

Narrative Description of Design Approach

Upton Apartments
Upton, MA 01568

Description of the Project Site & Surroundings

Upton Apartments is sited on a 6.75-acre site located north of a funeral home (Pickering & Son) and within the triangulation of Whitney Lane, School St, and Main St (Route 140). The adjacent lots are in Upton's SRA Zoning. Immediately surrounding the site are single family homes on lots averaging between 0.34 to 2.08 acres. There are a handful of 2-family and 3-family homes along Main St.

The funeral home to the south is sited on 1.27 acres of land. The property consists of three buildings—a two-story structure, a one-story structure, and a detached garage—totaling approximately 7000sf. The exterior materials consist of lap siding and asphalt shingles.

To the south and east are houses built between 1820 and 1950, citing some of Upton's history. These homes are primarily colonials and ranches, ranging from 800-1900sf. The exterior materials on these homes are lap siding and asphalt shingles.

To the north-west are single family homes built in the 1980s. These homes are primarily colonials, ranging from 1700-2200sf. The exterior materials on these homes are lap siding and asphalt shingles.

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The design for Upton Apartments feeds from several building features from the surrounding area. The building utilizes lap siding, shingles, and stone, all of which speak directly to pre-existing material palette.

While most buildings (and nearly all residences) in this area have pitched roofs, Upton Apartments features a flat roof with parapets to help reduce the height of the building and conceal the rooftop mechanical units. The lower building height respects the single-family houses in the area. Additionally, the sloped terrain of the site has been used to step the building, reducing the perception of its height.

Regarding the streetscape, the building is sited so the narrowest elevation faces Main St, reducing the perceived width and bulk of massing. This elevation has also been divided with façade articulation and material variety, again helping to reduce the building's perceived scale.

Human-scale moments continue throughout the building exterior, notably at the main entry of the building on the west. The main entry is celebrated with a two-story recess and a single-story roof that acts as a wayfinding element for tenants and guests. At the other entrances—the north and south stairwells and the east lobby—also are topped with canopies that speak to a more intimate, human scale.

Each elevation is set back from the residential parking with a soft, landscaping buffer ranging in depth of no less than seven feet. In a similar sense, the building is situated in the middle of the site, allowing for gracious landscaping and reprieve from the street and pre-existing homes. This buffer is not unlike the front and back yards of the existing properties in the area.