



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2025
7:00 PM
Acton Town Hall

Present: Peter Darlow (Chair), David Honn, Richard Keleher, Holly Ben-Joseph, Tom Doolittle

Guests in Attendance: Kristen Guichard, Planning Director; Olivia Barksdale, Conservation Agent; Dean Charter, Select Board member; Terra Friedrichs, citizen

Documents Reviewed:

96 Pope Road, Preliminary Subdivision:

- Proof Plan Date 1-27-2025
- Preliminary Residential Compound Plan Date 1-27-2025

Special Permit 60 Powder Mill Road:

- Site Development Plans at 60 Powder Mill Road:
- Existing Conditions C-2, Date 2-12-2025
- Parking Proof Plan C-3, Date 2-12-2025
- Flexible Parking Plan/Site Layout C-4, Date 2-12-2025
- Grading, Drainage and Demo Plan C-5, Date 2-12-2025

1. **Opening**

Chair, Peter Darlow opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

2. **Regular Business**

A. Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of November 7, 2024 were reviewed. They were unanimously approved as amended. Tom Doolittle will submit them to the Town.

The Minutes of February 3, 2025 were Reviewed and unanimously approved as written. Peter Darlow will submit them to the Town.

B. Citizen's Concerns: In regard to the proposed no-clear cutting by law, Terra Friedrichs stated she is in support of using the area of the tree trunk rather than caliper of tree method when calculating number or replacement trees required. Many more replacement



trees are required when using the Area method. Dean Charter, former Tree Warden of Acton has reservations about using this method. It results in requiring too many trees for the site.

In regard to the proposed changes to the zoning by-law Terra is concerned that developers will take advantage of the proposed Open Space Residential Development to densify the sites by building attached dwellings of 4 and 6 units as allowable by the proposed by-law. She showed an example of a boxy building that developers could build since there are no design guidelines.

She questions the allowance of 15 units an acre in 5.7.3.1.

It is her belief that if basements are not included when counting the square footage of a building developers will use this to build Mc Mansions as seen at the Quail Ridge neighborhood.

Terra Friedrichs also stated that it is likely that the prices of Acton's developable open space will be pushed higher due to allowing greater density in new developments.

3. Special Business

Review of 96 Pope Road, Preliminary Subdivision

A new subdivision is proposed with 4 homes on a lot that currently has one home. The proposal appears to conform to the Proof Plan in the number of homes allowed. Please refer to the DRB Memo dated March 13, 2025, titled: Review Memorandum, 96 Pope Road.

Review of Special Permit 60 Powder Mill Road

An addition to the existing parking lot is proposed for the Suburban Glass business. It appears to conform to the Proof Plan of allowable spaces. Please refer to the DRB memo Dated March 13, 2025, titled: Review Memorandum 60 Powder Mill Road.

Other business:

Richard Keleher stated he would like to revisit a by-law to tackle odd-shaped lots. For the next meeting, Richard will bring in a draft of a proposal to eliminate these lots. Peter D will put this on the Agenda for the next meeting.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
The DRB



TOWN OF ACTON DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Review Memorandum: 96 Pope Road
March 13, 2025

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, Thomas Doolittle, David Honn and Richard Keleher

Documents reviewed:

Preliminary Subdivision Plan for 96 Pope Road, sheets 1, 2, and 3
Dated January 27, 2025 Prepared by Stamski and McNary, Inc for the applicant, Tall Pines Trust.

Tall Pines Trust proposes to redevelop the existing approximate 13 acre tract of land located at 96 Pope Road as a four house lot subdivision. The majority of the existing tract consists of undeveloped forest and includes several vegetative wetlands. An existing dwelling, inclusive of accessory outbuildings and a tennis court, located in the midsection of the tract will be removed. The proposed four new house lots range in size from approximately 2.65 acres to 3.75 operates. Access to the lots is proposed to be via a common driveway that meets Pope Road along a similar path as the existing driveway at the north edge of the tract, follows the current drive and extends further into the tract.

The DRB offer the following observations concerning the preliminary subdivision proposal for 96 Pope Road:

- The forested land should be clearly documented to indicate how much of the property will be clear cut to accommodate the redevelopment.
- Significant shade trees should be surveyed and located. Trees with a caliper greater than 12" should be clearly indicated on the redevelopment plans with an effort made to maintain as many as feasible.
- Existing stone walls within the heart of the forested site should be maintained or rebuilt in a location and style that maintains the historic character of the lot.
- Significant rock outcroppings, if any should be notated on the proposed redevelopment documents.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Darlow for the DRB



TOWN OF ACTON DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Review Memorandum: 60 Powder Mill Road
March 13, 2025

DRB Members in attendance: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, Tom Doolittle, David Honn and Richard Keleher

Documents reviewed:

Site Redevelopment Plans at 60 Powder Mill Road, sheets C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4 and C-5
Dated February 12, 2025 Prepared by The Morin-Cameron Group, Inc. for the applicant,
Suburban Glass and Mirror Co.

Suburban Glass and Mirror operates a facility out of an existing property located at 60 Powder Mill Road. The proposed project is a redevelopment of the existing parking lot to accommodate a capacity expansion. The scope of work included regrading, construction of a new retaining wall, and the expansion of a stormwater management system.

The DRB offer the following observations concerning the proposal for 60 Powder Mill Road:

- The proposed relocation of three trees adjacent to Powder Mill Road, due to the parking lot expansion towards the road, is encouraged. That said, the applicant should be mindful that a successful relocation of the trees involves the careful relocation of the root ball structure and attention paid to placement of the tree in relation to the proposed retaining wall. If the health of the trees cannot be maintained the DRB recommend a condition of approval include the replacement of trees that are a minimum 3.5" caliper, should the relocation effort lead to failure of the trees to thrive.
- Consideration should be given to maintain the existing tree at the SW corner of the lot, rather than relocation, by jogging the parking lot retaining wall to clear the existing tree. This section of the proposed expanded parking lot is not scheduled for use for parking and jogging the wall will provide more pervious land area if the wall is indented to avoid moving this corner tree.
- The DRB wishes to point out that a section of the proposed retaining wall will be taller than 30" and therefore should be provided with a guardrail as per the building code.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Darlow for the DRB