

Memo

To: City of Somerville Planning Board
From: Davis Square Partners
CC: George Proakis, Adam Duchesneau, Redgate Real Estate Advisors, KSS Realty
Date: July 5, 2012
Re: Maxwells Green Site Enhancements

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

At our last meeting on June 7th, we discussed the proposed Lowell Street monumental entrance signage at Maxwells Green. In lieu of approval, Board members requested that we provide the following for our next meeting:

1. Evidence that the crash barrier wall is coordinated with the MBTA's GLX Lowell Street Station
2. Evidence that the wall is constructed at the documented height

Our hope for the upcoming Planning Board meeting is to further discuss the merits of the entrance signage as affixed to the crash barrier walls and explain minor enhancements we made to our approved site plan since the start of construction activities. We recently conducted a site tour for the Planning Staff to bring them up to speed on these changes as outlined below:

Lowell Street Entrance Signage:

Although we closely coordinated and communicated with various agencies involved in the project such as the City of Somerville Planning Staff, the MBTA, GLX design team, MassDot and the design team for the Community Path, we neglected to review our revised plans with the Planning Board in a timely manner and would like to apologize for this unintentional oversight.

In the approved and permitted site plan, signage is shown in the areas where we have constructed the crash barriers today. As the design evolved and the question of public safety in and around the entrance arose, we believed these areas to be appropriate locations for signage and planting beds minimizing the massing of these walls and hiding the concrete. After working collaboratively with the above agencies, we now feel the signage promotes both good functional and aesthetically pleasing design.

The design is intended to create a welcoming entry for the community as well as the residents of Maxwells Green. It is a clear marker for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to the site; Community access and activity within and across the site is one of the greatest attributes of this project and perhaps one of its highest selling points. This project was conceived of and promoted as a Transit Oriented Development, not a gated community. The signage walls open up to the bridge sidewalk and seamlessly connect to the existing bridge walls and fencing.

We have flattened and widened the crosswalk/sidewalk area in front of the driveway allowing for an improved pedestrian experience along Lowell St which will promote access to the Lowell St Station as well as the Community Path via an ADA compliant sidewalk which allows for wheelchairs, strollers, etc to descend safely and comfortably to either the Community Path or the centralized Community Green. The crash barrier walls were positioned and constructed to prevent automobiles from rolling down steep embankments on both sides of the entrance where they are most vulnerable and potentially travelling at the greatest speeds. We believe the design to be far safer and more welcoming than a simple jersey barrier type guardrail and more aesthetically pleasing than the standard chain link fencing used atop the concrete bridge walls. We have also created attractive granite planting beds to integrate foliage with the design of the signage. It had been suggested by a member of the Planning Board that we incorporate ivy as well; we think this is a great suggestion and plan to implement.

At the time of the Planning Board hearing on June 7th, the crash barrier walls were still under construction; backfilling had not been completed to raise the grade to its finished levels. The foundations of these deep concrete structures were exposed. It may have appeared to be very tall to those walking or driving along Lowell Street and we certainly understand that perception. As our renderings accurately represent, the newly completed sidewalks reveal our design to be lower in height and more visually palatable than before. Please note that the grade of the driveway will be raised another six inches (+/-) which will even further reduce the scale of the walls. Currently, the height of the walls at the bridge is 4'-6".

It is important to note that a 5 foot section of the wall on the MBTA side of the entryway where it connects to the bridge wall was not constructed per the documents. We have instructed the contractor to lower this section of wall to the height of the bridge wall so that it will not impede pedestrian and vehicular visibility. Again, this was not part of the intended design and we have informed the MBTA of this correction.

We have shared our correspondence regarding all of these design modifications with George Proakis to show that our changes were designed to complement the Green Line Extension, the Community Path and Maxwells Green simultaneously. In an email dated 6/22/12 from Michael McBride, GLX Program Manager to our development team (which cc'd the City of Somerville) the GLX team states that it is their intention to repair and/or replace any alterations they make to the crash barrier walls or signage that may be required as their designs for the Lowell St Station evolve.

Community Green:

The landscape design for the Community Green that was submitted with the approved site plan was a placeholder. The Board, planning staff and our team felt that there was room for improvement. As a result, we have been working with our design team to enhance the landscape plan and form a central green space that is aesthetically pleasing to the residents and inviting to the public. The added costs associated with the following upgrades will be borne by the development team. We are currently consulting with Planning Staff members to finalize our landscape plan in conformance with the special permit.

