



TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Review Memorandum: 50 Nagog Hill
Site redevelopment plans
June 05, 2020 Virtual Meeting

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, David Honn, and Dean Charter, (BOS Liaison), Robert Hammel Planning Department

Proponents in attendance: None.

Documents Reviewed:

Page titles Architecture dated April 14, 2020:

A2.0 Schematic Elevation
A2.1 Schematic Elevation
A2.2 Schematic Rendering

Page titles Site Plans dated May 15, 2020:

C.0 Title Page
EX 1 Existing Conditions Plan
EX 2 Existing Conditions Plan
N-1 General Notes
C-1 Demolition and Erosion Control Plan
C-2 Grading and Drainage Plan
C-3 Utility Plan
L1 Planting and Lighting Plan
L2 Planting and Lighting Plan
L3 Planting and Lighting Plan
L4 Planting and Lighting Plan

The proponents are proposing to demolish an existing office building and surrounding parking lots (434 spaces) and to build in its place a completely new multi-tenant one-story storage facility and offices with a total square footage of 119,000 SF. The site will include 86 parking spaces, loading docks and a trailer storage area. Impervious area created by the new site plan is 4.8 acres. There is a net reduction of impervious surfaces. The site is toward the end of Nagog Park Road and the abutters are other office buildings, light industry (Insulet Corporation) and multi-family residential buildings of Avalon.

The site is zoned as Office Park 1 zone, which allows for a storage facility but does not allow for distribution centers (like UPS or an Amazon warehouse) which would have continual truck traffic.

The elevations show a one-story tilt-up concrete structure with several office entrances with overhead concrete canopies. There seems to be little direct connection between the entrances and the Handicapped parking and landscape elements/islands. This type of construction is flexible and easily renovated, this includes the number of loading docks. The parking and traffic control plan shows 40 possible loading dock positions.

The DRB understands that there are no tenants yet for the project so the number of building entrances and loading docks have not yet been established.

The DRB has the following comments:

1. The DRB is pleased that the overall square footage of impervious surfaces will be reduced with this new plan, but is concerned about the higher amount of noise pollution from tractor trailer or container trucks and what kind of impact this will have on the residential neighbors. The loading area is on the north side of the building, which is the side that abuts Avalon housing.
2. The number of spaces required for a use-type as this is 21, the DRB would like to know why 86 spaces are being shown and what they are needed for. Perhaps anything over the 21 spaces could be on pervious surfaces, or be indicated as future parking and added as necessary.
3. The DRB believes the planting around the perimeter is a bit skimpy and we would prefer to see naturalistic groupings of trees rather than the standard 30 or 40 foot spacing between each tree, this would help offset the monolithic building.
4. In addition, the DRB recommends adding pedestrian scale lighting (bollards) at each office entrance.
5. The DRB does not have comments on the architecture at this point, and recommends that as part of the approval for this project, the proponent be required to present the final architecture, showing entrances and loading docks, to the DRB for feedback.
6. Because the fluidity of the building type, and the speculative nature of the development, the DRB is concerned with 'use-creep' and requests that conditions to control the type of use be added in the approval permit, including a clear denial of the building to be converted into a distribution center at any future date. The quantity shown of 40 possible truck bays is a red flag that such a use is planned for.

Respectfully submitted,

The DRB