



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

2021 JUL 27 AM 9:50
CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

NOTICE OF DECISION

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| Case Number: | 361 |
| Address: | 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue |
| Zoning: | Business B (BB)/ Central Square Overlay District |
| Applicant: | Gas Light Building, LLC. 100 Summer Street, Suite 1600, Boston, MA 02210 |
| Owner: | Gas Light Building, LLC. 10 Winthrop Square, Boston, MA 02210 |
| Application Date: | March 4, 2020 |
| Date of Planning Board Public Hearing: | July 21, 2020; December 15, 2020, April 27, 2021; June 15, 2021 |
| Date of Planning Board Decision: | June 15, 2021 |
| Date of Filing Planning Board Decision: | July 27, 2021 |

Application: Special permit to exempt basement area from Gross Floor Area (GFA) calculation (Article 2.000, Definition of GFA) and special permits in the Central Square Overlay District for building height exceeding 55 feet (section 20.304.2), additional combined residential and non-residential FAR (Section 20.304.3), exemption of rooftop spaces from GFA calculation (Section 20.304.3.6) reduction of parking and loading requirement (Section 20.304.6), formula business (Section 30.305.5.4), and exceeding allowed frontage for bank use (Section 20.305.3.b) to renovate the existing building and create an addition resulting in a total of 40,432 square feet of development for ground-floor retail, office space, and a 36-room hotel use, with no on-site parking and 8 long-term bicycle parking spaces.

Decision: GRANTED, with Conditions.

Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17 of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after filing of the above referenced decision with the City Clerk. Copies of the complete decision and final plans, if applicable, are on file with the Community Development Department and the City Clerk.

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Swaathi Joseph

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Swaathi Joseph at 617-349-4648, or sjoseph@cambridgema.gov.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on March 4, 2020, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Community Outreach Summary, Sustainability Narrative prepared by WSP, dated 9/10/2019, Transportation Analysis Report prepared by VHB, dated 1/23/2020, Project Narrative, plan set titled 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue Special Permit Application prepared by Finegold Alexander Architects, dated 1/27/2020.
2. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 7/21/2020.
3. Revised materials dated 10/20/2020, including responses to questions from the Planning Board, revised narrative materials and revised plan set titled 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue Special Permit Application prepared by Finegold Alexander Architects, dated 10/20/2020.
4. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 12/15/2020.
5. Revised materials dated 3/24/2021, including responses to questions from the Planning Board, revised narrative materials and revised plan set titled 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue Special Permit Application prepared by Finegold Alexander Architects, dated 3/24/2021.
6. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 4/27/2021.
7. Revised materials dated 5/28/2021, including responses to questions from the Planning Board, revised narrative materials and revised plan set titled 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue Special Permit Application prepared by Finegold Alexander Architects, dated 5/28/2021.
8. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 6/15/2021.

City of Cambridge Documents

9. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Katherine F. Watkins, City Engineer, Department of Public Works (DPW), dated 3/16/2020.
10. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director, Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP+T) Department, dated 3/19/2020.
11. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 7/14/2021.
12. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 12/8/2020.
13. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 4/20/2021.

14. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 6/8/2021.

Other Documents

15. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 7/20/2020.
16. Email communication to the Planning Board from Bill Cunningham, dated 7/20/2020.
17. Email communication to the Planning Board from Cheryl Patterson Munroe, dated 7/20/2020.
18. Email communication to the Planning Board from Kenneth S. Barron, dated 7/20/2020.
19. Email communication to the Planning Board from Morris Naggar, dated 7/20/2020.
20. Email communication to the Planning Board from George H Katis, dated 7/21/2020.
21. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jookun Lim, dated 7/20/2020.
22. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jun Wang, dated 7/21/2020.
23. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jookun Lim, dated 7/21/2020.
24. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 7/21/2020.
25. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jookun Lim, dated 7/22/2020.
26. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 12/13/2020.
27. Email communication to the Planning Board from Carolyn Shipley, dated 12/14/2020.
28. Email communication to the Planning Board from Doug Brown, dated 12/14/2020.
29. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jun Wang, dated 12/14/2020.
30. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 12/14/2020.
31. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 12/15/2020.
32. Email communication to the Planning Board from Carol O'Hare, dated 12/15/2020.
33. Email communication to the Planning Board from Suzanne Blier, dated 12/15/2020.
34. Email communication to the Planning Board from Emmet Sheehan, dated 12/15/2020.
35. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jennie Song, dated 4/9/2021.
36. Email communication to the Planning Board from Joseph D'Agostino, dated 4/16/2021.
37. Email communication to the Planning Board from Brett Owens, dated 4/16/2021.