We are proposing informal stone seating areas with numerous café tables and large caliper trees for shading. Although we reduced the total number of trees, we have generously increased the size of the trees allowing for 10% additional canopy and a more lush landscape experience. We have added two

grass berms to encourage residents, visitors and the public to sit on the lawn area and a large open area to provide ample space for throwing a Frisbee or football. The main thoroughfare through the green is a concrete sidewalk that carries traffic diagonally across the green from the Community Path to Maxwells Green's amenity building. A combination of decomposed granite, stone, grass, low shrub plantings and other ground cover combine to provide a rich and varied experience throughout the landscape.

Warwick Street Stoops:

During the course of construction, we realized that an engineering miscalculation caused our parking spaces along Warwick Street to be partially located in the public right of way. The stairs to the stoops at Building C conflicted with the publicly accessible sidewalk in front of the building. The grades near the community path were also steeper than anticipated, requiring more steps down from each stoop to reach grade in that area. The stairs were permitted as perpendicular to the building, but as a consequence of the field conditions, we needed to turn the stairs parallel to the building in order to maintain the minimum sidewalk width required by ADA guidelines. We believe that this modification maintains the essential character of the stoops, sustaining a strong connection with the neighborhood. The change has been approved administratively as planning staff believe that this modification is a de minimus revision to the special permit.

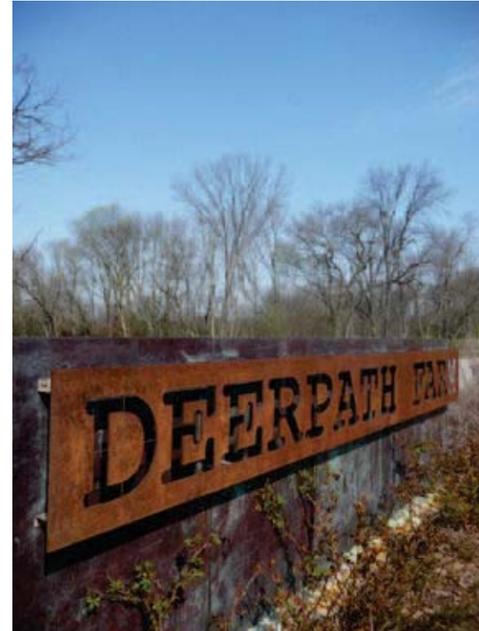
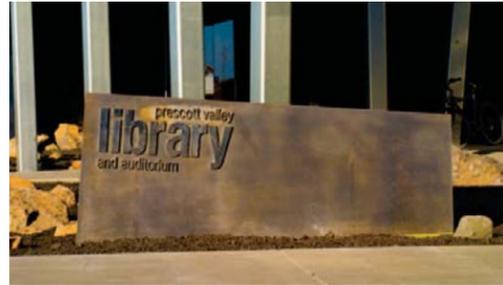
Dog Park at Community Path:

Maxwells Green is a pet-friendly development. As an added amenity for both the residents and community path users, we are contemplating adding a small dog area enclosed by low fencing for pets to interact, play, get a drink of water (and do business!). There will be stations for cleaning and grooming. The amenity will be maintained by users and the property management company. Conveniently located between building A and B adjacent to the Community Path, it will keep the community green pet-free and clean for the general public, making the experience of The Green more enjoyable for everyone.

Sincerely,



Steve Perdue
Owner Representative
Redgate Real Estate Advisors on behalf of Davis Square Partners



