



**TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Review Memorandum: 358 Great Road
August 15, 2024

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, and David Honn

Proponent representative in attendance:

Paul Kirchner, Stamski & McNary Inc.

Cynthia First and Mehdi Khaldi, AHC LLC, owners of 358B Great Road Building

Morris Schopf, SDA, architect for 358 Great Road Proposed Mixed Use Building

John Barbadoro, GC for 358 Great Road Proposed Mixed Use Building

Thomas Buckborough, owner and architect/builder of existing 358A single family home

Documents reviewed:

Special Permit Plan Set:

May 16, 24 Drawing Set Issue

Existing Conditions Plan, 358 Great Road Condominium – Stamski & McNary

Site Development Plan, 358 Great Road Condominium - Stamski & McNary

Layout Plan, 358 Great Road Condominium - Stamski & McNary

Mixed Use New Construction

3 Dwellings and 1 Commercial Space 358 Great Road Condominium:

4/24/24 Drawing Set Issue

Cover Sheet – SDA

A201 Partition Plan Floor 1 – SDA (Schopf Design Associates)

A202 Partition Plan Floor 2 - SDA

A203 Partition Plan Roof (no attic) – SDA

A300 Elevations – SDA

A301 Elevations – SDA

A350 Building Sections – SDA

358 Great Road:

8/2/2024 Drawing Set Issue

Sheet 3 Proposed Floor Plans – Thomas Buckborough & Associates

Sheet 4 Proposed Elevations 1 - Thomas Buckborough & Associates

Sheet 5 Proposed Elevations 2 - Thomas Buckborough & Associates

Sheet 6 Proposed Renderings 1 – Thomas Buckborough & Associates

Sheet 7 Proposed Renderings 2 – Thomas Buckborough & Associates

Sheet 8 Proposed Renderings 3 – Thomas Buckborough & Associates

358 Great Road is a 135,230Sf parcel of land that has been set up as a Condominium consisting of two exclusive use land portions, 358B and 358A, with more than 50 % of the site set aside as a wooded wetland common area. Exclusive use area 358B, a 37,273SF land area adjacent to Great Road, currently has a little used existing commercial building with associated parking, that is presently unoccupied. Exclusive use area 358A, a 25,364SF land area adjacent to Great Road and north of exclusive use area 358B, currently has an existing occupied single-family residence. The two buildings share one septic system. The commercial building on 358B originally was the barn associated with the single-family residence. Both existing buildings are understood to be listed on the Historical Commission CRL and are listed on the MACRIS inventory. There are two separate proponents on this application.

The project intent is to replace the existing commercial building at 358B with a larger mixed-use building that consists of one retail space and three residential units, and to enlarge the residence at 358A with two additions. The proposed buildings will be compliant with setbacks and the total area of the new buildings combined will not exceed the total allowable FAR available. Both existing building renovations will maintain their Great Road frontage which has a smaller setback than allowable but has been grandfathered in. The proposed expansion of the building footprints will be balanced by removal of impervious pavement (several new planting beds in the parking areas located between the units and along Great Road) to maintain the existing ratio of pervious to impervious surfaces.

358B

The proponents for 358B propose to remove the existing building complete, rebuild upon the existing foundation limits, and to expand the footprint of the new building north. The proposed new two-story wood frame building will consist of one retail space and one three-bedroom unit on the first floor and 2 two-bedroom units on the second floor. The exterior of the new building has been intentionally designed utilizing contextual New England vernacular detailing to provide unique fenestration for each of the residences and to clearly differentiate the retail space from the three residential units. The primary entrance for the three residential units is a shared common entrance facing Great Road. Each unit has a unique second entrance/exit on the west facing façade. The façade will be generally finished with Hardi Board clapboards and trim boards will be PVC.

The DRB offer the following observations concerning the proposal for 358B:

- In general, the building design utilizing the differing window and bay modulation treatments within the façade are successful at providing distinction between the units.
- It is recommended that the corner boards be at least 10” wide to provide an appropriate scale in harmony with the overall building scale.
- The exterior of the retail space is successfully delineated with the window type selection and the use of a covered entrance porch along the south face of the building.
- The south façade above the retail space and the north side of the building are too opaque with large areas of uninterrupted clapboard. Given the spaces behind these exterior walls are the living areas for the three residential units, the DRB highly recommends adding more windows to break up these facades and to offer light and natural ventilation opportunities for the unit occupants.

- The second-floor gable roof dormer details are too heavily trimmed. The DRB recommends a simplification of the amount of cornice detail.
- The roof above the residential front door entrance facing Great Road is proportionally positioned too high above the door and should be lowered a few feet.
- A landscape plan has not been prepared. It is highly recommended that a new planting plan be submitted as a condition of the special permit.
- The DRB recommends that some intentional outdoor common space be established at grade for the residential units. A suggestion is to develop a patio area at the base of the west façade exterior access stairways from the three residential units.

358A

The existing single-family house is the residence of the proponent. The proponent wishes to remain and is proposing two additions to expand the residence to better accommodate their ongoing use of the property. One addition proposed is a one-story living room added at the north corner of the west side of building. The second addition is a two-story wing added to the south edge of the west side of the building utilizing a one-story connecting porch to separate the mass of the new addition from the existing two-story building. The new two-story wing will consist of a two-bay garage at grade and a master bedroom suite above the garage. The detailing of the additions is contextually consistent with the traditional detailing of the existing residence.

The DRB offer the following observations concerning the proposal for 358A:

- DRB recommends that the living room addition be extended to the north, 5” approximately, without overstepping the setback limit, to break the plane between the existing one-story porch on the north side of the building and the added taller living room mass.
- At the garage doors, it is suggested an “eyebrow” roof be placed over the doors to break the plane and to add some weather protection for the doors that face due south.
- At the garage side door, it is suggested that a small “eyebrow” roof be placed over the door. Given the windows flanking the door are taller, insertion of a roof detail here will help balance the façade that can be seen from Great Road and will help break up what is otherwise a large exterior wall lacking in fenestration.
- A second-floor exterior porch, accessed from the master bedroom, is proposed for the west façade of the two-story addition. The scale of the porch with its overhead roof and two story outside corner support posts is visually of sync with the balance of the design. The DRB suggests the details for how the porch is supported with corner posts be revisited. Perhaps the posts should not be trimmed to be as wide and/or the corner posts should be set back from the edges of the deck and roof to break down the length of the posts.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Darlow for the DRB