



**DRB Memorandum
Acton Self Storage, 533
Main Street**

Date of first review: June 7th, 2017

Date of second review: July 5th, 2017

DRB Members in attendance, first meeting: Holly Ben-Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Assistant Chair), David Honn, Kim Montella, and Janet Adachi (Board of Selectmen liaison).

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

Architect Sven Hiestad in attendance at both meetings. First meeting Sven brought Building Plans and elevations only.

Second meeting the Site plan was reviewed.

Comments from first review:

The site is commercially zoned with an existing block building was used as a testing lab. It is proposed to be developed into the Acton Self Storage under a two-phase project as follows:

Phase I: Interior Fit-up and modification to the existing building (moving front entrance, ADA requirements at the entrance, adding elevator, etc.). Phase I work does not require a permit and is currently on-going, estimated to be complete in 60-90 days.

Phase II: The addition of seven new, free-standing metal buildings that house multiple, lockable self-storage units. The buildings will have low-pitched metal roofs that are 10' +/- maximum in height. There will be one full time employee and parking for 20-30 cars. The buildings will be clad with metal in neutral tones of dark greens/browns.

When questioned about the need for such a project, the architect stated that 10% of all households use off-site storage facilities.

The architect did not bring a Site Plan or a Landscaping Plan for review to this meeting.

Of main concern is the combination of Buildings 2 & 3, which combine to make a building 230 feet long - sited along the front setback line of the site. This building's length is unusually long and will be readily visible from Post Office Square Road.

To improve the visual organization of the property as seen from along the Post Office Square street edge, the DRB makes the following suggestions:

- Eliminate Building 7, located to the left of the main entrance in order to open the site's

- entrance and to have a visual connection with the new entrance to the existing building.
- Align Buildings 8 & 10 so that they are parallel with the existing building
- Provide a break between Buildings 2 & 3 by eliminating two of the 10' x 30' units. Locate the break to make a site-line down the interior parking lane located to the right of the existing building. In addition, the DRB suggested to shorten several of the proposed 10' x 30' units to along buildings 2 and 3 to allow for enlarged planting bed "inserts" along the back of the building. Both of these suggestions will break up the long mass of this building and allow for larger landscaping plantings (trees vs. shrubs). One of the breaks/inserts may be located at an existing pump chambers enabling the chambers to remain in place rather than be relocated as currently proposed.

The DRB would like to review the site and landscaping plans as well as proposed color schemes and provide comments and guidance prior to final approval of this project by the Town. We look forward to meeting with the proponents again to review the plan changes.

Comments from second review:

We reviewed the Landscape-site plan dated April 21, 2017 and revised June 22, 2017. In addition, we made comments on the revisions the architect made after our first review. The following are the DRB's comments and suggestions:

1. Building 7 remains in its original location. It was noted that the knoll in front of the building shields it from view of the road. The DRB agrees.
2. Building 10 has been moved to the other side of the road, closer the existing building. The DRB agrees that this is a better location.
3. The DRB again suggests that building 2 and 3 be separated into two buildings rather than being one very long building. The best location for this break is opposite the access road that runs parallel to building 4. This break, in addition to the notch at the back of building 3 will greatly lessen the impact of the building on the streetscape.
4. In addition to breaking up the buildings, the DRB recommends that the trees located on the hill below building 2 and 3 be planted at larger sizes to help with screening. The deciduous trees could be 3-3.5" caliper, and the evergreens could be 10-12' in height at planting.
5. On another note, the DRB would like to see as many mature existing trees on the site remain. In the few undisturbed areas, the DRB recommends protecting the vegetation. Also along the road, if there are existing mature trees that can be saved and maintained in good health during construction, they could be used for screening and lessen the number of the proposed trees.

Respectfully Submitted
Design Review Board