Material Imagery



Sign Elevation

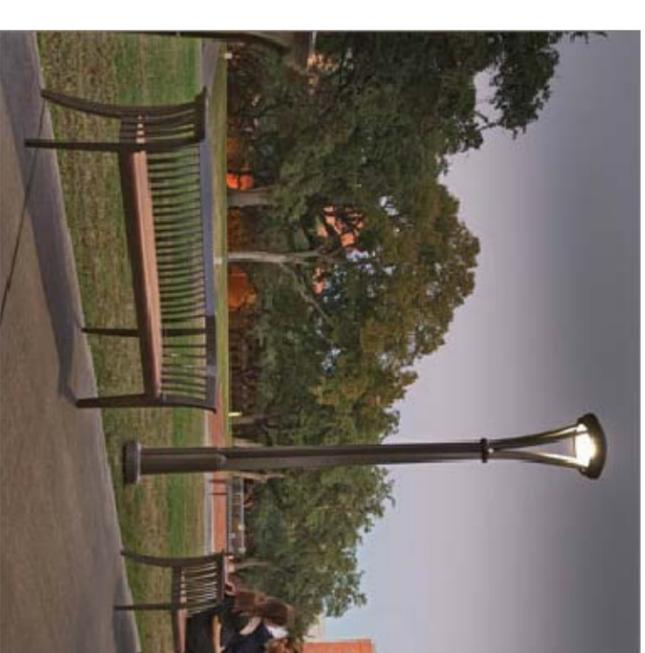
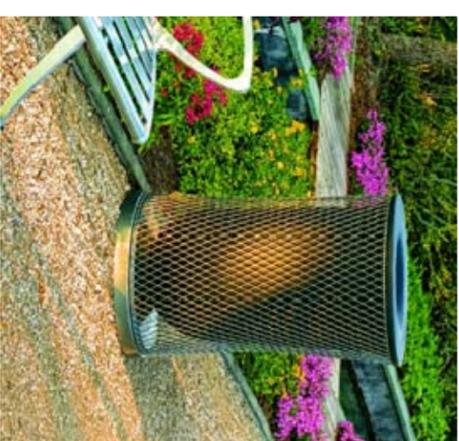
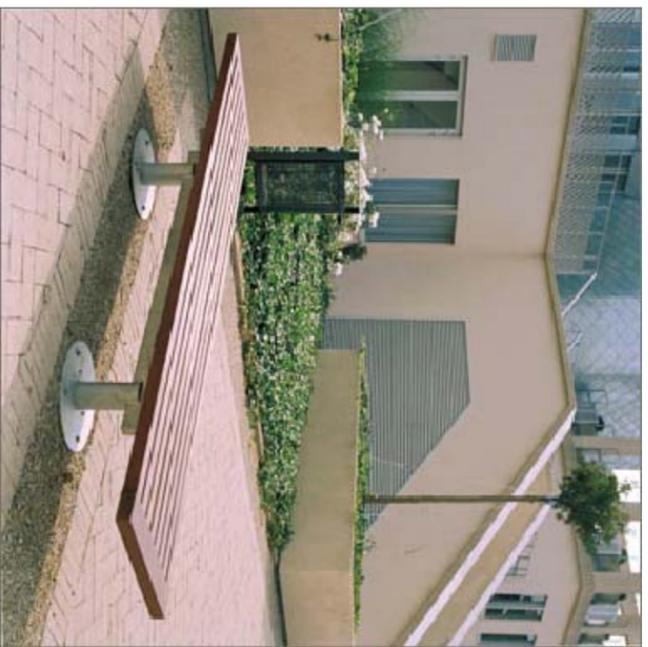


Proposed entry signs on Lowell Street with existing bridge wall





Proposed entry signs on Lowell Street with future MBTA station

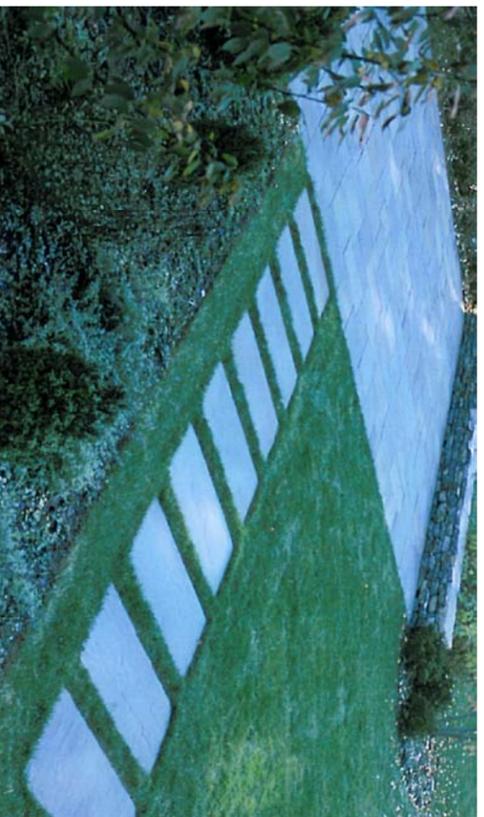


BENCH OPTIONS

PLACED BOULDER SEATING

TRASH RECEPTACLE

LIGHTING

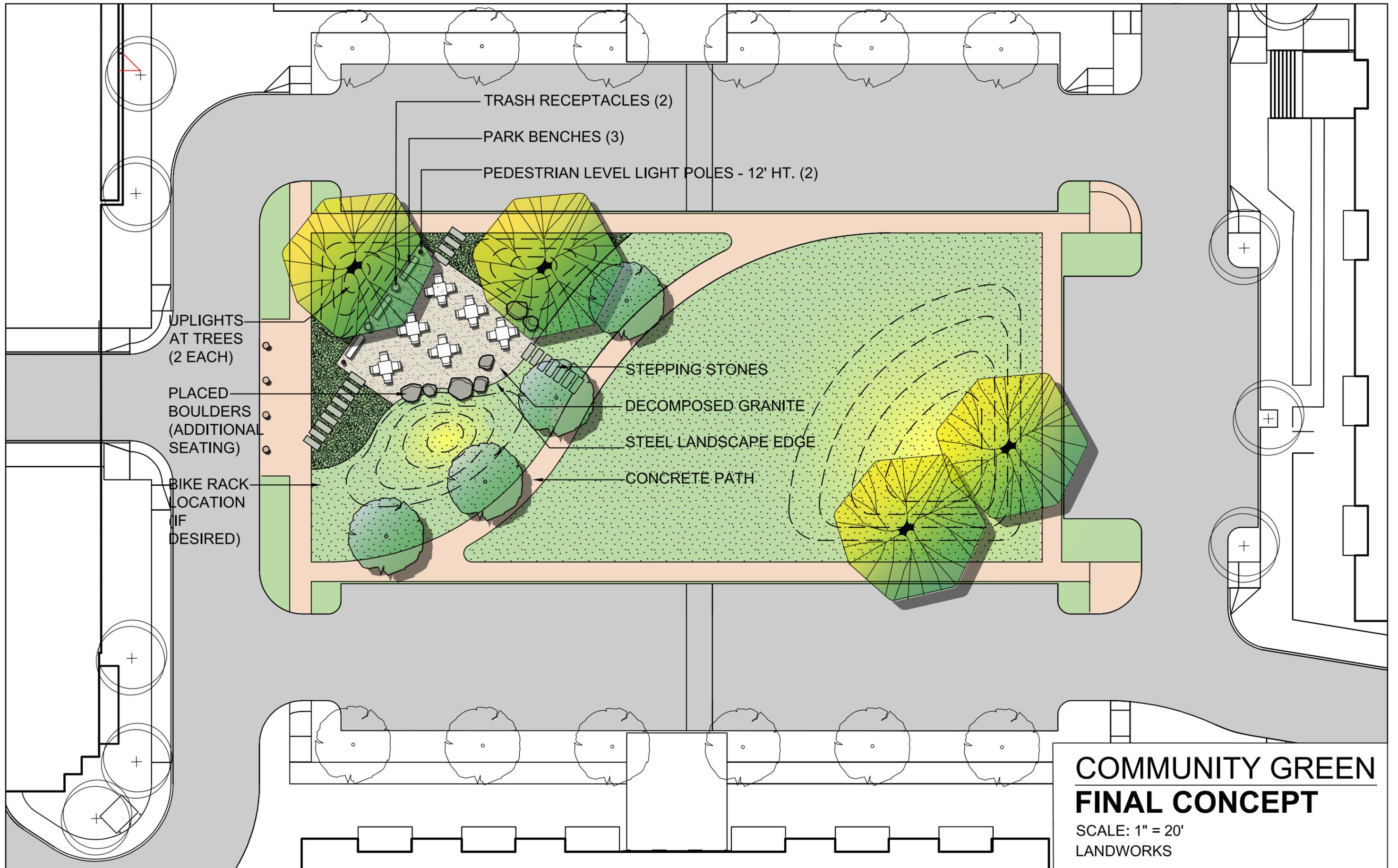


STEPPING STONES

BIKE RACK

COMMUNITY GREEN IMAGES

SCALE: NTS
LANDWORKS



COMMUNITY GREEN
FINAL CONCEPT
 SCALE: 1" = 20'
 LANDWORKS