



TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Review Memorandum: 40 High Street
Nash Place, Town GIS Map H3-B-10

December 14, 2023 Meeting at the Town Hall, Room 9

Design Review Board (DRB) Members in attendance: Peter Darlow (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, David Honn, and Richard Keleher

Absent DRB Members: Thomas Doolittle

Proponents in attendance: Overlook Design Build (Nash Quadir <nash.odb2020@gmail.com>), Stamski & McNary (Presentation by Paul Kirchner, Robert Melvin <rjm@stamskiandmcnary.com> is the Project Manager)

The following documents were reviewed:

Definitive Subdivision Plan for Nash Place dated November 6, 2023, consisting of the following drawings:

- Record Plan
- Existing Conditions
- Site Development Plan

It is proposed by the project proponents to develop a residential compound as a subdivision with three single family dwellings on a 2.5-acre site. An existing 4-unit apartment building will remain. The site is primarily forested with open space around the existing dwelling. There are several very large unique trees on the front and middle portions of the site. The four residences are proposed to be accessed via a common driveway.

Town water will be provided off of High Street. There will be a stormwater management system. The frontmost house will not block the view of the existing large apartment house and is set back a similar amount as the adjacent house at 30 High Street. Each house will have its own septic system and the existing apartment building will have a new septic system. The existing garage will be removed and be replaced by a parking lot with seven spaces.

DRB comments:

1. It was noted that there has been erosion and sedimentation overflows onto High Street and onto the adjacent Audubon Hill Condominium property from the adjacent development at 46 High Street, which has a similar site layout plan. The proponent said that an erosion and sedimentation control plan will be submitted, so that the Town can oversee drainage controls. Drainage

structures will be maintained by the homeowner's association that will be established. The DRB recommends that a construction bond be required by the Town.

In addition to the erosion and sedimentation plan that will have measures to control erosion during construction, the DRB recommends that the sloped banks at the front of the property be planted with groundcovers or grasses that will form a dense mat and that erosion control mesh be placed on the slopes.

2. It was noted that there are several mature or specimen trees at the front and middle of the lot that ideally will be preserved. This may call for minor relocation of some elements as shown on the Site Layout Plan. The trees the DRB suggests the site proponent make an effort to save: 24" oak at the proposed lot 2 dry well; 12" chestnut; 42" maple; 14" hickory; 50" beech; 14" elm; and two 16" maples at the proposed parking lot. The plan should show all trees over 12" diameter that are being preserved and which ones are being removed. Trees in the eastern end of the site should be shown. None are shown on the plan. Snow fences should be used to keep construction equipment out the root zones of all trees to remain, which is approximately the extent of their tree canopy (the drip line).
3. It was noted that beech trees have very shallow roots; the DRB highly recommends that construction equipment absolutely be kept off of the ground within the root zone.
4. The DRB recommends that the minimum number of trees be removed; only as necessary to do the work.
5. It was suggested that a planting plan be provided for review by the DRB.
6. The proponent was requested to add a wave/curve to the road to break up the long straight stretch and give the road a more rural feel.
7. It was suggested that the garage of the first house be entered from the back, instead on the right side, to conceal it from the street.
8. It was suggested that the garage for the house behind the existing house be entered from the north of the house, instead of the west, to avoid the two paved areas being so close together.
9. It was suggested that the garage for the last house be entered from the south rather than the west, to make it less visible from the street and to make a "greener" first entry view.
10. It was noted that the opening in the stone wall will have to be enlarged to accommodate the new fire truck compliant radius of the pavement at the street. The DRB suggested the stones that are removed from the wall could be used to follow the initial radius of the entrance drive on each side in lieu of building it square to the opening, which will help to retain the higher grade behind the wall and also provide a rural looking driveway.
11. It was suggested that the proponent avoid the installation of any new fossil-fuel infrastructure, in accordance with the new Opt-in code adopted by the Town (which will not officially take effect until at least March 2024).

12. The DRB noted that the proposed parking for the apartment units has the look of a commercial building lot, and that the parking either be reduced or that tree islands be added. The DRB suggests that the least number of parking spaces required by regulation should be provided.

Public comments:

1. It was noted that at least 7 parking spaces should be provided for the tenants of the apartment building. The proponent said that 8 spaces are being provided. However, it was also noted that the current Zoning Bylaw requires two spaces per dwelling unit, but that the proposed South Acton zoning only requires 1-1/2 spaces per unit.
2. It was suggested that the trees be marked and protected.
3. It was asked if anything will be changed about the existing house. The proponent said that the intent is to preserve it. It will remain as four units. The proponent was urged to be careful in any work done on the existing house.
4. It was noted that house designs and planting designs can be asked for and that there is precedent for doing so. Also, stone wall details. And that the Planning Board should see those designs.
5. It was noted that the requested waivers should be discussed in depth by the Planning Board.

Respectfully submitted,

The DRB