38. Email communication to the Planning Board from Michael J O’Leary, dated 4/17/2021.
39. Email communication to the Planning Board from Stuart Weinberg, dated 4/19/2021.
40. Email communication to the Planning Board from Max Barber, dated 4/19/2021.
41. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jonathan Mendez, dated 4/21/2021.
42. Email communication to the Planning Board from David Barlam, dated 4/21/2021.
43. Email communication to the Planning Board from Adrien Nussenbaum, dated 4/22/2021.
44. Email communication to the Planning Board from Bill Cunningham, dated 4/25/2021.
45. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jun Wang, dated 4/26/2021.
46. Email communication to the Planning Board from Kevin Treanor, dated 4/26/2021.
47. Email communication to the Planning Board from Shauna Reyburn, dated 4/26/2021.
48. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 4/26/2021.
49. Email communication to the Planning Board from Corinne Engelbert, dated 4/26/2021.
50. Email communication to the Planning Board from Rony Sellam, dated 4/26/2021.
51. Email communication to the Planning Board from Kavish Gandhi, dated 4/26/2021.
52. Email communication to the Planning Board from Audra Murphy, dated 4/27/2021.
53. Email communication to the Planning Board from Charles Wyzanski, dated 4/27/2021.
54. Email communication to the Planning Board from Harriet H. Ahouse, dated 4/27/2021.
55. Email communication to the Planning Board from Shelley Reiman, dated 4/27/2021.
56. Email communication to the Planning Board from Karen Chen, dated 4/27/2021.
57. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jun Wang, dated 4/27/2021.
58. Email communication to the Planning Board from Carol O’Hare, dated 4/27/2021.
59. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 6/4/2021.
60. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 6/10/2021.
61. Letter to the Planning Board from Tania Del Rio, dated 6/14/2021.
62. Email communication to the Planning Board from Louise Parker, dated 6/14/2021.
63. Email communication to the Planning Board from Carol O’Hare, dated 6/14/2021.
64. Email communication to the Planning Board from Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan, dated 6/14/2021.

65. Email communication to the Planning Board from Bill Cunnigham, dated 6/14/2021.
66. Email communication to the Planning Board from Esther Cul-Kahn, dated 6/14/2021.
67. Email communication to the Planning Board from Liz Layton, dated 6/14/2021.
68. Email communication to the Planning Board from Suzanne Bas Davis, dated 6/14/2021.
69. Email communication to the Planning Board from Ben Simon, dated 6/14/2021.
70. Email communication to the Planning Board from Lawrence Kolodney, dated 6/14/2021.
71. Email communication to the Planning Board from Smith Jacquelyn, dated 6/14/2021.
72. Email communication to the Planning Board from Andy Nash, dated 6/14/2021.
73. Email communication to the Planning Board from Sarah Heintz, dated 6/14/2021.
74. Email communication to the Planning Board from Shelley Reiman, dated 6/14/2021.
75. Email communication to the Planning Board from Benjamin Gammage, dated 6/14/2021.
76. Email communication to the Planning Board from James M. Williamson, dated 6/14/2021.
77. Email communication to the Planning Board from Lee Farris, dated 6/14/2021.
78. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jane Ehrlich, dated 6/14/2021.
79. Email communication to the Planning Board from Lisa Horvitz, dated 6/14/2021.
80. Email communication to the Planning Board from Monty Montero, dated 6/14/2021.
81. Email communication to the Planning Board from Huma Gupta, dated 6/14/2021.
82. Email communication to the Planning Board from Nancy Ryan, dated 6/14/2021.
83. Email communication to the Planning Board from Joel Greenberg, dated 6/14/2021.
84. Email communication to the Planning Board from Theodora Skeadas, dated 6/14/2021.
85. Email communication to the Planning Board from Patrick Barton, dated 6/14/2021.
86. Email communication to the Planning Board from Karen Chen, dated 6/15/2021.
87. Email communication to the Planning Board from Eric Colburn, dated 6/15/2021.
88. Letter to the Planning Board from Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan, undated.
89. Letter to the Planning Board from Tianna Afieri, undated.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The Applicant proposes renovation and rehabilitation of the historic Cambridge Gas Light Company building and constructing an addition behind and partially above the existing building to include ground-floor retail, office space, and a 36-room hotel (the “Project”). The proposal does not include off-street parking and loading areas and seeks a special permit to waive those requirements. The property is located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Temple Street in the Business B District within the Central Square Overlay District. The site is entirely within the Central Square National Register District and the existing building is considered to be a contributing historic building. The Applicant reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission, who concluded that the project does not require a formal hearing by the Commission. The requested special permits are discussed in detail in the Findings below.

