



**TOWN OF DURHAM**  
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***Town Planner's Recommendation***  
**Wednesday, October 8, 2014**

**257 Newmarket Road – Two New 3-Unit Buildings.** Design Review (preliminary) application for construction of two multi-dwelling buildings with three two-bedroom units each. The site contains an existing student housing building. A variance was granted in 2009 for the additional units. Christopher Meyer and Edward Marquardt, Seacoast OPM of Durham, owner. Matt Silva, coordinator. Tax Map 18, Lot 3-2. Rural Zoning District.

- I recommend discussion and continuation to October 22 for the public hearing. **It would not be appropriate to endorse the proposed design in any fashion at this point, as more work is needed**

Please note the following:

- This project is presented for preliminary design review. Note that with the process for design review (per the Rules of Procedure), the Planning Department sends out notices early notifying about the first meeting where the application is presented and the public hearing at the second meeting. Thus, the public hearing is already scheduled for October 22.
- This project was presented for design review a number of months ago and a site walk was held. The plan that was submitted was based on the septic design and simply showed a parking lot with 2 buildings at angles behind the parking lot. I recommended that the application be tabled so that the applicant could prepare a better layout.
- I met with the applicant several times and recommended they use a layout with the 2 buildings set perpendicular to each other with the parking lot on the third side. This would create a pleasant space framed by the buildings and the parking lot (once it is buffered with landscaping). Sidewalks would then link the new buildings with the existing. There are certainly other possible layouts that would be effective but this seemed like the easiest approach.
- The key issue is to have a harmonious layout without the parking lot being so prominent. This is not only good planning it is required by the zoning ordinance, under Article XXI Parking and Loading, as follows:

**175-111. General Requirements.**

**G. *Design Requirements.***

6. Buildings should be sited closer to the street and parking areas shall be located on the side or rear of lots in an effort to reduce the visual dominance of parking areas, improve pedestrian safety, and increase the visibility of businesses to drivers.
- The applicant submitted two plans with this current design review – the original one based on the septic layout and a new plan that approximates the layout that I suggested. However, the latter can and should be made more regular and refined. Plus, more detail, particularly for existing conditions, is needed to be able to evaluate the design effectively.
  - I wish to emphasize that the layout should be harmonious, attractive, walkable, and orderly. It is the responsibility of the applicant and his designer to meet this objective. If site conditions substantially drive another layout this should be demonstrated strongly.
  - The applicant can continue to work on the design over the next few weeks.