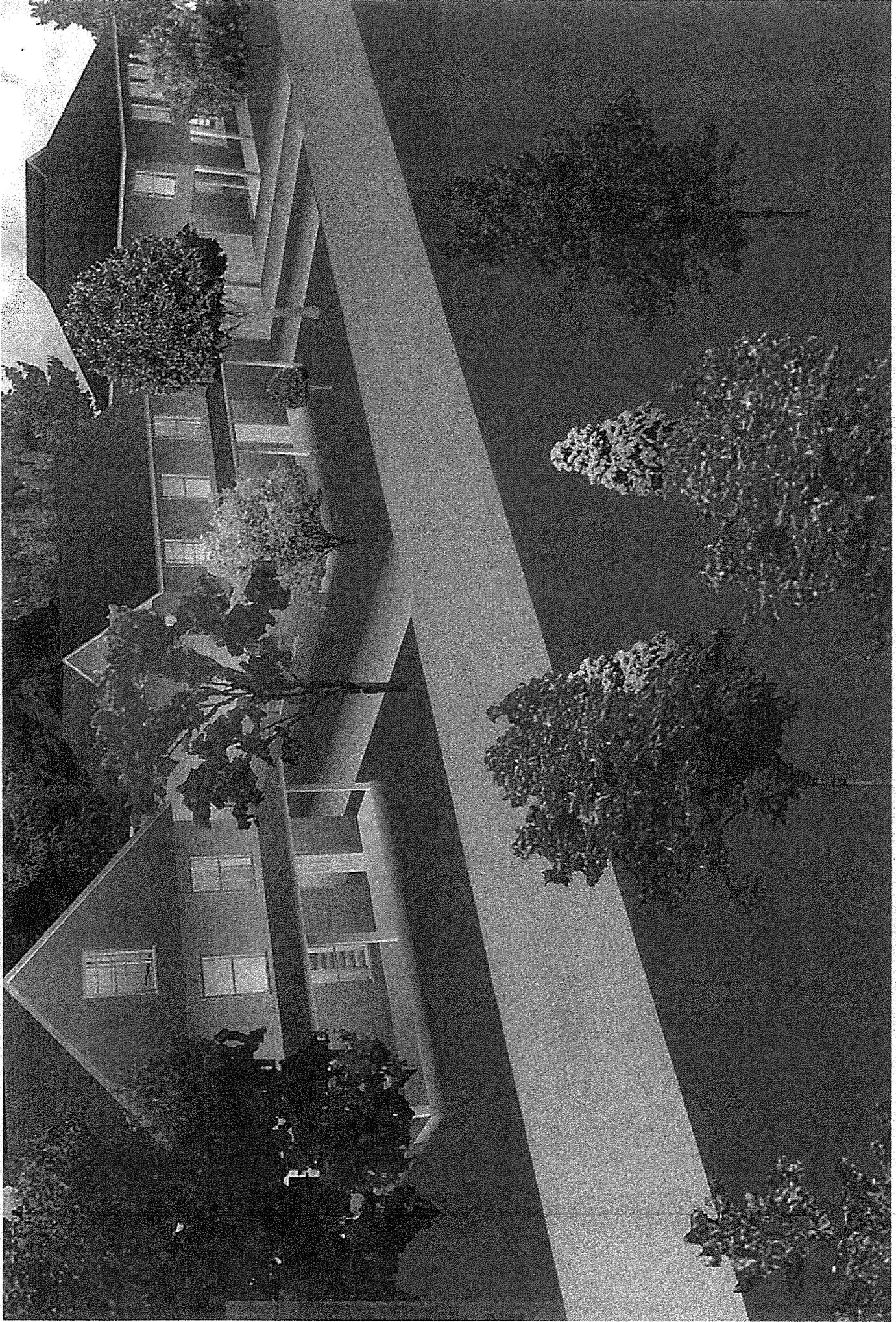


Acton Meadows

Front Elevations, showing typical spacing between homes



ACTON MEADOWS



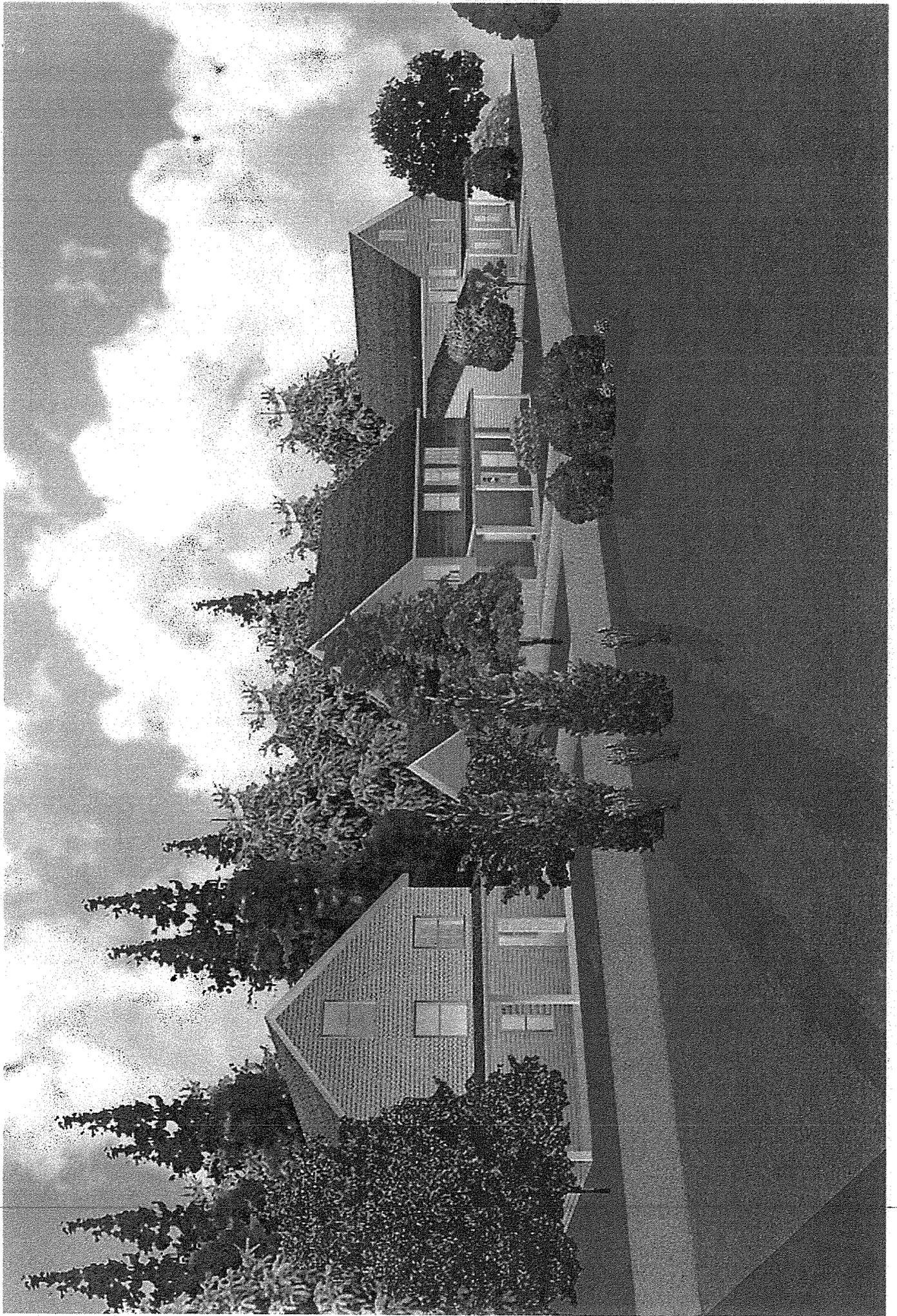
**ACTON MEADOWS**

**ELEVATIONS**

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C

C



**ACTION MEADOWS**

**ELEVATIONS**

## Cheryl Frazier

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**From:** Holly BenJoseph [hollydbj@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 07, 2012 12:54 PM  
**To:** pilotconant@aol.com  
**Cc:** Design Review Board; Building Department; Board of Selectmen; Nancy Tavernier; Steve Steinberg  
**Subject:** Re: Additional Material for Acton Design Review Board

Hello Peter,

Thank you very much for sending this additional material for review, it is helpful.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16, starting at 7:30. Would you be able to attend on this date? Can I tentatively put you on for 7:40pm?

I have found out that the town no longer distributes hard copies to the reviewing boards, so if you have an office set that you could bring to the meeting this would be very helpful. (if you don't have an office copy, let us know).

The DRB is in the process of developing a list of Suggested Materials to bring to meetings, so we don't have a list yet on the website, but the materials we have found helpful in reviewing other projects are:

Existing site photos

Site sections (also including relation to adjacent buildings)

All the other plans & elevations (site and Arch) that you have submitted in the packet.

