

ACTON MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES DEPARTMENT

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner **Date:** 5/10/00
7/31/00
9/21/00

From: Dean A. Charter, Municipal Properties Director

Subject: Preliminary Landscape Review: Brookside Shops, 145 Great Road
Resubmitted 7/31/00, Site Plan Special Permit 07/26/00-372
Revised 9/21/00, after staff comment session with applicant

I have reviewed the plans submitted for the above noted site, reviewed the applicable Zoning Bylaw, and have visited the site. My comments are as follows:

1. Even the casual observer will note that several of the parking lot islands as designed are almost devoid of trees. This appears to be caused by the fact that the septic system is located under a portion of the parking area and under these islands. A similar situation exists behind the renovated Acton Memorial Library, where we had to opt for a daylily bed rather than woody vegetation that might cause the septic system to fail. That being said, I believe that there is room to put at least four trees in each of the two most westerly islands without impacting the septic system.
2. The applicant proposes the use of "Sunburst" Thornless Honeylocusts throughout the site. My experience has shown that Thornless Honey Locusts in general are very poorly adapted to this area, and that there are numerous insect and mite problems inherent with these trees. I strongly recommend that alternate species be chosen instead. A list of possible substitutes might include Red Oak, Pin Oak, London Plane, Zelkova, Seedless Green Ash, and Linden.
3. I note that the applicant has chosen to plant a fairly open row of deciduous trees to create the mandated buffer between the Business use and the Residential use at the north side of the property, and has chosen to plant a very thick evergreen hedge to separate this Business Use from the adjacent Business Use to the east side of the property. I suggest that it would be more in keeping with the spirit of the bylaw if these two landscape treatments were switched, so as to provide the maximum year round buffering for the residential neighbors on Esterbrook Road.
4. The shade trees along Great Road are shown as being planted at eighty-foot spacing. This is wholly inadequate, and trees should be added to provide for one tree every forty linear feet along Great Road.

NOTE 7/31/00: The applicant has chosen to submit the same landscape plan for the Special Permit filing as was submitted for the Preliminary Review. The issues I raised during Preliminary review have not been addressed, and I repeat them once again.

NOTE 9/21/00: Item # 1 has been addressed in the revised plans
Item # 2, regarding the suitability of Honey locust trees has been discussed with applicant, they feel that it is possible to keep these trees in proper health.
Item #3 has been addressed by the applicant; species of trees has been changed to Norway Spruce
Item #4 has been addressed by adding four trees

Cc.: Engineering