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# *Development Review Team Report*

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*November 26, 2007. Revised December 13, 2007; December 31, 2007*

*Initial Comments – Application for Site Approval*

*Easton Shovel Shop LLC (26, 28 & 34 Main Street; 13 Oliver Street)*

To: Easton Board of Selectmen  
From: Development Review Team

CC: David A. Colton, Town Administrator  
Easton Zoning Board of Appeals  
Easton Conservation Commission  
Easton Historical Commission  
Easton Housing Partnership  
Easton Planning & Zoning Board  
Development Review Team Members

## **Proposal Summary**

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The project sponsors intend to apply for a comprehensive permit under MGL, Chapter 40B. The proposed development will consist of 182 newly constructed housing units, of which 55 will have one bedroom and 127 units will have two bedrooms. Forty-six units, or 25% of the total units, will be affordable based on 70% of the AMI (Area Median Income).

Seven (7) 2 ½ story buildings will be converted to four-story structures, preserving the lower two stories of granite that are to be capped with two (2) new timber framed floors. Two structures are to be demolished. One is a 1 ½ story granite structure (Building #5) on the site plan. The other is a two story wood structure (Building #7) to accommodate parking and site access.

## **Comments**

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Below, please find comments received after a *preliminary* review by staff from the Departments of Building, Health, and Planning and Community Development Staff, and by the members of the Historical Commission and

the Planning and Zoning Board. Comments from the Conservation Commission are attached in a separate document at the end of this memo.

### Building Department

The building, electrical, plumbing and gas permit fees should not be waived for this project. Parking, as shown, may be insufficient to meet the requirement of the site.

### Department of Planning and Community Development

#### *Circulation*

In general, the walkways shown in plan are *grossly* insufficient to get travelers safely and conveniently from their cars to any number of destinations in the site. This site plan appears to force pedestrians travelling from their cars to use vehicle travel lanes and cross site entrance driveways to reach destinations. For example, the walkway proposed to the east of building "C" does not appear to continue even along to the length of the adjacent parking on that side of the building. Someone parking east of building "C" and walking to building "A" or "D" will have no convenient way to reach his destination. Even if someone were to park one spot south of where the proposed walkway ends, he will be forced to walk in the vehicular travel land to reach the nearest building.

- The applicant should revise the site plan to include walkways providing a convenient, safe route from and *through* parking areas to all buildings, minimizing potential conflict with vehicular traffic.
- Any walkways through parking lots should be clearly delineated by paint, grading, or paving, and should be illuminated with pedestrian-scale lighting (less than 14' high).
- Walkways should continue all the way around buildings.

#### *Mitigation*

The traffic generated from this project will impact current traffic including that on Main Street and Elm Street. With increased volume of traffic anticipated for Elm Street, the need for a traffic signal at Route 138 and Elm Street will become even more evident.

#### *Trash*

The applicant shows no provision for trash collection/disposal. The location of all dumpsters should be shown on the plan. Additionally, appropriate screening and fencing for dumpster enclosures should be provided. The dumpster should be placed to allow maneuvering to the dumpsters by rubbish removal vehicles.

#### *Parking*

The applicant should develop a traffic management plan to address potential user conflicts for access to parking spaces. The plan should address which spaces will be dedicated to the residences and their visitors and which spaces will be allocated to the office employees and their patrons. If any commercial/retail uses are contemplated onsite at a future time, this should also be addressed in the plan. The plan should address who will be responsible for enforcing parking restrictions within the project site and also describe the signage that will be employed throughout the site to inform users of these traffic and parking requirements and restrictions.

Additionally, bike racks should be provided at a rate no less than 1 bike parking spot for every 20 car parking spots, and should be shown on plan

## *Safety*

The applicant should provide an Emergency Access Plan to demonstrate that Town of Easton emergency apparatus can safely travel throughout the project site. The applicant should meet with the Easton Fire Chief to review this plan and obtain Fire Department approval for the proposed site layout and roadway access plan. In particular, the accessibility between the Office Building and Building A appears to be problematic. There is approximately a 270 ft. long by 40 ft. wide area between these two adjacent buildings and the access from the southern end of this area is blocked by a proposed handicap accessible ramp, and access from the northern end is blocked by parking spaces.

## *Site Planning*

The applicant is proposing to use an existing curb cut along Main Street to access the parking areas adjacent to Building D. This curb cut is approximately 100 feet from another proposed curb cut and is skewed at an angle to Main Street. It is suggested that the applicant review the possibility of relocating this curb cut further to the south to increase separation from the adjacent curb cut, as well as eliminating or reducing the intersection angle with Main Street.

