



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2019

7:30

Room 126, Town Hall
472 Main St, Acton, MA

Present: Holly Ben Joseph, (Chair), Peter Darlow, (Vice Chair), David Honn, Kim Montella.

Absent: BoS and Planning Board Representatives

1. Opening

Chair, Holly Ben-Joseph, opened the meeting at 7:35pm.

2. Regular Business

A. Citizens' concerns – none

B. Meeting Minutes – The June 5, 2019 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Special Business

A. Review of 361-363 Great Road LIP 40B Project

Present: Mark O'Hagan of MCO Housing Services

Summary: The project is a proposed 32 units, 4 story condominium project on a steeply-sloped site. See the Design Review Board Memorandum dated July 24, 2019 (attached) for comments.

B. Review of 66 Harris Street Fire Station Schematic Design

Present: Todd Costa and Jackie Rudd Architects for Kaestle-Boos Associates; mark Hald, Assistant Town Manager; Bob Vanderhoof, Dept Chief, Acton Fire Department; Brian DeFilipps, PMA Consultants, Owner Representative.

Summary: The project is a proposed new fire Station for North Acton. See the Design Review Board Memorandum dated July 24, 2019 (attached) for comments.

4. Adjournment

At 9:16 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.
The motion was approved unanimously.



Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- DRB Agenda dated July 24, 2019
- 361-363 Great Road LIP 40B Project dated 7.24.19 including: Summary sheet of project statistics; Overview Map Existing; Overview Map Proposed; Site Plan; Typical Floor Plan; Renderings (2)
- 66 Harris Street Fire Station Schematic Drawings dated 7.24.19 including: Title Sheet; Site Plan; Floor Plan; Option F Elevation; Option F-3 Renderings

Attachments

- DRB Memorandum for 361-363 Great Road 40B Condominium Project dated July 24, 2019
- DRB Memorandum for 66 Harris Street Fire Station dated July 24, 2019

Submitted by: David Honn, DRB Member



DRB Memorandum
Draft
Grandview Condos
361 – 363 Great Road

July 24, 2019

This is the first review of the proposed Grandview Condominiums Project, Local Initiative Project (LIP), “Friendly” 40B.

DRB members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), Kim Montella and David Honn.

The project’s proponent in attendance: Mark O’Hagan of MCO Housing Services.

Documents Reviewed:

- Bullet Item Summary (1 page) prepared by MCO Housing Services
- 6 Page Untitled Plan Set (Dated July 18, 2019 by Stamsky & McNary) comprised of Architectural Rendering of Building from Proposed Parking Lot, Floor Plan showing 8 Condo Units per floor, Architectural Rendering of Building from Proposed Front Yard, Simple Site Layout Plan showing preliminary locations of building, driveway, parking area, and proposed drainage basin & septic areas, Overview Map of area with proposed preliminary site improvements superimposed on it, and same Overview Map with pictures of surrounding existing property improvements referenced thereon.

The existing site is currently comprised of approximately four acres on two lots with a small bungalow and semi-circular driveway on it. The topography generally slopes up towards the back of the site from Great Road (towards the North) and there is a slight plateau on the site where the proposed building is currently sited. The remainder of the site is wooded. The site is surrounded by several condominium complexes (Wampus Avenue, Meyer Hill and Brook Run) as well as a couple of single-family homes and a small professional building across Great Road.

It is proposed to demolish the existing bungalow and erect a five (5) story building that will consist of 32 condo units (2 bed, 2 bath, 1600 – 1700 SF, garden-style units w/ balcony or patio, all handicap accessible, with covered parking on the first floor & elevator). 8 of the units are proposed to be affordable units (\$200K price point) while the remainder will be market rate (\$460K +/-, pricing according to the proponent). All units will be age restricted, meaning at least one of the Owners has to be 55 years old or older. The underground parking area will provide approximately 36 parking spaces and the exterior surface lot behind the building has approximately 40 additional spaces. There will be 4 stories of condos with 8 units on each floor.

The site is near some Town amenities such as shopping, playing fields, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and access to Rtes 2 & 495.

The following are the DRBs comments on the development as presented:

1. The orientation and height of the building are concerning. The DRB proposes that the proponent orient the front of the building as parallel with Great Road as possible and push the building back from Great Road. In doing this, the approach to the building will be more pleasing to future residents as they will not be seeing the garage entry as they approach the building and the view of the mass of the building will be somewhat minimized. Also, by moving the building back as far as possible from Great Road, more existing mature trees and landscaping can be maintained which will also help minimize the building mass. The DRB does understand that the topography may inhibit these requests.
2. The height of the building is also of concern...as per the proponent, the height exceeds 40'. The DRB requests a scaled drawing of the façade of the building in relation to Great Road (both directions) and the immediately surrounding buildings to ensure that the mass of the structure complements the area.
3. The DRB suggested reducing the number of surface parking spaces (currently well in excess of two spaces per unit) and reworking an entrance drop-off area that would accommodate shuttle vehicles. Further, pushing any surface parking to the back of the site will help to alleviate any steeper driveway slopes.
4. The DRB would like the existing mature trees/shrubs along Great Road to be maintained – the proponent agreed.
5. Since the location is close to existing shopping, playing fields and the rail trail, it would be nice to provide a way for the future residents to access these neighborhood features without having to walk along Great Road. The proponent did briefly discuss a potential walking path that could connect to the adjacent Wampus Ave. Complex to the northeast of the site. We encourage him to continue investigating this option.
6. Regarding the architecture, it is proposed to give the entrances a bit more importance – they seem to be a bit lost.
7. On the building interior, it was suggested to look into way of getting natural light and window views into the corridors and/or vestibules.

The DRB will have more comments on the architectural drawings, grading, site layout, and landscaping/lighting once the project becomes more developed.

The DRB appreciates the proponent coming to the Board at this early stage and looks forward to working with him as the project progresses.

Respectfully Submitted
Design Review Board



**DRB Memorandum
North Acton Fire Station
78 Harris Street, Acton
07-24-19**

DRB members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), David Honn, Kim Montella

Project Team in attendance: Todd Costa and Jackie Rudd Architects from Kaestle-Boos Assoc. Inc.; Mark Hald Assis. Town Manager, Bob Vanderhoof, Dept. Chief, Acton Fire Department; Brian DeFilippis, PMA Consultants, Owner's representative.

Neighbors: Palma Cicchetti lives on Harris Street

Documents Reviewed:

Powerpoint Presentation Set, dated July 24, 2019, consisting of:

- Cover sheet with date
- Site Plan
- Proposed floor plan
- Elevation of preferred option F
- Two sheets of 3-D renderings of preferred option F

The architects also showed previous architectural designs and they referred to a grading plan.

The existing site has three buildings, one residential or office structure and two garages that are all located on the south side of the site. The site has a total square footage of 1.9 acres. Previous use of the building has been municipal. The adjacent neighbors of the site are a single family residential to the west, a high-density housing development to the east. The north-east quadrant is undevelopable because of wetland setbacks and will be preserved as is.

Harris Street consists of a mix of single-family residential and apartment buildings. The street serves as a connector/cut-through between routes 2A and 27 and is also the outlet for several housing developments. The proposed fire station is located on the eastern end of Harris Street.

The proposed fire station is located at the front of the site, just at the setback line. It has a 45' concrete apron in front of the garages. This station does not expect to have visitors, but there are 3 parking spaces located in the front. The existing garage is located behind the building, and has been incorporated into the new plans so that previous, less-restrictive, wetland setbacks are grandfathered in for this new site plan. The garage will be used for storage, but the actual use has not been determined yet. There is a parking lot with 18 spaces in the back-northwest side of the property for staff. Other site features are an antenna mono-pole, a patio and a gabion wall. In addition, there is a generator on site that will be with-in a sound-enclosure structure.

The building has two colors of brick and a cast stone base. It has a two major masses – the garage and the administration building that are finished with red brick and two wings that are finished with brown brick. The roof is sloped toward the back of the building and will be dark brown PVC. There is a clearstory above the garage doors. The garage doors will be brown and red below with windows above. The architectural style is municipal modern.

The DRB provides following are comments on the development as presented:

1. The DRB approves of this design and feels it good blend of finishes and massing to fit within the neighborhood and yet still read as a municipal building. We have a few comments for improvement as follows.
2. The DRB suggests that the two major roof pieces have the same angle.
3. The DRB suggests that the garage doors be all glass, allowing for residents to see the equipment. The fire department does not want this because they have found that sunlight harms the equipment.
4. The DRB recommends that end ‘wings’ be surfaced in metal panels that look like wood rather than the brown brick, this will soften the building and help it to blend in with the neighborhood. Also we recommend using the stone base for the two major portions of the building only, this will help to accent the importance of this part of the building, and will reduce the visual scale of the overall frontage.
5. The DRB recommends beefing up the metal bars that hold up the roof and to make a special detail where they attach to the brick columns. In their current size they look a bit spindly.
6. The only landscaping comment is to avoid putting major sized shade trees next to the building.
7. There is a possible plan to add a solar array to the roof of the building.
8. A neighbor is concerned about the noises that will be generated on site – the backup warning beeping, and the sound of the generator. In addition, she has concerns over how a fire truck will be able to pass through if there are two cars pulled at the same spot going different directions. The architects stated that there will be a traffic study to determine any possible problems and that only the ladder truck absolutely has to back up to park. The rest of the vehicles can drive through the garage (it has doors at both ends), if there are no other vehicles blocking the way.

Respectfully Submitted
Design Review Board

From: John Mangiaratti <jmangiaratti@acton-ma.gov>
To: Holly Ben-Joseph <hollydbj@gmail.com>; Design Review Board <DRB@acton-ma.gov>
Subject: RE: DRB - Meeting minutes and OML question
Date: Mon, Sep 9, 2019 9:56 am

Holly

It is ok to reference the memo in the minutes and then include it as an attachment with the minutes. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Thanks

John

John S. Mangiaratti

Town Manager

Town of Acton, MA

(978)-929-6611

jmangiaratti@actonma.gov



From: Holly Ben-Joseph [mailto:hollydbj@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2019 10:40 AM
To: John Mangiaratti; Design Review Board
Subject: DRB - Meeting minutes and OML question

EXTERNAL EMAIL * Caution is Advised *

Hello John,

We have a question/request about OML and our meeting notes. Many times the DRB writes a design review memo for a new project that is being proposed in town. The memos are complete and include a description of the proposed project, the DRB comments, guest list who attended for that project, and all documents that we reviewed.

We would like to know if instead of repeating this same information (in an abbreviated form) in the meeting minutes that instead we would write that we reviewed so and so project in the minutes and then refer to the design memo that would be attached to the end of the minutes. This would save us time in having to type up repetitive information (and avoid having possible conflicts in info).

We'd appreciate clarification within a week or so since our previous two meeting minutes have this condition and we are waiting for a response to this question before we write the minutes.

Thank you,

Holly DRB Chair

--
Holly D. Ben-Joseph
Landscape Architect
Tel: (508) 451-3388