FINDINGS

After review of the Application Documents and other documents submitted to the Planning Board, testimony given at the public hearing, and review and consideration of the applicable requirements and criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance with regard to the relief being sought, the Planning Board makes the following Findings:

1. Special Permits for development in the Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.300)

The Project requires special permits under the provisions of the Central Square Overlay District for building height (Section 20.304.2.2), additional FAR for residential uses (Section 20.304.3.4), exemption of rooftop spaces from GFA (Section 20.304.6.3), reduction of parking and loading requirements (Section 20.304.6), Formula Business use (Section 20.304.5.4), and waiver of limitation on bank frontage (Section 20.304.5.3.b). In granting such special permits the Planning Board finds that the Project is in general conformance with the standards set forth in Section 20.305, for the reasons set forth below.

20.305 Standards for Issuance of Special Permits. In addition to the general standards for the issuance of a special permit found in Section 10.40 of the Zoning Ordinance, the special permit granting authority shall in addition make the following findings:

(1) The proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan:

- encourage responsible and orderly development;*
- strengthen the retail base to more completely serve the needs of the neighborhoods;*
- preserve the Square’s cultural diversity;*
- create active people oriented spaces;*
- improve the physical, and visual environment;*
- provide retail establishments that serve people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods;*

- *encourage the development of new mixed income housing; and*
- *promote compatible retail adjacent to residential uses*

The proposed mix of uses will maintain and increase ground-story retail uses on the site and will create additional office and hotel uses, which will help to support and sustain retail businesses in the area. The hotel use, which is allowed in the district, is proposed to have limited food service to encourage guests to patronize local businesses. Retail uses with improved façades will be located along the Massachusetts Avenue frontage, to support continuity in the retail streetfront and street-level activity in the public realm. A pattern of smaller retail storefronts will offer opportunities for different types of businesses.

(2) The building and site designs are consistent with “Urban Design Plan for Central Square” as outlined in the “Central Square Action Plan” and the “Central Square Development Guidelines”;

The preservation and restoration of the historic Gas Light Building is supported by the Board and is consistent with the development guidelines for the area. The site design maintains a strong pedestrian-oriented streetfront with multiple entrances and a largely transparent ground story. The proposed addition is designed to complement and enhance the existing historic building along Massachusetts Avenue and to be minimally intrusive to the existing building’s architecture. Board members acknowledged that there is tension between the desire to orient massing in a way that is sensitive to an existing historic building and the desire to minimize the impact of height and bulk on a neighboring residential building. The Applicant provided several iterations of design that adjusted the massing of the addition to allow greater light and views from the abutting residential building while retaining the integrity of the existing structure. Ultimately, the majority of the Board found that the final design iteration achieves a balance that appropriately meets the design objectives for the area.

(3) The building and site designs adequately screen the parking provided and are sensitive to the contributing buildings in the vicinity;

The proposed addition will not have any off-street parking spaces, which improves its visual character.

(4) No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building; and

(5) No National Register or contributing building has been demolished or altered so as to terminate or preclude its designation within the five (5) years preceding the application.