## *Stormwater Management*

Low Impact Development (LID) techniques should be incorporated into the stormwater management and site plan design. Possible interventions should include:

- The use of bio-retention cells (rain gardens) in landscaped islands in the parking lot
- Porous concrete or Grasscrete overflow parking
- Compact car parking spaces (to reduce impervious surface)

The plans indicate a portion of Building D, Community Buildings and pool lie below the 100-year flood elevation.

- The applicant should provide compensatory storage for flood waters if the proposed development will result in a decrease in the flood storage capacity of the site.

## Health Department

The project's density will require an on-site treatment plant, which should be reviewed and permitted by the DEP, Wastewater Division.

- The discharge quality should be categorized as tertiary or meeting drinking water standards.
- The applicant should be aware that there are possible pipe conduits running underneath the parcel.
- The discharge location for the plant would need to be positioned above virgin land; it cannot be on land that has been altered with possible pipes running underneath.

Additionally, water conservation is an issue. The Town has a limit of gallons available to provide to existing and new development. The Town water system permitted by the State allows only so many gallons to be drawn daily at each pumping station.

- Each dwelling unit should have a separate water meter, to encourage conservation by residents on an individual level.
- The development as a whole should be constructed with water conservation in mind, e.g. with landscaping that requires little or no irrigation.

## Historical Commission

The surviving Ames complex is a critical piece of extant historical fabric that traces the full expanse of American industrial and business history. Complimented by the entire "company town" of North Easton and extensive historical collections held by Stonehill College, the Ames Shovel Shops represents a unique and tremendous significant piece of American history. The Easton Historical Commission considers the shovel complex of major significance in its entirety. The organic growth of, interrelationships between, and functionally determined architecture of each of the buildings are all critical parts of both the story of the Ames Shovel Company and the history of the Town of Easton.

Any project that meets Secretary of the Interior Standards will likely address most concerns of the Historical Commission. However, should the new owner decide not to take advantage of the financial incentives to abide by such guidelines, the Easton Historic Commission expresses several areas of concern, as follows:

*Demolition:* The Commission would vehemently oppose demolition of any buildings but those noted.

*Rehabilitation:* The Commission supports and encourages efforts to rehabilitate and upgrade the extant buildings for new functions that will encourage better use and appreciation of the site. The Commission would oppose any proposal to make major alterations to the exterior facades, rooflines, window and door opening patterns, or overall massing of any but the buildings noted.

*Lighting:* The lighting plan seems incomplete.

The Commission also has the following questions:

- What are the retaining walls constructed of and how tall are they?
- Are those ramps on the machine shop?
- How will the views from Main Street be maintained?
- What is the fate of the little house and the office building?
- Will there be a fence along Main Street?
- How about the view from the Railroad Station through the Long Shop and past the retaining wall?
- Can anything be done about the overall height of the project?

Finally, the Commission recognizes that a few elements within the complex are of less importance in comparison to the site as a whole. Of less significance are:

- The 1928, steel-walled store house
- The small, metal addition to the southwest of 1868 Antrim opening shop
- The small outbuilding, just north of the 1868 Antrim opening shop
- The various southern, metal-walled additions to the 1857 machine shop
- The small, concrete block building adjacent to the southeast side of the 1928 steel store house
- The small connector between the 1852 long shop and 1870 store house (no construction date but suspect it to be 20th century)

In addition to the structures themselves it is important to remember that this was in part a water powered site and any remnants of the hydropower system remaining archaeologically or within the buildings would be important to preserve and/or carefully document before alteration or destruction. Subsurface artifacts and structures on the entire site are of potential significance and any work should be monitored and pre-construction archaeological testing should be considered.

The importance of preservation of this complex is clear and its national significance can easily be supported beyond the local community. If necessary, it would be easy to obtain a host of letters from state, region and nation to support preservation of these structures.

The Easton Historical Commission welcomes the potential opportunity for enhanced preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of the historic shovel shop complex. They look forward to working cooperatively with a property owner who recognizes the benefit of working within these unique and nationally significant buildings centrally located among one of the most important historic areas in the nation. A redevelopment that sees the historic attributes as benefits rather than burdens can add much to historic North Easton and the Commission looks forward to working with the new owner of the project.

The Easton Historic Commission urges any redevelopment to take advantage of state and federal historic preservation tax credits which can not only return to the property owner up to 40% of restoration costs, but will assure that any work on the properties is properly reviewed to assure preservation and compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. Such a tax credit project is a win-win with financial benefits to the property owner, and enhanced and more desirable final project for purchasers or renters, and a redevelopment of benefit to the community.

### [Planning & Zoning Board](#)

The Easton Planning & Zoning Board is concerned with the proposed density of this development. It feels the proposal concentrates too much development on the site. There is concern about the traffic generated, inadequate parking and need for maintaining the historical integrity of the neighborhood.