



DRB Memorandum

July 15, 2016
248 High Street (Proposed Adeline Way)

DRB reviewed the Comprehensive Permit Plan Set, dated June 2016 prepared by David E. Ross Associates.

Existing site is a 1.5 acre (65,201 SF) site that currently contains a 1920's "foursquare" house under the stewardship of the Acton Historical Commission with a gravel driveway, a partially collapsed barn at the far east corner of the site and a small shed in the far north corner. This parcel is in the R4 zone (Min. 40,000 SF lots). In accordance with current zoning, the lot is appropriately sized for one single family home.

It is proposed to construct a 240' long street with 8 single family homes on lots ranging from 6,546 sf (0.15 Ac) to 8,284 sf (0.19 Ac). Two of the proposed lots are "hammerhead" lots, which allow the building of homes in the visual backyard space of adjacent homes. Two of the homes are proposed to be Affordable Housing Units - those two units are located on the two smallest lots with High Street approximately 20' off the rear of the house. All of the proposed lots are substantially less than 1/4 acre.

There are no sizes or architectural details provided for the proposed homes but they appear to each be at least twice the size of the existing house.

This proposed development is in no way compatible with any existing dwellings located along High Street. It is grossly overdeveloped with a Dwelling Unit Density of 5.33 units per acre as opposed to the existing Dwelling Unit Density of <1 unit per acre under current zoning.

In order to maintain the integrity of Acton, the existing High Street neighborhood, and not set a precedent for other wooded lots and open land in residential neighborhoods such as this, the DRB recommends the following:

- The project be reduced from 8 units (2 affordable units) to a total of 4 units (1 Affordable unit).
- The DRB was apprised that 8 units were necessary for the project to be economically feasible. The DRB questions this analysis. (A previous developer who appeared before the HC proposed to purchase and demolish the existing house and build a single new house).
- Any units fronting on High Street should be sited to face High Street to maintain the street-scape.
- The location of the affordable should be changed to be equitable with the market rate units.

The project represents the antithesis of one of the primary tenants of the Acton 2020 Master Plan-the retention of Acton's physical character. Basically, this site should not be sacrificed with gross over-development in order to gain an additional affordable unit for the Town. It is irresponsible and ruinous.

We look forward to meeting with the proponents again once the architectural plans are more developed, building materials are selected, and a landscape plan is developed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Design Review Board