The existing contributing building’s exterior façade will be restored without modification that will impact its designation. Staff from the Cambridge Historical Commission have reviewed the designs along with CDD urban design staff and are supportive of the proposed restoration.

The Board makes the following additional findings with regard to the specific special permits being sought.

2. Special Permits for additional building height in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.2.2)

20.304.2. Building Height Limitations. The maximum heights of buildings in the Central Square Overlay District shall be governed by the regulations of this Section 10.304.2; however, at locations where the base zoning district establishes a more restrictive height limitation, the more restrictive shall apply

2. *Special permit for Additional Height. Additional height may be permitted as follows:*
- (a) *The maximum allowable height in the Central Square Overlay District may be increased up to eighty (80) feet upon issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board provided that those portions in excess of sixty (60) feet are set back from the street line at least ten (10) feet and that those portions are also set back from one or more forty-five degree (45°) bulk control planes beginning sixty (60) feet above any streetline in the district and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.*

The proposed addition will be 80 feet in height with portions above 60 feet set back at least 10 feet from the street line and with 45-degree bulk control planes. Furthermore, as described above, the proposed addition has been set back from the abutting residential lot and the height of the addition is stepped-back from the residential building to increase light and sky views to residential units.

3. Special Permit for additional FAR in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.3.4)

20.304.3. Floor Area Ratio Limitation. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limitations established in the applicable base zoning district shall continue to apply to any lot in the Central Square Overlay District unless specifically modified by the following provisions:

4. *Additional FAR for Residential Uses. Upon issuance of a special permit, the Planning Board may increase the allowed FAR on any lot or portion of a lot located within the Business B (BB) portion of the Central Square Overlay District to a total FAR of 4.00 for all non-residential and residential uses combined, notwithstanding the Rules for Calculation of Permitted Gross Floor Area on a Lot as set forth in Section 5.30.12, provided that the maximum FAR permitted for non-residential uses on a lot shall not exceed the limitation on non-residential FAR applicable in the base zoning district and that the proposed FAR of all non-residential uses on the lot shall not exceed the proposed FAR of all residential uses on the lot.*

The proposed addition will increase the FAR to 3.83. The residential component of the FAR (which includes the hotel use) is 2.35 and the non-residential component of the FAR is 1.48.

The non-residential FAR is less than the maximum FAR of 2.75 permitted in the Business B zoning district. Hence the Planning Board may approve the increase in FAR.

4. Special Permits for exemption of rooftop spaces from GFA calculation in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.3.6)

20.304.3 Floor Area Ratio Limitation. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limitations established in the applicable base zoning district shall continue to apply to any lot in the Central Square Overlay District unless specifically modified by the following provisions:

6. *FAR Exemption for Rooftop Spaces. In the Business B district only, notwithstanding any other provisions of this Zoning Ordinance, the Gross Floor Area of open-air spaces on the roofs of buildings, such as roof gardens, terraces, walk ways, including open or enclosed egresses, covered staircases, mechanical head-houses, or observation spaces shall be exempted from Gross Floor Area and FAR limitations upon the granting of a special permit by the Planning Board. In granting any special permit, the Planning Board must be able to find that the proposed rooftop spaces have been located and designed to minimize impacts on neighboring uses, including but not limited to light trespass, noise or other nuisance, and may place further requirements or conditions on the design or operational aspects of spaces exempted pursuant to this Paragraph, including but not limited to hours of operation, range of activities permitted, signage and lighting fixtures, visual screening devices, sound mitigation, and other measures to ensure ongoing compliance with the Board's findings.*

The proposed roof terraces on the fourth floor facing Massachusetts Avenue are screened by the parapet of the existing building on the street side and screened by the new addition from the residential building in the rear. The private terraces are proposed to have limited lighting and downlighting. Hence the impacts will be minimal on neighboring uses.

5. Special permit for reduction of parking and loading requirements in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.6)

20.304.6 Parking and Loading Requirements. The provisions set forth in Article 6.000 shall apply except as modified by the provisions set below.