Information on exterior building materials and colors

site lighting information (if applies)

site signage (if applies)

We understand that it is early in the process and you may not have all of this information developed yet, so please bring what you have that will help us understand the overall aesthetics of the project,

Regards,

Holly Ben-Joseph (co-chair)

On Fri, May 4, 2012 at 12:26 PM, <pilotconant@aol.com> wrote:

To: Holly Ben-Joseph, David honn, Christopher Dallmus, Ryan Bettez

From: Peter Conant, RA

Re: The Meadows at Acton

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Sincerely,

Peter M. Conant, Registered Architect

copies to: Acton Board of Appeal via Acton Building Department  
Acton Board of Selectmen  
Nancy Tavernier, Acton Community Housing Corporation  
Acton Management Corporation

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Holly D. Ben-Joseph  
Landscape Architect  
Tel: (508) 451-3388  
email: [hollydbj@gmail.com](mailto:hollydbj@gmail.com)  
web: [www.hdbjlandscapes.com](http://www.hdbjlandscapes.com)



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  
**From:** Planning Department (on behalf of the Acton Planning Board) *R.B.*  
**Subject:** The Meadows at Acton – Proposed 40B Development at 263 Great Road

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**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**

**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.

### **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.

### **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.
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).
3. Note the limit of work and any existing vegetation to be retained on the plan.
4. A community playground or play area is recommended.
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).

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

CC: Planning Board

# PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY – THE MEADOWS AT ACTON (MAY 8, 2012)

EVALUATION CRITERIA <sup>1</sup>	Small-Scale Project		Mixed-Use Project		Large-Scale Project	
	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
<b>I. DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES</b>						
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	X		X	
<i>Site is in another Preferred Location</i>	X	Y1	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		X		X	
<i>Height conforms to zoning</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<i>Development comprised of approximately 12 units or less</i>	X	N2	X			
Building & Landscape Design Considerations	X	Y3	X		X	
Buildings & Site						
<i>Building designs similar to highly-rated residences in VPS</i>	X	Y	X		X	

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Town of Acton Comprehensive Permit Policy

EVALUATION CRITERIA <sup>1</sup>	Small-Scale Project		Mixed-Use Project	Large-Scale Project
	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
<i>Buildings oriented to the street or around courtyard</i>	X	Y	X	X
<i>Side and/or rear parking</i>	X	Y 4		
<i>Walkability: sidewalks, internal pathways</i>	X	Y	X	X
<i>Connectivity: linked to surrounding neighborhoods or commercial areas</i>	X	N 5		
<i>No adverse impact on historic/architectural significance (may be N/A)</i>	X	Y 6		
<b>Open Space &amp; Natural Resources</b>				
<i>Open space at least 50% of site</i>		Y		
<i>Not more than 50% of open space is wetlands</i>	X	Y		
<i>Open space is directly accessible to residents of the development</i>	X	Y	X	X
<i>Landscaping emphasizes low-water-use plantings</i>	X	Y 7	X	X
<i>Outdoor irrigation system is designed to conserve water</i>		N/A 8	X	X
<b>Site Plan Standards</b>				
<i>Substantially conforms to ZBL Section 10.4, Site Plan Standards</i>	X	Y	X	X
<b>Public Benefits</b>				
<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	X
<i>Contribution to a local capital improvements project appropriate to the scale of proposed development</i>			X	X
<i>Contribution to Town's affordable housing fund</i>			X	X
<b>II. AFFORDABILITY PREFERENCES</b>				
<b>Percentage of Affordable Units</b>				
<i>Development provides more than 25% minimum affordable units</i>			X	X
<i>Additional affordable units are for LMI households</i>			X	X
<b>Income Targets</b>				

Town of Acton Comprehensive Permit Policy

EVALUATION CRITERIA <sup>1</sup>	Small-Scale Project		Mixed-Use Project		Large-Scale Project	
	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N	Standard Applies	Y/N
<i>One or more units priced for households at/below 80% 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				
<b>III. AFFIRMATIVE MARKETING &amp; LOCAL PREFERENCE</b>						
Local Preference Units						
<i>Offers 70% local preference units</i>	X	Y	X		X	
Affirmative Marketing Experience						
<i>Team includes person/organization with prior affordable housing lottery experience</i>	X	Y	X		X	
<b>IV. LARGE-SCALE PROJECT PUBLIC BENEFIT CRITERIA</b>						
Project provides any of the following benefits:						
<i>Transportation management</i>					X	
<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**

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.
2. The project consists of 26 units, it does not fit the criteria for a large-scale project, nor a small scale project.
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.
4. Parking is proposed inside of attached and detached residential garages. All garages are located to the side or rear of the main structure.
5. 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).
6. 265 Great Road is identified on the list of Culturally Significant Homes in Acton. The applicant proposes to renovate 265 Great Road.
7. A Landscaping sample plan for individual lots with low maintenance plants was not specified in the application, but should be included in landscaping plan.
8. An irrigation system was not show on the plan, if one is proposed it should be added to the plan.