



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 Liaison)

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

Documents Reviewed: A set drawings prepared by Stamski and McNary 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 Historic District Commission, (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 sight.
- 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.
- 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 were comfortable with the balance of the proposed landscaping materials and their placement.
- 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 is very comfortable with the project proposal for 9 School Street and commend the proponent for the effort made to fit this project within the historic district in an appropriate and thoughtful manner.

Respectfully submitted,

The DRB