



TOWN OF ACTON DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Review Memorandum: 465-469 & 471 Great Road
August 06 & 21, 2025

DRB Members in attendance Aug 06: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, Tom Doolittle, David Honn, and Richard Kelleher

DRB Members in attendance Aug 21: Peter Darlow, (Chair), Holly Ben-Joseph, David Honn

Proponent representatives in attendance Aug 06:

Leo Bertolami – 465-469 & 471 Great Road Applicant
Nathaniel Cataldo – Stamski and McNary, Inc
Karoline Viana – soulveplus

Proponent representatives in attendance Aug 21: None

Documents reviewed Aug 06:

Site Plan Sheets prepared by Stamski and McNary – Existing Conditions Plan, Site Development Plan, and Layout and Utility Plan, each dated 06.23.2025

Architectural Sheets prepared by soulveplus – 465-467 Great Road: DD001 Cover Sheet, DD105 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations, DD106 Proposed Left and Right Elevations, DD107 Proposed Section each dated 08.06.2025 and 468-471 Great Road: DD01 Cover Sheet, DD 105 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations, DD106 Proposed Left and Right Elevations, DD107 Proposed Section each dated 08.06.2025

Documents reviewed Aug 21:

Site Plan Sheets prepared by Stamski and McNary – Same as Aug 06
Landscape Plan prepared by Clemence Landscape Architecture – Landscape Plan L1 dated 08.12.2025

Architectural Sheets, updated, by soulveplus – 465-467 Great Road: DD001 Cover Sheet, DD002 General Notes and Fenestration, DD105 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations, DD106 Proposed Left and Right Elevations, DD108 Trim Details and 468-471 Great Road: DD001 Cover Sheet, DD 002 General Notes and Fenestration, DD105 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations, DD106 Proposed Left and Right Elevations, DD107 section each dated 08.20.2025

Renderings prepared by soulveplus: exterior views 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 and 07

The Applicant proposes to develop a pair of buildings, each to house Trade Shops, on a combined parcel comprised of 465-469 Great Road and 471 Great Road. The existing parcel at 465-469 Great Road currently contains a small strip mall building housing 3 tenants and the existing parcel at 471 Great Road contains a small commercial building. The existing buildings will be taken down and the newly combined approximate 2.35-acre site will be fully redeveloped to accommodate the pair of proposed new buildings.

The proposed project will conform to the zoning requirements with respect to building setbacks, building size and height, as well as site development requirements pertaining to parking, septic, water runoff containment, and pervious/impervious surface ratios.

The proposed buildings to be built on the 465-467 portion and the 468-471 portion of the site will each accommodate four trade shops on ground level. Due to the sloping site topography, the northern half of the building on the 468-471 portion will step down, allowing two of the proposed trade shops to be taller. The taller shops will each contain a mezzanine. Each proposed building will provide attic space that can be used for storage.

The exterior of the proposed buildings are designed with a nod to Acton's residential scaled commercial buildings evident in the villages and in portions along Great Road. The proposed new building's mass will be broken up by dormers, gabled roof planes, and changes in ground plan. The building exterior finish will be a combination of clapboard style siding and shingled siding each to be paint finished with moderately different neutral gray tone. The doors, windows, corner boards, and gable trim will be painted PVC boards. Windows, are to be black finished aluminum framed. Visible pitched roof surfaces will be finished with architectural shingles.

Subsequent to the initial review of the proposal on August 06, the proponent offered to provide the DRB with revised exterior renderings of the proposed building in response to the DRB initial commentary. Additionally, the proponent offered to provide documentation missing during the first review meeting. The DRB met for a second review of the proposal on August 21.

The DRB feels the proposal is reasonably well thought out. The two buildings are contextually appropriate. The site, as designed, offers an upgrade as compared to the existing conditions, though board members have several comments and concerns to note. The reduction in pavement overall and specifically adjacent to Great Road is desirable. Given the overabundance of underutilized retail buildings along Great Road, the proposed use for trade shops seems a better business fit. The following are specific comments/recommendations offered to the proponent team upon review of the documents provided:

- Board members are pleased that the proponent has provided three dimensional renderings for explaining how the project will appear as seen from Great Road. This level of clear, readily understood, presentation imagery for proposals going forward should be encouraged with future proponents.
- DRB members recommend the proponent study the expected vehicle maneuvering space within the access drives along the shop trade bays as the space available could

be tight should trade vehicles park adjacent to their leased unit and not within a designated parking space.

- Given the level of redevelopment, DRB members feel the curb cuts at Great Road should be addressed. The present curb cut at the Southeast corner conflicts with the lined parking spaces. There is room for this curb cut to be better aligned with the driving aisle internal to the site to avoid the conflict. The curb cut towards the western portion of the site is unnecessarily wide and could and should be reduced to improve the safety for the pedestrian crossing at the sidewalk adjacent to Great Road.
- Landscape plantings, have been targeted to partially screen the trade bay garage doors visible from Great Road. The plantings look to be generally native species and appropriate for the location. That said, the board believes the density of the plantings in all proposed beds should be increased by another fifty percent to provide a reasonably dense cluster. Additionally, it is recommended that a portion of the plant material at each planting bed be shifted to an evergreen variety to offer four-season coverage.
- A dumpster corral for the tenants should be identified and positioned to the rear of the site, away from Great Road.
- As noted, the DRB feels the buildings are generally well thought out and well detailed. That said we offer the following recommendations that we believe should be required to offer a quality development outcome.
 - The clapboard and shingle material should be at minimum a Hardi Board type if not a true wood siding product.
 - The upper level windows, located within the not occupiable attic spaces, will be more consistent with the design concept and with the lower level windows if these are simple single fixed lite of glass, not a pseudo double hung window.
- It is understood that mechanical equipment will be positioned within the attic spaces generally and not placed on the available flat roof surfaces nor on grade, excepting potential air exchange equipment.
- Flat roof surfaces should be architecturally screened from view along Great Road.
- The quantity and placement of the proposed tenant identifying signage should be adjusted to comply with Acton's signage rules and regulations. Presently, signage is shown on the south facing Great Road facades and again on the north facing building facades.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Darlow, for the DRB