3. *Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements. Uses in the Central Square Overlay District which meet the following requirements shall be exempt from the parking and loading requirements as specified in Section 6.36 - Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements and the minimum requirements set forth in Paragraph 2 above.*
- (a) *The use is contained within a structure or portion of a structure in existence on or before June 1, 1940 or if constructed later is identified as a National Register or contributing building; or*

- (b) *The use is contained in a new structure or new addition to a structure identified in (1.) above, after the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board provided:*
- (i) *The total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot; or a cash contribution is made to the Central Square Improvement Fund to be established by the City of Cambridge in an amount equal to fifty (50) percent of the cost of construction of the parking spaces not provided*
 - (ii) *The subject lot is sufficiently small in size as to contribute to a development pattern of diverse, small scale, new structures and the retention of existing structures (for lots exceeding 10,000 square feet a specific finding shall be made that this objective has been met).*
 - (iii) *The Planning Board shall specifically find that an exemption from parking and loading requirements will result in a building design that is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood and that it is in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in Central Square Development Guidelines.*
 - (iv) *No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building; and*
 - (v) *No National Register or contributing building has been demolished or altered so as to terminate or preclude its designation within the five (5) years preceding the application.*

The proposed project seeks approval to waive all required on-site parking and loading. No new parking will be created with the proposed development, which will retain the retail use on the ground floor, activating the streetscape while preserving a contributing historic building located on a lot that is slightly larger than 10,000 square feet in area. The basis for the requested reduction is that the site is located in an area that is well served by multiple modes of public transit and that by not providing on-site parking, a better streetscape design that is more pedestrian-friendly can be achieved, including the elimination of a curb cut. Since the project will result in a development that exceeds ninety percent of the maximum allowed on the lot, a cash contribution in an amount that will be established by the City of Cambridge as equal to fifty (50) percent of the cost of construction of the parking spaces shall be made to the Central Square Improvement Fund. The proposed building addition provides an active street edge and restores the existing historic building, which are positive urban design outcomes that meet the objectives of the Central Square Development Guidelines.

6. Special Permit for Formula Business in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.5.4)

In the Central Square Overlay District, a Formula Business may be established on a lot by special permit from the Planning Board upon consideration of the following:

- a. *The extent to which the design of the proposal reflects, amplifies, and strengthens the established historical character of existing buildings and store fronts in Central Square.*
- b. *The extent to which the particulars of the building or storefront design is varied from the formula or standard design of the chain in order to reflect the unique character and conditions of Central Square generally or the specific location in particular.*
- c. *The extent to which the standard elements of the enterprise as they define it as a Formula Business are modified to respect and provide unique expressions of Central Square history and traditions as well as innovation in physical design and marketing that will distinguish the Central Square location from other locations of the Formula Business.*

The Project will retain the Bank of America use in its current location at the ground story. Aside from replacing the storefront and signs as well as restoring the elaborate grillwork on the corner bays of the Massachusetts Avenue facade, no other alterations are proposed to the exterior façade, which retains the colors and materials of the existing historic building in addition to the existing ratio of glass to solid materials of the existing building. The proposed signage is reduced to a modest amount in order to identify the business without detracting from the architectural character of the historic building.

7. Special Permit to waive limitation on bank frontage in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.5.3.b)

20.304.5 *Use Limitations and Restrictions. In addition to the use regulations applicable in each base zoning district the following use restrictions and limitations shall apply in the Central Square Overlay District:*

3. *Restricted Uses.*

- b. *Unless specifically waived upon the granting of a special permit by the Planning Board, no individual bank or financial institution (Section 4.34e) shall occupy more than twenty-five (25) feet of building frontage facing Massachusetts Avenue or Main Street, and no more than thirty percent (30%) of a lot's aggregate building frontage facing one or more public streets may be occupied by such uses.*

The existing bank use will not be increased from its present dimensions and will continue to occupy more than twenty-five (25) feet of building frontage facing Massachusetts Avenue and more than thirty percent (30%) of the lot's aggregate building frontage facing two public streets. The existing bank business will continue to serve its current customers in Central Square. As noted above, the signage proposed is relatively modest in size and located in an appropriate place for patrons to identify it. The proposed wall sign is pedestrian-oriented, which is consistent with

the Central Square Development Guidelines. The location, size, and color of signage is not inconsistent with the variety of signage found throughout Central Square.

