

Town of



AMHERST

Massachusetts

TOWN HALL  
4 BOLTWOOD AVENUE  
AMHERST, MA 01002-2351

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Planning (413) 256-4040  
Community Development 256-4042  
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### DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

*July 14, 2000 June 15, 2000*

**TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Site Plan Review – SPR 2000-00011  
**APPLICANT:** Town of Amherst, Town Manager  
**ADDRESS:** Town Hall, 4 Boltwood Ave., Amherst, MA 01002  
**PROPERTY ADDRESS:** Boltwood Walk  
**ZONING DISTRICT:** General Business (B-G)  
**DATE FILED:** 05/31/00

*\*Note: Changes are in italics.*

#### REQUEST

The applicant is requesting Site Plan Review approval for the construction of a two level parking garage (one surface level, one level below grade), with associated vehicular and pedestrian improvements (Section 3.3841, Public parking lot or garage).

#### PROJECT DATA

Assessor's Map/Parcel #'s: Map 14A, Parcels 285/60, 46, 334, 918, 57, 58, 59, 62/318.

	<u>Required</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Lot area:	N/A	* Because of the number
Frontage:	N/A	of parcels involved in this
Front Setback:	0 LF	project, this information
Side/Rear Setback:	0 LF	is compiled in a separately
Max. Allowable Height:	50 FT	attached summary.
Max. Building Coverage:	70%	
Max. Lot Coverage:	95%	
Parking Spaces:		188

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to construct a two-level parking garage and incorporate associated vehicular and pedestrian improvements. The garage will have one level below grade accessed by a vehicle-only ramp, stairs and elevator. The surface level will consist of vehicular access ways, parking spaces, landscaped plazas and pedestrian walkways. The three structures on the site are for enclosed elevator and stairwell houses, and an open-sided structure to cover two handicapped van spaces near the Bangs Community Center. In addition to lighting and extensive landscaping, the project contains many other pedestrian amenities including sitting walls, benches and raised pedestrian crosswalks.

This proposal is substantially the same as that which was approved under SPR 00-0002. The primary difference is the number of spaces to be included on the lower level. The Town is requesting that a base bid and two deduct alternatives be provided for the number of underground spaces in an effort to find ways to reduce the overall budget. Other minor changes include the specification of a less expensive paving material on the pedestrian plaza and walkways.

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

On August 26, 1999 the applicant submitted SPR 00-0002, a request for approval for the construction of a two level parking garage with associated vehicular and pedestrian improvements (Section 3.3841). The Board began its public hearing on September 15 and continued it to October 6, 1999. The Board approved this application with conditions and waivers on October 6, 1999. A copy of the Decision is attached.

### **SITE VISIT**

The Board held a site visit on September 10, 1999 as part of SPR 00-0002. A copy of the Site Visit Report is attached. The Board did not hold a separate site visit for this application.

### **WAIVERS**

- 1) Soil Erosion Plan
- 2) *Partial Waiver of the Traffic Impact Study*
- 3) *Parking space dimensional requirements – 8.5' width instead of 9'*

### **ISSUES**

#### 1) Soil Erosion Plan

The applicant is asking for a waiver of a Soil Erosion Plan. The application states that all construction will be confined to the site and that no disturbance of soil is proposed on any slopes greater than 2% at the edges of the site. Standard soil retention measures will be taken to prevent silt runoff into adjacent storm drains.

#### 2) Traffic Impact Statement

A Traffic Impact Statement has been commissioned by the applicant. This study will address projected Level Of Service (LOS) on Main Street resulting from adjusted project parking space numbers, projected traffic counts and anticipated changes in lane layout and turning motions. The study has not been submitted to the Planning Department as of the date of this report.

*A summary of the TIS with an explanation of the request for a partial waiver is included with this report.*

**3) Sign Plan**

The applicant has requested permission to submit a Sign Plan for review at a later date. A preliminary sign plan including off- and on-site directional signs and pedestrian information signs has been developed and is currently undergoing review. The applicant has indicated that they are willing to accept later review and approval as a condition of permit approval.

**4) Town Engineer's Review**

The Town Engineer has reviewed the current submission and has no comment. The list of concerns that he raised in the last submission were answered in subsequent submission of plans which are now part of this application.

