



TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Review Memorandum: 307 Central Street
Virtual Meeting
May 04, 2021

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow (Chair), David Honn, Richard Keleher, Tom Doolittle; Jon Cappetta (Planning Board Liaison); Matt Murphy (Planning Department)

Proponents in attendance: Ann Agnatovech, Bill Agnatovich

Documents Reviewed:

Shane Structures architectural drawing sheets for The Borelli Duplex dated Feb 2021

- Elevations
- First Floor Plan
- Second Floor Plan
- Basement Plan
- Foundation Plan
- Roof Plan
- Section

Dillis and Roy civil drawing sheets dated 3/15/2021

- Sewer Disposal System Design
- Proposed Plot Plan

The proposed project site is located near West Acton Village on a 16,116SF plot of land that was recently established by the proponents purchase and reconfiguration of parcels at 307 and 309 Central Street. The site, a variation on the “hammerhead” is currently accessed by an existing paved drive on the east side of Central Street and abuts the MBTA railroad track. Much of the plot is tucked in behind the existing homes located at 305 and 309 Central Street.

The intent is to develop a duplex residential building that will offer two side by side units of 2300GSF plus an unfinished basement level that could be finished to result in a total of approximate 3000GSF per unit. The project is within the village district and is allowed per the zoning code if granted a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The 33.5 foot high duplex residence, as proposed, will be two stories above grade with an unfinished full basement and an unfinished attic space. Though being a duplex will set the scale of the building apart as compared with the immediate neighboring single family residences, the scale of the building is consistent to a recent precedent constructed nearby at 296/298 Central Street. For developing thoughtfully designed side by side duplex buildings, the style of the design. The building style chosen is New England classic residential which is contextual to the neighborhood. The building exterior is proposed to be finished with low maintenance materials such as vinyl clapboards, pvc corner boards and trim, and vinyl finished double hung windows. The 8 over 12 gable roof will be finished with fiberglass asphalt shingles and decorative dormers are proposed on the street facing side of the roof.

It is proposed to reuse much of the existing paved drive access in from Central Street. The proponents hope to maintain as many of the mature trees on the site, especially those adjacent to the MBTA right of way, as is practical. Location of the septic system in the southeast portion of the plot close to the MBTA right of way establishes the placement of the duplex building closer to the property at 305 Central. Each residence will be provided a one car garage and space along the drive for parking a second car.

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

1. The DRB is pleased to have an opportunity to provide input while the development of the design is not fixed.
2. In general, DRB members are comfortable with the proposed informal placement of the duplex building understanding that the septic layout location as proposed, is impacting the placement. The building, tucked behind the home at 305 Central and not set parallel to Central feels organically fit to this location.
3. The proposed driveway layout for parking the second car for each residence while also providing a reasonable turn around space for each residence appears to not work well. DRB members suggested taking a look at shifting the parking for both residences into a pull off on the north side of the driveway tucked near the property at 309 Central. This should then offer a space for a turn around on the south side of the drive behind 305 Central. DRB members do not want to see the proponent widen the driveway coming in from Central to allow for parallel parking. Members prefer the narrow residential feel of the current proposed drive.
4. DRB members recommend the pedestrian walkway to the front entrance of each duplex be finished in a paving material that separates and distinguished the front entrance from the paved driveway.
5. DRB members are generally supportive of the proposed design of the duplex building exterior. The members would much prefer to see the proponents utilize real wood materials to support the intent as presented in the building elevation as rendered.
6. Members recommended taking a fresh look at the dormers on the gable roof. Given the dormers are decorative and not tied to the interior, it was suggested the dormers should be reduced in scale so as to proportionally sit comfortably on the roof. Potentially four smaller dormers can be constructed in lieu of the two oversized dormers as proposed.
7. Members also suggested it might actually improve the design and make it a bit more of a background building to remove the dormers completely, there is plenty of other detail proposed for the building.
8. DRB members pointed out that should the basement level be developed, the proponents should be careful to plan for the potential use of the proposed office space as a bedroom, (presuming the septic system is large enough to support a 4th bedroom per residence), and consider how an escape window can be integrated into the design for each basement.
9. With respect to the building envelope vinyl trim boards, it is recommended the proponents use 5/4” thick corner board, rake boards, and window casement boards. The corner boards should take a cue from the elevation rendering and be provided in a variety of scales depending upon the location

used. They should be 8” at least at the primary building corners, 6” at the dormers and at the garage bay, and can narrow at the window casings.

The DRB thanked the proponents for the opportunity to review the plans. The proponents thanked the DRB for the comments and will consider them as they move forward into the next phases of the project once past the ZBA hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

The DRB