



Town of Medway
DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
155 Village Street
Medway MA 02053
508-533-3291
drc@townofmedway.org

April 22, 2019

TO: Medway Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Matthew Buckley, Chairman
RE: DRC Comments – 39 Main Street 40B development

Dear Mr. Stumpf and members of the Medway Zoning Board of Appeals,

The Medway Design Review Committee [DRC] is pleased to provide a comment letter regarding the proposed multifamily residential development at 39 Main Street. The DRC had an informal meeting on Monday, November 5th, 2018 with representatives from Strategic Land Ventures. Present during the meeting were developers Justin Krebs and Geoff Engler as well as architect Nick Griffin from Cube 3 Studio, and Dan Merrikin from Merrikin Engineering. They presented a plan set date October 11th, 2018.

At that meeting, the DRC described techniques and modifications that would allow a building of this scale and form to more closely align with the *Medway Design Review Guidelines*. The applicant indicated that the Town's *Design Review Guidelines* would be employed and that they were open to the DRC's recommendations. They also acknowledged that the current plans did not include a high level of detail and that important elements like landscape plans and lighting would be forthcoming. They did indicate they would return to meet with the DRC with revised plans.

On April 1st, 2019, the DRC reviewed the updated site and architectural plans dated March 12, 2019 for 39 Main Street as forwarded to us by the Medway Community and Economic Development office. These are the plans submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals with the developer's application for a 40B Comprehensive Permit. After review, the DRC concluded that the developer had made minimal changes to the preliminary architectural plan and that the building designs as presented do not align with the *Medway Design Review Guidelines*. The DRC also noted that the plan set did not include any landscaping details.

During the April 1st meeting the DRC reviewed architectural schemes for large apartment buildings which incorporate design elements that more closely align with the *Design Review Guidelines*. Among the suitable solutions that were discussed are buildings created by Cube 3. These very design styles reflect what was discussed during the November 2018 meeting. Images of those designs are included here, along with those found on the Cube 3 website.

Medway Design Review Committee Members

Matthew Buckley, Member & Chair
Jessica Chabot, Member

Dan Connolly, Member
Tom Gay, Planning and Economic Development
Board Representative

Rachel Walsh, Member & Vice-Chair
Rachel Wolff Lander, Member

It is important to note that during the creation of the *Medway Design Review Guidelines* in 2015, public outreach workshops were conducted and were attended by many board and committee members. During these meetings, visual preference surveys were conducted to help establish design preferences within our community. Designs similar to what is proposed for the 39 Main Street project were included in the survey and were consistently rejected as inappropriate for Medway.

These designs were deemed to not reflect the fundamental character and style of Medway. The Medway Master Plan carefully calls out the role of the DRC to preserve these features while promoting thoughtful planning. The basis of the DRC's recommendations are derived from this mission as established by the Master Plan and articulated through the *Medway Design Guidelines*.

The DRC now offers a series of recommendations which center primarily on:

- 1) Reducing the size of the structure.
- 2) Diminishing the scale of the proposed building through architectural techniques.
- 3) Incorporating an architectural style that is similar to the surrounding community.
- 4) Developing screening for abutters and views along Main Street.
- 5) Separating the structure into multiple buildings that have a Village appearance.

They are as follows:

- Employ architectural techniques to lessen the appearance of the large height and overall scale of the building. The building is vastly larger than any other building currently in Medway.
 - This can be achieved by roofline breaks and building facades that step-back and are of alternate forms to reduce repetition and the building's large size.
 - Building heights can increase gradually with step-backs to reduce the scale at the front of buildings. The portion of the building(s) closest to Main Street should be no taller than 3 stories.
 - Upper floors can be incorporated into a false roofline or Mansard front to alleviate the appearance of height.
 - Material and color changes will mitigate the great length of the facades and provide a smaller and more comfortable sense of scale.
- Develop an architectural style that relates to those found within Medway.
 - This style can be employed most effectively in key places, like the lower entryways which initially address the public.
 - The public spaces, which appear as a gallery around the front of the building, should have a form that is more highly detailed and sets a tone for the architecture beyond.
 - The creation of more articulated architecture draws the focus to details and away from the large scale versus large blank buildings that dwarf the surroundings and do not provide a sense of proportion.

Again, each of these elements are clearly found in other designs by Cube 3 and shown here. They are absent from the designs submitted for 39 Main Street.

- Landscaped buffers are recommended within the site to separate the living area from the parking as well as to screen the development from abutters.
 - The DRC recommends that any screening provided for abutters include both vegetation and fencing to minimize impacts of cars traveling within the site.
 - Where ever possible, existing vegetation and large growth trees should be maintained and preserved.
 - Landscape designs that incorporate berms and rock walls combined with vegetation of varying heights provide ground level screening and diminish building scale and impact.
- The vastness of the parking areas should be broken into smaller units.
 - The parking can be segmented at intervals or pinched down and partitioned with vegetation to serve as a visual break.

The DRC discussed the position and form of the original entry and roadway during the November 2018 meeting. The DRC is pleased that its recommendation to offset the driveway has been incorporated into the revised site plan.

- This roadway could be constructed behind the existing tree line and be fortified with additional landscape plantings, thus establishing a significant buffering screen.

The DRC respectfully submits these review comments for the Zoning Board of Appeals' consideration. As always, the DRC is available to discuss any of these points and would gladly offer any additional recommendations and would gladly welcome an opportunity to meet again with the developer and their design team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Buckley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew Buckley
Chairman

Use of landscape berms, rock walls and vegetation to screen large building



Marq at The Pinehills – Plymouth

Traditional treatment with alternating materials and rooflines



Arlington 360 – Arlington

Preserving stands of old growth trees to maintain substantial buffers



The Hanover – Foxborough

Suitable examples of Cube 3 designs that offer step-back design, traditional treatments and alternating materials