8. Special Permits for exemption of basement from GFA calculation (Article 2.000)

The Zoning Ordinance allows that the definition of Gross Floor Area may be modified by special permit as set forth below.

Gross Floor Area shall not include: ...

- (15) *Any basement or cellar living space in any single-family or two-family home.*
- (16) *Any basement or cellar living space in any other type of structure with the issuance of a special permit. In granting such a special permit, the permit granting authority may approved the exemption of any portion of Gross Floor Area (GFA) located in a basement or cellar from the calculation of GFA, provided the permit granting authority finds that the uses occupying such exempted GFA support the character of the neighborhood or district in which the applicable lot is located.*

The project will require major renovations in the basement level to include mechanical utility areas, an electrical vault, and bicycle parking along with continued office use within a reduced area. The basement of the proposed addition is for utilities and mechanical areas associated with the hotel use. The Board finds the uses proposed for the basement area of the project to be generally consistent with the character of the neighborhood, in which commercial buildings typically contain a variety of utilities and other uses in their basements that support other active uses above. Making existing basements code-compliant for ancillary activities of the commercial use will allow for expanded retail areas at the street level.

9. General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit (Section 10.43)

The Planning Board finds that the project meets the General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit, as set forth below.

10.43 Criteria. Special permits will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except when particulars of the location or use, not generally true of the district or of the uses permitted in it, would cause granting of such permit to be to the detriment of the public interest because:

- (a) *It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or ...*

Upon granting of the requested special permits, it appears that the requirements of the Ordinance will be met.

- (b) *traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or ...*

The proposed conversion and addition to create a hotel and ground-floor spaces in conformance with zoning limitations is not anticipated to cause particular congestion or hazard. A communication from TP+T dated March 19, 2020 indicates that the project is not expected to have a major transportation impact in the neighborhood.

- (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or ...*

The proposed uses comply with allowed uses in this district, and will not adversely affect adjacent uses that exist or are anticipated in the future.

- (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or ...*

The proposed uses will not create nuisance or hazard, and all development activity will be subject to applicable health and safety regulations.

- (e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and ...*

The neighborhood has a mix of residential and non-residential uses, including some hotel facilities, and the proposed expansion and conversion would fit this existing and anticipated pattern of development.

- (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.*

The Board finds no inconsistency with the citywide urban design objectives. The urban design objectives are generally supported in the proposal through improved streetscape appearance and pedestrian amenity, consistency with the pattern of development in the area, minimal environmental impacts on abutters and minimal impact on City infrastructure.

DECISION

Based on a review of the Application Documents, testimony given at the public hearings, and the above Findings, the Planning Board hereby GRANTS the requested Special Permits subject to the following conditions and limitations. Hereinafter, for the purposes of this Decision, the Permittee shall mean the Applicant for the requested Special Permits and any successor or successors in interest.

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the Application Documents and other supporting materials submitted to the Planning Board, and the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board are the plan set titled 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue Special Permit Application prepared by Finegold Alexander Architects, dated May 28, 2021. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (“CDD”). Before issuance of each Building Permit for the project, CDD shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that the final plans submitted to secure the Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this Decision. As part of CDD’s administrative review of the project, and prior to any certification to the Superintendent of Buildings, CDD may present any design changes made subsequent to this Decision to the Planning Board for its review and comment.
3. The Special Permits granted to permit a Formula Business use and to waive the limitations on frontage for a bank use shall be granted only to the Bank of America use established at 727 Massachusetts Avenue at the time of application. Any future Formula Business, bank use, or other limited use established at this location shall be required to seek new Special Permits to the extent applicable to that future use.
4. The Permittee shall address the following comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be subject to CDD review and approval of the final design details prior to issuance of a Building Permit:
 - a. Selection of all exterior materials, colors, façade alterations and restoration details, which shall also be reviewed by the staff at Cambridge Historical Commission.
 - b. Changes to the adjoining sidewalks and their features, including any new trees and the removal of the existing curb cut, which shall also be reviewed by the staff at DPW. The street trees shall be preserved and protected in the long term and construction practices shall be approved by the staff at DPW.
 - c. All external lighting, to be reviewed for general conformance with technical guidelines recommended in the proposed Cambridge Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, with consideration given to minimizing light trespass.
 - d. Interior lighting and window treatment on the façade facing the Temple Place Apartments.

