



## DRB Memorandum

Project Location: Post Office Square, Acton, MA

Architectural Plans: Artform Home Plans - no dates

Engineering Proposal: Eastern Landscape Survey Assoc., Inc., Dated: 3-28-2012

Developer: Philip Singleton, Charing Cross Realty Trust

First Review of Project

**Date of DRB Review: 9-19-2012**

The DRB met with proponents Philip Singleton and Danielle Singleton on the above date to review project and drawings.

This is a Friendly 40B and the developer is slated to present before the BoS on September 24 for LIP approval. The project is located in an industrial-zoned area, across from the main Post Office. The development consists of 11 new, 3-bedroom, single family homes with lot sizes ranging from 5116sf to 9116sf. A portion of the property is remotely located on the south side of the existing industrial building (and connected with a thin band of land).

The DRB makes the following comments:

- **Layout:** The density of the units is appropriate for the site, and the DRB supports the proposed layout.
- **Retaining Walls:** Lots (#1,2,8,9,11 & 12) with the April Yarrow home style (garage below the unit), require retaining walls along the sidewalks and property lines to help raise the grade to the front door. The DRB recommends that the walls be no greater than 4' in height to make it more appealing visually to pedestrians and those in cars, and that the materials of the walls be stone or concrete with stone facing. It was offered that the walls could be lowered by sloping the land on either side of the walls or by adjusting the home layouts - for example switching units 9 and 10. This could substantially reduce the costs of the walls, while making the project more visually appealing for the owners.
- **Building Architecture:** The DRB finds the architecture styles submitted follow the Design Review Guidelines for the town. We applaud the fact that all of the building plans have the front doors and porches facing the street with the garages either hidden in the back or located below the units. These features help to provide a sense of neighborhood, encourage socializing, and could also potentially help to increase property values. The DRB recommends all porches have a 6' depth to make them usable. The proponent stated that the building finishes, porch styles, shingle and siding colors will vary, and the DRB supports the diversity this will provide for the development as a whole.
- **Impervious Surfaces:** In an effort to reduce the amount of impervious surfacing on the site, the DRB recommends sharing driveways where ever possible. Unit 5 and 6 could potentially have a shared driveway. In addition, the DRB recommends the cul-de-sac's center not be paved but rather a planted area. If designed to drain inwards, the center planter could act as a rain garden. Another option would be to make the street a loop street with two connections to Post Office Square, but with the current layout this is may not be feasible. These changes could help the LEED certification.

- Other Possibilities:

The DRB would like to open discussion with the town engineering department on the possibility of removing the cul-de-sac on Post Office Square Road, since the road has been lengthened the cul-de-sac is now at mid-street. Removing the extra pavement would provide more planted area and a buffer to the development.

Land Swap - the DRB questioned if it would it be possible to do a land swap- to exchange the remote parcel on the south side of the industrial complex for land that abuts the site. This additional land could provide more square footage for the development and individual units, thereby reducing the amount of retaining walls currently required, and may facilitate the second desirable connection to Post Office Square Road.

The DRB thanks Mr. Singleton and Danielle Singleton for their attendance and openness in discussion. The proponent recommended having a working session with the architect and engineer to study possible ways to improve the layout and reduce the need for retaining walls, thus making the project more cost effective to build. This next meeting is tentatively set for October 17, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Design Review Board

Members in attendance: Conor Nagle, PE; Kim Montella, PE; David Honn, RA; Peter Darlow AIA; LEED, Holly Ben-Joseph, PLA, DRB BoS Liaison: David Clough