

82

**TOWN OF EASTON
HISTORICAL COMMISSION**



Easton Historical Commission Recommendation
Easton Board of Appeals Hearing
January 7, 2009

The Easton Historical Commission voted the following recommendation to the Board of Appeals at a meeting held this past Monday, January 5, 2009:

The Easton Historical Commission supports redevelopment of the historic Ames Shovel Works site and is not opposed to affordable housing as a possible, viable reuse. At this time, however, we cannot support the current proposal as it stands. We oppose any plan which causes such tremendous adverse effects on this particular historic site and much of the North Easton National Register and H.H. Richardson National Landmark Districts. Hundreds of local residents share this view. Experts from near and far support our long-standing claim that this site and district are unique and of the highest level of state and national historic significance. We join them in agreeing that the current proposal would cause irreversible and unconscionable harmful changes. Simply put, the site is too important and the changes too great to be supported.

However, if the Board of Appeals chooses to approve the project with conditions, the Commission would request an approval that is conditioned sufficiently to preserve the unique historical assets of this site. While we do not necessarily support any of the specific alternative proposals developed by the Friends of the Ames Shovel Shops, we do support the general concepts of their design guidelines. The Historical Commission would request an approval with a number of very specific conditions that would assure preservation of the site and the historic district:

1. All work on the site must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

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2. No full or partial demolition of any building constructed before 1908, with the exception of the Valve House
3. No additional stories should be added to any building constructed before 1908
4. All development should conform to design guidelines similar to those prepared by the Friends of the Historic Ames Shovel Works, to be developed in conjunction with the Easton Historical Commission
5. All parking areas should be separated from the street by a landscaped buffer
6. All new buildings that are proximate to Oliver and Main Streets and visible from Mechanic Street should reflect the scale and pattern which exists on these streets; new buildings on site should be of a consistent scale and size to the significant historic structures on the site
7. No new buildings should be constructed between the Historical Society, Oliver Street, and the existing historic structures
8. An easement should be granted for pedestrian access through the site and under the railroad bridge from Mechanic Street to Main Street
9. Historic views toward and from the site should be preserved
10. Existing granite walls, window and door openings, rooflines, eaves, and cupolas should be preserved on all primary building facades, except where necessary to meet building code and habitability requirements
11. No buildings should be higher than 35' above grade
12. No fencing shall be allowed along Main and Oliver Streets and along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site. Fencing shall only be allowed as required for public safety and such fencing shall be of historically appropriate style
13. An archaeological survey and inventory of historic artifacts on site as well as a curatorial plan for such artifacts shall be completed before construction begins

As noted above, the Commission does not support the current project. However, if the Board of Appeals chooses to approve a redevelopment proposal the Commission respectfully recommends that they only do so with these conditions.

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