

# *The Residences at Stow Acres*



*Application for Comprehensive Permit  
Stow Zoning Board of Appeals  
Stow, Massachusetts  
December 8, 2023*

*Submitted by:*



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*The Residences at Stow Acres*  
*Comprehensive Permit Application*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Executive Summary
2. ZBA Application Form
3. Jurisdictional Requirements
  - i. EOHLC Site Approval Letter
  - ii. Evidence of Site Control
4. Certified Abutters List
5. Site Development Plans (33 Sheet Plan Set)
6. Landscape Plans (4 Sheet Plan Set)
7. Tabulation of Proposed Buildings Summary
8. Drainage Summary Narrative
9. List of Requested Exceptions to Local Requirements
10. Building Designs & Floor Plans
11. Traffic Study

*The Residences at Stow Acres*  
*Comprehensive Permit Application*

**1. Executive Summary**

# *The Residences at Stow Acres*

## *Comprehensive Permit Application*

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

We are pleased to submit the application for Comprehensive Permit for the proposed Residences at Stow Acres. This project will consist of a total of 189 housing units targeted to meet both the market-rate and affordable housing needs of a broad range of people. We are proud and excited to offer a residential housing community which will reflect the entire host community we hope to serve.

#### ***Concept Plan***

The project as submitted is substantially the same concept plan which has been circulating and presented to the Stow community over the past 18 months. This base plan was used to aid in the Town's decision to acquire a Conservation Restriction on the South Course at Stow Acres. It was also utilized in evaluating the Town's decision to purchase the adjacent +/- 110 acres for its long term conservation and recreation needs.

The project will consist of three different housing components. In fact, although the information is submitted together, we are seeking three separate Comprehensive Permits. This is required to ensure we are in compliance with the LIP Affordable housing program in conjunction with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC), formerly DHCD.

#### ***Project Components and Home Styles***

##### **A. Single Family Homes for Sale**

We have proposed 124 single family homes which shall be for sale. These homes are located on three types of lots. There are 53 Interior Lots with approximately 5,000 sq feet of area and provide for attractive street facing homes with alley loaded garages. The homes will start in size at approximately 2,000 square feet.

There will be 51 Exterior Lots which wrap around the interior lots and have approximately 7500 square feet of area. These homes will generally feature side loaded garages and will be larger, starting at approximately 2,700 square feet.

The final homes for sale will be Village Style residences. These are located between the main loop road and the rental cottages at the rear. These offer charming modern farmhouse style designs and rear loaded garages. These lots are approximately 3,500 square feet with homes sizes of approximately 2,000 square feet.

## *The Residences at Stow Acres*

### *Comprehensive Permit Application*

All of these homes (market & affordable) will be sold on fee simple lots and will be part of a homeowners association. The Association will provide for the maintenance of common roads, water and sewer services, common landscaping and maintenance.

25% of these homes (31) will be sold to income eligible, first time homebuyers earning no more than 80% of the median income of the area (adjusted for household size). Based upon the 2023 income levels, a household of 4 can earn up to \$118,450 annually and qualify for the affordable homes at Stow Acres. Based upon current mortgage rates, income levels and local real estate tax rates, a three bedroom affordable home would currently sell for approximately \$268,000. The affordable homes will be generally consistent in style with the market rate homes and will be spread throughout the community.

#### B. Rental Cottages

The second housing component will be the development of 40 detached cottages which shall be made available for rent. These unique rentals will feature 2 and 3 bedrooms in charming cottages featuring front porches with common greens as focal points.

There are three homes styles. A Bungalow with approximately 1,150 square feet with 2 bedrooms all on one level. This style is great for empty nesters seeking to downsize as well as being suitable for handicapped individuals. There is a 2 bedroom, two story cottage with approximately 1,300 square feet and both bedrooms being located on the second floor. The final style offers three bedrooms in approximately 1,400 square feet with a first-floor master bedroom. This plan works well for young families as well as downsizing renters seeking one level living. The maintenance for the rental cottages will be done by the property owner. They will share in the expense of water, sewer and other common facility expenses.

25% of the cottage rental homes will be leased to people earning no more than 80% of the area's median income, adjusted for household size. Based upon the current income levels and anticipated allowances it is expected the affordable cottage rents would range from \$2,325 for a two bedroom home and \$2,550 for a three bedroom home.

#### C. 62+ Multi Family Apartments

Lastly, we are developing a multifamily building featuring 25 modest one bedroom apartment for applicants which are 62 years or older. The building is designed to look like a gracious clubhouse overlooking the property's central green. The affordable apartments at this property will be targeted towards lower income individuals with a maximum income at only 50% of the area's median incomes, adjusted for household size. Based upon a maximum income of only \$59,400 the affordable rents would be only \$1,395 per month. These will be a great option for older residents on modest fixed incomes, enabling them to stay local.

Of the 189 homes being created, a total of 46 will be set aside for income eligible individuals and families. A total of 96 of the homes will qualify towards the Town Subsidized Housing Inventory, bringing Stow over the state goal of 10%.

# *The Residences at Stow Acres*

## *Comprehensive Permit Application*

### ***Design Concept and Amenities***

The overall site design is based upon a Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) concept. Charming homes on smaller lots with front porches, broad sidewalks, walking paths and pocket parks. The homes are clustered, yet provide immediate access to golf views and open space. The Town of Stow has acquired the adjacent 110 acres of the North Course of Stow Acres. This will largely remain as golf for a period of years and then transition to feature a wide range of Town conservation and recreation activities which are still to be determined. Stow Acres South Course as well Butternut Farms 18-hole golf course are both adjacent to the site.

We have incorporated a clubhouse with a workout area, limited community meeting space, pool and play area for kids of property residents. There will be a natural looping path which runs the perimeter of the property and will ultimately tie into the Town land. Residents and guests could also enjoy the path surrounding the South Course at Stow Acres which provides views of the Assabet River. Once completed the connected paths will offer approximately 5 miles of trails for enjoyment. The path will generally be gravel and shall meander through the woods and around wetlands to limit its environmental impacts. Although the exterior loop will not be handicapped suitable, there is an extensive network of safe, broad sidewalks within the development which shall be handicap accessible. Sitting areas are located throughout the property and along the perimeter trail. A community garden area has been designated for residents who would like to grow their own food or flowers. We have tried to incorporate activities and places to suit the needs of residents aged from 8 to 80.

### ***Infrastructure***

The Residences at Stow Acres will be serviced by a Public Water Supply permitted directly through the Massachusetts DEP. We have been approved for artisan wells anticipated to be over 500 feet deep into the bedrock. The wells have been located adjacent to Wheeler Pond which shall be protected with no development activities unrelated to the water service being located within a protective Zone 1 radius. We will be seeking DEP approval to allow for the use of the perimeter walking path within this zone, as these types of passive recreation are commonly accepted.

We will also be installing a wastewater treatment facility to service the entire property. There will be a building located by the clubhouse to process the waste and a leach field has been located with the property to release for what is essentially clean effluent. This system is also approved directly by DEP and has an extensive design and review process.

Drainage for the development will be handled through a combination of low impact development (LID) techniques. We have created a unique drainage design which will run through the center of the property. These smaller basins are designed to be landscaped and will allow storm water to work through them to ultimately release into an existing pond on the property. We have incorporated a walking path along this system to traverse the property, creating a swath of green space among the homes. Individual homes will have subsurface drainage areas tied into a gutter system to provide

# *The Residences at Stow Acres*

## *Comprehensive Permit Application*

immediate groundwater infiltration as preferred by DEP. Some larger subsurface drainage areas have been incorporated to limit unattractive basins. The overall drainage plan is in compliance with the Massachusetts DEP State Stormwater handbook as required.

Utilities will all be underground. Much of the property will be serviced by electric, heat pump systems, although some homes may be serviced by propane or natural gas. All homes will be highly energy efficient as required by the new energy focused building codes.

### ***Project Administration***

The water & sewer systems, roadways, common land, clubhouse and other amenities will be managed by a central Trust made up of the residents and property owners. The expenses will be shared by the various housing components on a percentage basis, generally consistent with water & sewer usage and the area they cover.

There will be three different entities created to represent all parties and fund the regular and long term maintenance of the development. Specifically, a Homeowners Association representing the 124 for sale, single family homes will be responsible for approximately 75% of community expenses. The 40 Rental Cottages will be responsible for approximately 20% of community expenses and the 62+ Rental building will be responsible for the remaining 5% of community expenses. These three entities will be the members of a central Community Trust whom shall manage the overall property and facilities, likely with the assistance of a professional management group.

### ***Conservation Permitting***

There are wetlands on the property which have already been outlined and approved by the Stow Conservation Commission. We will be working within the 100 foot buffer zone in some areas, but have not proposed filling any wetlands. We have maintained the 35 foot offset preferred by the Commission in most areas of the property. After the ZBA has reviewed the drainage designs for the property and determined them to be appropriate, we will make filings with the Conservation Commission seeking an Order of Conditions to ensure the project is in Compliance with the State's Wetland Protection Act.

### ***Lot Design and Home Styles***

The economic driver of the development is the 124 single family homes which are to be sold. These will be on fee simple lots with a homeowners association to deal with common area maintenance. They will not be condominiums. We have proposed lot designs with minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks for the different lot styles. All homes will require a usable front porch and garaging will be set for the lot styles as well. We have included a range of initial homes designs to set the tone for the development. This concept allows some flexibility on specific styles and for potential modifications for homes in the future as is normal in any residential development. The Rental Cottages and the Multi Family apartment

# *The Residences at Stow Acres*

## *Comprehensive Permit Application*

building will be fixed designs on the established lot areas as depicted in the submittal, allowing for minor modifications to adjust for market needs.

### ***Green Design Features***

We have incorporated many Green design features into the community and its design. This includes utilizing electric heat pump systems wherever practical to limit usage of fossil fuels on site. We also utilize foam insulation to create the tightest home envelope possible to reduce the costs for heating and cooling. Energy Star rated appliances, fixtures and windows as well as Water Sense rated plumbing fixtures will be used to further limit electric and water usage at all residences. In regards to infrastructure, we have incorporated Low Impact Development techniques to provide immediate recharge of the water table and have focused the area of the development to allow for more open space and vegetation to remain. We will have EV charging stations at several locations on the property for resident usage and will have bike storage racks at the Clubhouse. The overall design concept itself goes a long way towards limiting the infrastructure on the site.

### ***Traffic and Safety***

We have worked with our designers and traffic consultants to focus on creating a SAFE property for residents to enjoy. We have incorporated a series of raised crosswalks throughout the property, particularly on longer straighter sections which shall essentially serve as speed bumps to limit vehicular speeds within the development. Rear loaded alleys have been incorporated for most of the Interior and Village style lots to limit parking on the main loop roadway. The crossing roadways have parallel parking on one side for visitor parking. The main roadway is wide enough to handle excess parking for holidays and family events, but there will be no parking allowed along the main roadway on a regular basis.

We have reviewed the plans in detail with the Stow Fire Department and, at their request, we have incorporated three 30,000 gallons cisterns for water storage to aid in fire protection on site. The 62+ Multi Family apartment building will have a residential sprinkler system per code.

### ***Summary***

This project has truly been a collaboration with the Town of Stow, Stow Acres Golf Course and the Stow Conservation Trust. We look forward to bringing it from concept to reality in conjunction with the Stow Zoning Board of Appeals.