



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 DeFilipps, 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