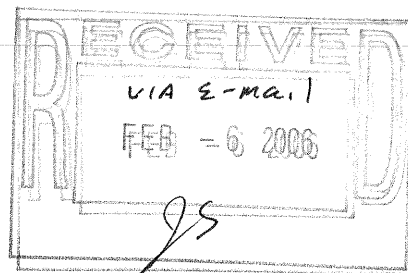


BELMONT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

February 6, 2006

Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals
Attn: Jay Szklut, Planning and Economic Development Manager
Homer Building
Town Complex
Belmont, MA 02478



Re: Belmont Uplands 40B Application (The Residences At Acorn Park)

Dear Mr. Szklut:

The Belmont Historical Commission is pleased to respond to the Zoning Board of Appeals request for a review of AP Cambridge Partners II, LLC proposal for The Residences at Acorn Park.

Authority

Article 15 of the Belmont Town By-Laws endows the Belmont Historic District Commission with the powers and duties of Historical Commissions as provided in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40 Section 8D. Said Historical Commissions are established “for the preservation, protection and development of the historical or archaeological assets of [the] town.”

Comments

The Belmont Uplands directly abuts the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) 120-acre Alewife Reservation. The Reservation consists of a narrow corridor located along Little Pond, Little River, and Alewife Brook. The proposed project lies within close proximity to Little River and Little Pond in Belmont. Unlike many other man-made ponds in the region, Little Pond is a natural pond.

While there are no buildings of historic significance on this site, the Uplands area near Little Pond is historic.

In a letter dated July 19, 2002, addressed to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for a previously proposed office park development (Frontage Road Office Center, Belmont, MHC #RC.27606, EOEA #12376R), Eric S. Johnson, Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Archaeologist and Preservation Planner wrote, “Review of MHC’s inventory indicates that Native American archaeological sites are often found in similar environmental settings, and that proximity to known archaeological sites is a strong indication that an area is likely to contain archaeological resources. The project area may also contain archaeological deposits associated with the historic-period settlement and development of the Belmont area.”

In his letter, Mr. Johnson’s comments were followed by his request for the opportunity to assess “the likelihood that the project area may retain undisturbed archaeologically sensitive areas and determining whether an intensive archaeological survey (950 CMR 70) is warranted for the project area.”

Mr. Johnson has since left MHC, however we contacted the MHC and spoke with Ed Bell, the Senior Archaeologist. Mr. Bell informed us that, in a follow-up to Mr. Johnson’s 2002 letter, an archaeological survey was done; there were no significant findings; and, no further action was

BELMONT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

necessary. The site, he said, was the Heustis Farm Midden Site. His records do not show a site plan or map that, he assumes, to have been archived.

The Historic District Commission has no map or site plan showing the location of the office park proposed in 2002. We assume the project location for the Residences at Acorn Park is somewhat different than the office development. Mr. Bell advised us to ask if MEPA review is required and if a Notice of Project Change is required. If so, an archaeological survey may be required, in which case the Belmont Historical Commission must be advised of its results.

Accordingly, we recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals direct the developer to advise on a course of action and schedule to determine the applicability of 950 CMR 70 and the potential need for an archaeological survey.

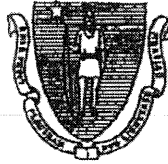
Signed On Behalf of the Belmont Historical Commission,



Michael Smith
Member

Richard Cheek, Co-Chair
Lydia Ogilby, Co-Chair
Paul Bell
Peter Gunness
Lisa Harrington
Linn Hobbs
Arleyn Levee
Richard Pichette

Cc: Ed Bell, Senior Archaeologist, MHC
Attach: Letter from Eric S. Johnson to EOE, dated July 19, 2002



07-23-02 11:03 12

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 19, 2002

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JUL 23 2002

MEPA

Secretary Bob Durand
Attn.: Jay Wickersham, MEPA Office
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
251 Causeway Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114-2150

RE: Frontage Road Office Center, Belmont, MHC #RC.27606, EOEI #12376R

Dear Secretary Durand:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission have reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the proposed project referenced above and have the following comments.

Undisturbed portions of the project area are archaeologically sensitive and are likely to contain archaeological sites associated with the Native American occupation of the Belmont area. The area's archaeological sensitivity is determined by its favorable environmental characteristics including areas of well-drained soils and relatively level terrain, proximity to natural features such as water bodies (Little River, Little Pond, wetlands), and cultural features such as known archaeological sites. Review of MHC's Inventory of the Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth indicates that six Native American archaeological sites are located within one kilometer of the project area. These sites are associated with the ponds, streams, and wetlands of the Belmont-Arlington-Cambridge area. Review of MHC's inventory indicates that Native American archaeological sites are often found in similar environmental settings, and that proximity to known archaeological sites is a strong indication that an area is likely to contain archaeological resources. The project area may also contain archaeological deposits associated with the historic-period settlement and development of the Belmont area.

HIS

At present, the MHC is unable to determine what effect the proposed project will have on historic properties without further information. The MHC requests the opportunity to review information on the present and past land use of the project area and soil boring logs for the project area if these are available. This information will assist MHC staff in assessing the likelihood that the project area may retain undisturbed archaeologically sensitive areas and determining whether an intensive archaeological survey (950 CMR 70) is warranted for the project area.

These comments are offered to assist in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 9, Sections 26-27C (950 CMR 71) and MEPA. If you have any questions concerning this review, please feel free to contact me at this office.

Sincerely,

Eric S. Johnson
Archaeologist/Preservation Planner
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: Margaret B. Briggs, Epsilon Associates
Stephen Corridan, O'Neil Properties Group
DEP, Northeast Regional Office
Belmont Historical Commission

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

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www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc