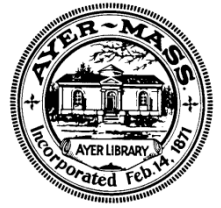


# Town of Ayer

## Office of the Town Planner



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Town of Ayer| Ayer Town Hall| 1 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor| Ayer, MA 01432|978-772-8218| [www.ayer.ma.us](http://www.ayer.ma.us)

### **Staff Report: Planning Board action; April 23, 2024**

### **Site Plan Review, Major Stormwater Management Permit**

**DISCLAIMER: Please note that the comments and opinions stated in the Staff Report below are the professional opinions and comments of the Ayer Town Planner and DO NOT reflect the opinions or views of the Ayer Planning Board on any specific project.**

Prepared by Daniel Ruiz, Ayer Town Planner

Date: **April 23, 2024**, Planning Board meeting

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**Site Location / Zoning District(s):** 91 Groton Harvard Road / Residence A1

**Assessor's Map and Parcel Numbers:** Map 13, Lot 8

**Tract or Parcel Size Undergoing Development:** 4.21 +/- acres (183,585 SF)

**Type of Application:** Site Plan per AZB Section 3.5.1 **and** Stormwater Management §245-6

**Other Permits needed:** N/A. **Applicant:** Tetra Tech

**Landowner if different from Applicant:** North Atlantic Concrete / **Engineer or Surveyor:** Tetra Tech

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / KEY POINTS FOR THE PB TO CONSIDER:**

The applicant is seeking a **Site Plan Review** for 91 Groton Harvard Road. The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing warehouse/office building and replace it with a commercial building while maintaining the same existing uses on site. The proposed commercial building will be approximately 12,390 SF with office space, storage space, and loading bays. There is also an existing landscape company that will continue to use a portion of the land for its vehicles and storage.

The applicant is also seeking a **Stormwater Management Permit** for the proposed project at 91 Groton Harvard Road. The proposed project triggers the Major Project threshold due to land disturbance of an area greater than 40,000 Sq Ft. The applicant is proposing an underground infiltration system to handle the roof runoff and the southern parking lot. There is a biofiltration system that will handle the stormwater from the northern parking lot.

The property is located within the Residence A-1 zoning district and is considered an existing non-conforming use.

The applicant is requesting three (3) waivers from the Town of Ayer Site Plan Review Rules and Regulations Section IV and one (1) from the Stormwater Management Bylaw:

- Section IV. C. 14. Detailed Landscape Plan – Reason: The proposed planting on site is limited to shrubs in front of the proposed commercial building. (See Sheet C4.1 and C6.1) The redevelopment of the project site will generally maintain the existing trees/shrubs that are acting as natural landscape buffer/screening surrounding the previously disturbed portion of the site.
  - Town Planner: I do not agree with this waiver request. 3 of the 7 proposed plantings for the biofiltration area are not meant to be planted in wet/soggy areas and the biofiltration area will be wet and soggy most of the time. 1 of the 7 proposed plantings are shown on the table of plantings that should be used in a biofiltration area within the Stormwater Handbook. The applicant proposed rhododendrons along the front of the building, and they are very close to the foundation. Rhododendrons should not be planted near concrete foundations or walkways because the alkalinity from the concrete will kill the roots. The applicant proposed boulders along the north and south side of the building instead of actual landscaping. Due to all these reasons, I think a detailed landscape plan stamped by a Landscape Architect should be required.
- Section IV. E. 2. Traffic Impact Analysis – Reason: Although the proposed building may provide more space for office and interior storage use, the Applicant does not anticipate more onsite personnel / employees that would be coming and leaving the site on a daily basis than the current condition and existing businesses renting interior and exterior storage space will remain the same, therefore onsite traffic patterns will generally remain the same.
  - Town Planner: I agree with the applicant's request for this waiver. I recommend that the Planning Board approve this waiver request.
- Section IV. G. 2. Photometric Plan – Reason: Site lighting is limited to wall mounted light fixtures that are mounted to the exterior wall of the proposed building with automatic shut-off function as operating hours for the existing businesses are limited to weekdays from 7AM– 5PM, therefore a Photometric plan would be unnecessary.
  - Town Planner: I agree with the applicant's request for this waiver. The applicant should still submit spec sheets for the proposed outdoor lighting to ensure they are dark-sky compliant. I recommend that the Planning Board approve this waiver request.
- Section 2.8. D. b. Redevelopment Stormwater Management Performance and Design Standards - Allow water quality retention volume and pollutant removal (TSS and TP) to be provided to only the redevelopment portion of the project site. Reason: Through onsite soil testing for locating suitable area for subsurface sewage disposal system and drainage system, it was discovered that the site surface condition is filled with ledge. For most of the test pit locations that were possible to dig down, we discovered fill materials that are unsuitable for locating drainage system. After multiple days of digging, we were able to locate an area south of the existing building to allow for subsurface infiltration chambers, therefore a drainage system was designed for the site based on this area.
  - Town Planner: The applicant states that the site has ledge when they did test pits and that only the southern portion of the site has viable soils for subsurface infiltration. These test pits were not witnessed by anyone from the Town, and they did not submit any soil logs for the other test pits they did in which they hit ledge. The applicant should submit logs showing what depth they

hit the ledge and show on the site plan where the test pits were conducted. A site visit may be needed to confirm these locations. Until this information has been submitted I cannot make a determination on the waiver request.

## Project Description and Interdepartmental Review

- a. Location Description and Surrounding Neighborhood (inc. Locus Map from Assessor's Maps and Google Earth) Note:



North Atlantic Concrete, 91 Groton Harvard Road – Map 13, Lot 8

### I. Applicable Zoning, Site Plan and/or Subdivision Regulations

- a. Zoning District(s) and Applicable Building Development Standards: Residence A-1

#### Section 6.2 Schedule of Dimensional Requirements:

- a. **Minimum Lot Area:** 40,000 SF
- b. **Minimum Lot Frontage:** 150 FT
- c. **Side Yard:** 15 FT
- d. **Front Yard:** 35 FT
- e. **Rear Yard:** 30 FT
- f. **Building Height:** 2 1/2 Stories or 35 FT
- g. **Maximum Building Coverage:** 15%
- h. **Maximum FAR:** NA
- i. **Minimum % Open Space:** 80%

b. Other Needed Reviews, Approvals and Permits:

- **Building Permit(s)**
- **NPDES Permit**

## **II. Issues to Discuss and Recommendations for the April 23, 2024, PB Meeting**

### Interdepartmental Comments on Site Plans:

**Assessor:** No Comments.

**Fire Department:** No Comments.

**Building Commissioner:** No Comments.

**Dept. of Public Works:** See attached letter dated 4/11/24.

**Police Department:** No Comments.

**Community & Economic Development:** No Comments.

**Board of Health:** No Comments.

**Conservation Commission:** See attached letter dated 4/12/24.

**Treasure/Tax Collector:** No Comments.

**Town Manager:** No Comments.

**Town Planner:** See attached letter dated 4/4/24.

### Recommendation for the April 23, 2024, PB meeting:

1. Presentation from the applicant on their submission.
2. Review the Department Head comments issued for the application.
3. Discuss the requested waivers.