

Building Massing and Architectural Style

The proposed development introduces 95 residential rental units designed with the aesthetic qualities of traditional New England cottages, ensuring the community reflects the architectural heritage of the region while delivering much-needed housing diversity. The buildings are designed and scaled to resemble traditional single-family homes, employing pitched roofs, gables, dormers, and porches that are common throughout the area.

Distinct unit types will be provided, including both single-story ranch-style homes and two-story configurations, allowing the neighborhood to appeal to a wide demographic — from young professionals and families to empty nesters and seniors. The majority of homes are organized in a “paired home” format, where two units are placed back-to-back. This arrangement provides efficiency in site planning while also offering each resident privacy, natural light, and dedicated exterior access and outdoor space that reinforces the sense of an independent home.

Exterior Materials

Exterior building materials are proposed to be durable, low-maintenance, and appropriate for long-term residential use. Siding will consist of a combination of horizontal clapboard and shingle-style profiles, utilizing fiber cement and/or vinyl products in muted, natural colors. Architectural elements such as painted trim, gable features, and covered entry porches will provide visual interest and reinforce a cohesive residential character.

Site Layout and Open Space

The site is organized as a walkable, human-scale neighborhood with tree-lined streets, landscaped buffers, and open spaces integrated throughout the plan. Units are clustered in small groupings to create smaller communities within the development while offering a central circulation spine providing access to the entire community.

Each unit is designed with its own private outdoor space — such as a porch, patio, or small yard — to foster a sense of ownership and connection to the landscape. Common greens and pocket parks punctuate the layout, providing opportunities for gathering, play, and relaxation. Parking is accommodated through surface parking dispersed throughout the site at a ratio of ~1.2 spaces/bedroom and screened with landscaping, when possible, to minimize their visibility and ensure the pedestrian environment remains the focus.

Relationship to Adjacent Properties and Development Patterns

The project has been carefully scaled and buffered to respect the surrounding neighborhood context. Instead of a traditional 5:2 (7 story) Multifamily design configuration, the development is comprised of smaller scaled 1 and 2 story buildings. The scale of the development creates a soft transition to adjacent single-family neighborhoods. The development aims to maintain a natural landscape buffer where possible to preserve existing trees and provide a sense of privacy to abutters. Care and consideration have been taken where adjacent buildings are present.

The orientation of the homes toward internal drives and open spaces establishes a sense of address and reinforces a neighborhood character. Paired homes have been carefully designed and placed on the site to accentuate their architectural features. The main vehicular entrance aligns with existing rights-of-way. Upon entering the site, the development will provide sidewalks and landscaping to welcome residents and guests alike. Pedestrian connections are emphasized throughout the development with meandering sidewalks and green spaces.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Sustainability is a core principle of the project. All units will operate entirely on electricity, eliminating the use of fossil fuels and ensuring compatibility with Massachusetts' decarbonization goals. The buildings will be designed to meet or exceed the Stretch Energy Code, incorporating high-performance envelopes, efficient HVAC systems, and modern appliances that reduce overall energy consumption. By delivering an all-electric community, the project supports long-term resilience, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, and positions residents to benefit from future renewable energy sources.

Conclusion

This proposed 95-unit development combines the traditional character of New England with thoughtful site planning to create a community that looks and feels like a neighborhood of single-family homes while delivering attainable rental housing that is greatly needed. With a mix of unit types, private outdoor space for each resident, a sustainability-forward design, and a layout that emphasizes compatibility with adjacent properties, the project will serve the diverse housing needs of Amesbury while enhancing the fabric of the community.