



TOWN OF ACTON  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
Review Memorandum: Avalon Acton Phase II  
Room 126, Town Hall  
November 7, 2018

DRB Members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), Kim Montella, David Honn, and Janet Adachi (Board of Selectmen Liaison), and Emilie Ying, Planning Board Liaison.

Edward Bradford, AIA, The Architectural Team, Inc., and Scott Dale, SVP, Development and Michela Desantis, Development Manager, both of Avalon Bay Communities (ABC) in attendance to present the Phase II proposal.

This is the first review meeting of the proposed project for Phase II for Avalon Bay. The meeting was a general overview of the existing conditions on-site and the Phase II of the project.

Mr. Dale gave an overview of the history of the company and the existing project: Phase I was constructed in 2005-2006 and is comprised of 380 Apartments (84 in Westford and the remainder in Acton). The existing development is comprised of 4 story buildings and “stacked flats”. There is an outdoor pool and common areas. The entire site is approximately 66 Acres and has Conservation and National Heritage Restrictions. The development has its own sewage treatment plant and other infrastructure that is sized to also handle Phase II. 95% of the units have been occupied since the completion of Phase I of the project.

Originally, Phase II was permitted to be Town Houses for Sale. But, ABC used demographic information to determine that the rental units in Phase II should be targeted towards the over-55 set and they confirmed that the highest and best use continues to be rental units. Their current demographics are 26% Millennials and 12% over-55ers... when the market studies showed that the demand from over-55ers is 35%, so that group is under-represented. In their other Avalon developments in Sudbury, Marlboro and Cohasset, the occupancy of over-55ers is 40%, 40%, & 50%, respectfully. Based on this info, they are proposing town house and direct entry models, some with one-car garages.

Phase II will consist of 86 Units, which will be 100% rental units. There will be 1 bedroom (33%), 2 bedroom (57%), and 3bedroom (10%) Units in 13 Buildings with 2 parking spaces/unit plus 30 additional parking spaces. There will be four (4) town house (TH) style buildings with single garage entry at the rear of the buildings, 4 additional TH style buildings and 5 direct entry buildings. Some of the units is the direct entry units will have front-entry, 1-car garages. There are 74 1-car garages proposed in total.

Regarding amenities, ABC proposes the following: Open Space Area for passive recreation with a covered outdoor veranda with Exterior TV, firepit, and BBQ area. There are other activity areas scattered around for other recreational activities (cornhole, etc.). There will not be another pool constructed in Phase II.

Paved, lighted, and landscaped sidewalks and interior walkway are proposed through the site to connect the recreation areas with the dwelling units...the buildings are clustered so the open recreation space is as large as possible and ABC are trying for a neighborhood feel. Bollard lighting will be used through-out for a more intimate feel...no the tall, standard "Acorn"-type fixtures.

As far as the massing of the buildings, the end units of the buildings are generally 2 stories high and then go up to a maximum of 3 stories. Every unit has some sort of outdoor space: 6' wide balcony, 4.5' wide porch, or 18' x 8' deck.

The Building exterior will be similar to the Phase I finishes, but the colors are planned to be a bit random where Phase I is notably beige and clay colored with white trim. The materials will be a combination of vinyl siding and Hardie Plank clapboards and shingles with composite trim, painted aluminum entry doors, and architectural roofing shingles.

There will be raised curbing around the driveways and grass/planting beds at driveways.

DRB members are very pleased by the proposal and commend the applicant for the proposed thoughtful design of the site. We offer the following recommendations:

1. Make the pedestrian the focus and consider a walking path around the perimeter of the site.
2. Add Bike storage...Perhaps near the mail kiosks?
3. Meander any pathways through and around the buildings and add benches.
4. Consider using one tree species along the center pathway for visual impact.
5. Propose other flowering trees and shrubs in the remainder of the site.
6. Replace horizontal windows at the top of the gable ends with additional vertical muntins. Remove horizontal window muntins for a cleaner look. Use decorative bracket/bracing at garage roof overhangs. Use substantial trim/corner boards (suggest 5/4).
7. Consider a community garden somewhere on-site.
8. Make the porches deeper than the proposed 4.5' wide...anything less than 6' is not desirable/useful.
9. Consider landscaping for privacy at ground floor porches.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Montella  
DRB Member