



## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB)

### Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2021, REVISED December 10, 2021

7:00 PM

IN-PERSON MEETING

**Present:** Peter Darlow, (Chair), David Honn, Richard Keleher, Dean Charter (SB Liaison)

### 1. Opening

Chair, Peter Darlow, opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

### 2. Regular Business

- A. Citizens' concerns –There were no citizens other than the proponents present.
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the July 29, 2021 minutes as amended. The minutes, as amended, were approved unanimously. David Honn to submit the July 29 minutes for posting. The minutes for the June 23, 2021 meeting were not available.

### 3. Special Business

#### A. Review 9 School Street Housing Project

9 School Street Development Team Attending: John Perkins - Developer, Nathaniel Cataldo – Stamski and McNary, who presented the drawings for the project.

A design for a six-unit residential building was presented to the Board. The building has a lower level for parking and mechanical, two floors of living space, and an attic. The architectural design of the building was reviewed extensively by the Historic District Commission, so this review was primarily of the landscaping and site development.

Refer to attached separate memo dated September 7, 2021 discussing the DRB review.

#### B. Review of PCRC and Lot Width and Area Memoranda

Dean Charter said that these proposals did not make the cut for Select Board (SB) action in their priority list for the upcoming year. They might make a 5-year priority. The SB's primary goals are sustainability and equity. If we present these with these goals in mind, we might have some success. Jim Snyder-Grant will be presenting these initiatives to the Planning Board to see if they will be on board with pushing for changes on each and would work with us. Dean Charter will then talk to Jim and let us know the outcome.



#### 4. Trees

Dean Charter reported that Concord and Wellesley have similar tree ordinances that might be useful as a basis for what we might suggest. We need to articulate our objectives, which are:

1. Front Yards: Town character and streetscape.
2. Side and Back Yards: Property owners have to protect their own view with trees, etc.

After that, we might consider a land-clearing bylaw.

Whether these requirements apply to single-family lots will be a big question. Traditionally, such restrictions have not been applied to single-family lots. Dean Charter noted that the Concord and Wellesley bylaws apply to any new structure.

Street Trees to be Shown on Plans: Requirement that proponents show the location of all street trees when they first submit their plans is supposed to be added to the application form. Dean Charter said that he would check with the Town Engineer.

#### 5. Adjournment

At 8:30 pm, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

A set of drawings prepared by Stamski and McNarry titled: Site Plan for 9 School Street in Acton MA  
Dated July 20, 2021.

#### Page titles:

- Sheet 1 Cover Sheet
- Sheet 2 Existing Conditions Plan
- Sheet 3 Grading and Drainage Plan
- Sheet 4 Layout and Utility Plan
- Sheet 5 Construction Details
- Sheet 6 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan
- Sheet 7 Landscape Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Keleher



**TOWN OF ACTON  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**  
Review Memorandum: 9 School Street  
Site and Landscape Plans  
September 07, 2021

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow (Chair), David Honn, Richard Keleher, and Dean Charter, (BOS Liason)

Proponents in attendance: John Perkins - Developer, Nathaniel Cataldo – Stamski and McNary

Documents Reviewed: A set drawings prepared by Stamski and McNarry titled: Site Plan for 9 School Street in Acton MA Dated July 20, 2021.

Page titles:

- Sheet 1 Cover Sheet
- Sheet 2 Existing Conditions Plan
- Sheet 3 Grading and Drainage Plan
- Sheet 4 Layout and Utility Plan
- Sheet 5 Construction Details
- Sheet 6 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan
- Sheet 7 Landscape Plan

It is proposed by the proponent to construct a multi-unit residential building, consisting of 6 individual two bedroom three level townhomes combined as a single building at 9 School Street across from Exchange Hall. Given the location of the property within the South Acton Historic District the proponent has met with and satisfied the HDC with respect to the encouraged “volumetrically appropriate” building design as well as the style and detailing of the building exterior. Given the building design is essentially settled due to the proponent working closely with the HDC, this review generally focuses on the site development proposed as well as the suggested landscape design.

The proposed building site is snug to and generally parallel with School Street on the north property line. The land slopes from School Street down to the adjacent railroad tracks which parallel the south side of the property. The residential building has been designed to sit relatively close to School Street, consistent with other existing properties within the core of the historic district. Owing to the sloping site, the townhomes are designed to read as 2 stories high as seen from School Street as well as Main Street yet have a third level that serves as the parking and utility level which is generally only visible from the railroad right of way. Each town home has a separate landscaped walk from School Street direct to the front door. Each residence can park two cars within an open air carport at the lower level of the site beneath that townhome’s

private deck and a portion of the residence above. Each town home will manage its own trash and recycling within the lower level carport. Gas and electric services serving each residence, as well as condensing units for the individual unit hvac systems, are proposed to be hidden or screened from the public street views.

The balance of the site consists of the drive to service the 12 car port spaces, on site drainage control, and some very modest front and side yards.

Following are comments and recommendations made by the DRB:

- The DRB is pleased with the single building townhome approach to fitting the 6 residential units onto the relatively small site and concur that given the location within the heart of the South Acton village commercial district, the approach of maximizing the building massing tight to School Street is consistent with the traditional development pattern of the historic district.
- The DRB is also very pleased with the attention to the smaller details proposed such as the screening of utilities and the intentional placement of most utilitarian elements out of the public's site.
- The DRB recommends that the proposed curbing and landscape islands intended to separate the 12 parking spaces into 6 individual pairs within the carport be adjusted to be built flush and utilize a hardscape material such as a cast brick or cast stone. It is unlikely plant materials will hold up well and given the tightness of the parking the complete surface area flush will be better for maintenance.
- DRB members were comfortable with the balance of the proposed landscaping materials and their placement.
- The DRB recommends that the posts supporting the private decks overhead of the carports be protected with a 30" high cast concrete sonotube base.
- DRB members agree with the proponent's intention to place the HVAC condenser units on the exterior of the building tucked within the individual unit carports.
- DRB members are pleased that the gas meters, proposed for the west side of the building are intended to be screened from view with a trellis system.
- The DRB respectfully requests that the proponent work with Land Use staff to update the architectural drawings presented on Docushare given the HDC approved design for the building is not presently made available.

The DRB is otherwise comfortable with the project proposal for 9 School Street.

Respectfully submitted,

The DRB