



DRB Memorandum

429-433 Great Road

Project Location: Site of the existing Pegasus Tack Shop

Project Description: A one-story retail car dealership consisting of an eight-bay vehicle service area, showroom, support facilities and a basement area evidently for vehicle storage.

Architectural Plans: The proponent submitted:

- Existing Conditions Plan;
- revised architectural floor plan, sheet A-1 titled Basement Floor Plan; sheet A-2 titled First Floor Plan, and A-3 titled Exterior Elevations;
- Layout Plan;
- Grading and Drainage Plan; and
- Landscape Plan (sheet L-1).

The applicant, Leo Bertolami, Architect Manny Rempelakis, R.A., of E.J. Rempelakis Associates, and Civil Engineer George Dimakarakos, P.E. of Stamski and McNary were not present.

Date of DRB Third Review for this project proposal: 05-4-2016

Background

The site borders existing apartment buildings and adjacent retail uses on Great Road. The existing building is a wood frame, barn-type structure with condition problems. The building is not located in an historic district nor is it located on the Acton Cultural Resource List as a protected structure. Therefore, demolition of the existing building is allowed. The proponent will be seeking a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The existing building violates a 30-foot setback from Great Road and the proponent will be seeking to replace the existing building with a new structure that does not conform with the required setback.

In general, in its third review, the DRB found the revised drawings confusing. We recommend that the Applicant and/or the architect and civil engineer appear before the DRB in order to provide clarifications. In order to enable the DRB to perform an appropriate review, the Applicant should provide exterior elevations that are consistent with the proposed site plan modifications. There appears to be a grade change that is reflected in the plan and is not depicted in the submitted building elevations.

The comments below, which follow the review of the submitted drawings depicting revisions to the proposed project, should be read in conjunction with prior memoranda regarding this proposed project.

The DRB is concerned that the newly introduced basement level is proposed to have a clear height of 7 feet, 6 inches, and is provided a single means of egress. For these reasons, the DRB recommends further study of the basement concept by the design team and would like to understand the intended use of the basement level. The DRB is also quite concerned with the proximity of the depressed drive to the basement level in relation to the street edge of Great Road. The exterior elevations do not suggest the planned pedestrian ramp leading to the entrance facing Great Road, which causes concern for the DRB. The first floor appears to be five to six feet above the Great Road sidewalk at its eastern corner. The DRB suggests that the drawings should show the Great Road façade in relation to the road and illustrate how the grade change is to be managed along the facade in relation to the first floor and Great Road. The DRB disfavors the proposed five-foot high exposed foundation. The applicant should bring the finishing down. The building needs a base from which the brick and stone can start. In general, the DRB considers it unwise to lift the building four feet above grade. This approach is out of character with attractive commercial development and appears to be a gimmick to accommodate the basement. It will require considerable earth-moving. The ramp leading to the basement level will require fencing that will also be unattractive and will not be hidden by the proposed plantings. The DRB recommends an additional rock wall along the front if the applicant is insistent on raising the building above the sidewalk, which, as noted, the DRB does not encourage.

The DRB suggests that the entrance portico is not in keeping with the design of the building and should be reconsidered.

The design of the front of the building is a conventional flat-roofed commercial structure that does not relate well to the taller rear portion of the building which has been drawn with a gable roof. The pitched roof at the rear of the building is a very flat pitch and therefore not reminiscent of a barn-like structure as has previously been suggested is the concept for this. Thus the DRB suggests that it may be better if the whole building is constructed with a roof line that is a series of flat-roofed elements. Or in the alternative all portions of the building should be provided with appropriately pitched gable roof lines. The DRB commends the applicant for revising the proposal to include uniform materials.

With respect to the proposed plantings, the DRB recommends that the applicant find a different mid-sized tree as the proposed tree is considered invasive.

Finally, the DRB requests that in the future this applicant (and all applicants) heed the DRB's guidelines regarding the need for two copies of drawings to be submitted in full scale in advance of the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Design Review Board

Members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph, Peter Darlow, Michael Dube.