**5) Accessibility**

Two other minor changes in the plans are in response to accessibility requirements. The slope of the walkway leading from the north end of the pedestrian plaza to the Bangs Center will now require handrails. Also, steel columns have been selectively removed from the west side of the covered HC parking canopy structure south of the Bangs Center because they constricted van access to the parking spaces.

**6) Bike Racks**

The previous Site Plan Approval called for 10 bicycle racks to be installed on the surface, and five in the sublevel. The current site plan shows 8 bicycle loops installed across the surface in 3 groups of 2-3 loops each. To maintain the vehicle parking count, and for reasons of safety and convenience, no bicycle parking is proposed for the sublevel. The Public Transportation Committee had requested parking for bicycles in the sublevel to provide bicycle storage with protection from inclement weather. It should be noted that 4 bike loops have been installed underneath the deep eaves at the west entrance to the Bangs Center.

**7) Landscape Plantings**

The general layout and character of the proposed landscaping has remained the same from the previous submission. However, in response to earlier comments and conditions, there have been some changes and substitutions in the particular species proposed. In particular, seven London Planetrees have been replaced by Japanese Zelkova (an Asian relative of the American Elm). Also, two Callery pear trees and a Katsura have been replaced with honeylocust. The invasive Burning Bush and several other shrubs have also been replaced by other species. A complete plant list was included with the plans.

8) Unchanged issues

The following issues are handled the same way as the previous proposal:

- Emergency vehicle access
- Pedestrian circulation
- Utility layouts
- Lighting layouts and fixtures
- Drainage
- Security
- Solid waste disposal/deliveries
- Maintenance/management plans

9) Amherst Redevelopment Authority (ARA) Review

The ARA met Tuesday, June 13, 2000, to review the revised Parking Garage plans. The ARA concerns centered around the changes to the Paving Plan from the plans previously reviewed. The overall appearance of the project has been a high priority of the ARA, as they are responsible for the completion of the Urban Renewal Area. The ARA would like the appearance and quality of materials to be comparable to the earlier phases of the Boltwood Walk project. Budget constraints have required cutbacks in the surface treatment of the pedestrian areas, reducing the areas covered with pavers to a minimum and replaced these with scored concrete. While sympathetic with the practical constraints of this project, the ARA is exploring possibilities for including additional pavers in the project if the final budget allows for this improved surface treatment.

10) Design Review Board Review

The Design Review Board is reviewing the revised plans at their meeting on June 20, 2000. Their comments will be made available to the Planning Board at its meeting on June 21, 2000. *A copy of their comments is attached.*

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# AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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June 21, 2000

## DRB MEMORANDUM #00-17

MEMO TO: William Start, Bldg. Comm.  
Lynda Faye, ZBA Admin. Asst.  
FROM: Jonathan Tucker, Senior Planner *J.T.*  
SUBJECT: DRB Recommendations of June 20, 2000

The Tuesday, June 20, 2000 meeting of the Design Review Board began at 7:40 p.m. in the Town Room, Town Hall, in the absence of a quorum. Members David Dillon and Henry Lu were present, along with Senior Planner Jonathan Tucker. Also present were Elisa Campbell (Parking Garage Building Committee), Carl Seppala (Select Board & Amherst Redevelopment Authority), Fran Van Treese (Amherst Redevelopment Authority), Alan Root (Ann Whalen Apts. resident) and Stephanie O'Keefe (Amherst Survival Center).

The members took the following actions and made the following recommendations pending ratification or amendment by the full Board at a later meeting:

Consideration of DRB Memo #00-16 was deferred.

The members turned to Appointments.

#00-0029, Boltwood Walk Parking Garage, Town of Amherst – In the absence of a quorum, no formal action could be taken on this application. For the information of the members, Mr. Tucker informally presented plans for the garage, describing the differences between the revised designs and the previous designs.

Mr. Dillon suggested that the architect match the geometry of the scoring pattern on the concrete pavement to the geometry of the various spaces in which the paving occurred, rather than applying a single computer-generated pattern to the entire surface "like a carpet." He said this resulted in odd fragments of patterns. Ms. Campbell indicated that her committee could make that request of the landscape architect.