- e. Details of visual and acoustical screening of rooftop mechanical equipment.
 - f. Coordination with Cambridge Arts Council on the removal of its upper portion of the mural on the west wall of the existing building when the existing rooftop penthouse is demolished, and on protection of the remaining portion during construction.
5. Prior to the final selection of colors and textures for façade materials, the Permittee shall erect a mock-up(s) of an exterior wall section incorporating all colors and materials on or near the building site to be reviewed by CDD for comment. Members of the Planning Board shall be notified when the mock-up is erected and given an opportunity to view the materials and transmit any comments to CDD.
 6. In accordance with Section 20.304.6.3(b), the Permittee shall make a cash contribution to the Central Square Improvement Fund established by the City of Cambridge in an amount equal to fifty (50) percent of the cost of construction of the minimum number of parking spaces required based on the Gross Floor Area of the proposed uses. The funds shall be used by the City of Cambridge in accordance with that section of the zoning, and as set forth therein, the Central Square Advisory Committee shall receive and make comments on any proposal for the expenditure of such cash contributions, and the value of the cash contribution shall be determined by the Community Development Department assuming equivalent structured parking spaces and using generally accepted cost estimation methods customarily used by architects and engineers or using actual construction costs for comparable contemporary parking construction in Cambridge. Such payment shall be made and certified prior to issuance of a building permit for construction authorized by this Special Permit.
 7. The Permittee shall be required to implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures:
 - a. Provide 65% transit pass subsidies to full time hotel employees. This may be prorated for part-time employees.
 - b. Provide Gold level membership to all employees at the site who wish to enroll in the Hubway bike share program.
 - c. Provide a real-time transit and Bluebikes display screen in the hotel lobby to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip.
 - d. Provide incentives for patrons to not bring a car to the hotel.
 - e. Promote public transportation and other sustainable modes of travel on the website of the hotel.
 - f. Have available an air pump and bicycle repair tools for employees and customers to use when needed.
 - g. Provide lockers and showers for employees.

- h. Designate an employee of the facility as a transportation coordinator (TC) to manage the implementation of TDM measures including:
 - i. Compile and provide to all employees up-to-date transportation information explaining all commuter options. This information shall also be distributed to all new employees as part of their orientation.
 - ii. Provide customers the information regarding transportation options to access the site.
 - iii. Provide and maintain information on the project's website, newsletters, social media, etc. on how to access the site by all modes, with emphasis on non-automobile modes.
 - iv. The TC will participate in any TC training offered by the City of Cambridge.
 - v. If requested by TP+T or CDD, perform an annual transportation survey to employees and guests. The survey shall be approved by TP+T and CDD.
8. Loading activities for the hotel (e.g., laundry, cleaning and other hotel operating services) should not occur during peak morning and evening commute hours (7-9 AM and 5-7 PM) to minimize traffic impacts. At no time shall loading or drop-off/pick-up activities result in blocking of a bicycle lane or other traffic flow on Massachusetts Avenue, Temple Street, or any other public street.
9. In order to meet the requirement for short-term bicycle parking spaces, the Permittee shall make a contribution to the City's Bicycle Parking Fund in accordance with Section 6.104.2-b of the Zoning Ordinance equivalent to the amount necessary to provide six (6) bicycle parking spaces or three (3) bicycle racks. Such contribution shall be made prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
10. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).
11. The applicability of the Incentive Zoning requirements set forth in Section 11.202 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance shall be determined prior to issuance of a Building Permit. If the Incentive Zoning requirements apply, the applicable Housing Contribution shall be calculated at the time of issuance of a Building Permit and the Housing Contribution shall be made prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
12. Throughout design development and construction, the project shall conform to the Green Building Requirements set forth in Section 22.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. CDD shall certify that the applicable requirements are met prior to issuance of a building permit, and again prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, for development authorized by this Special Permit.

Voting in the affirmative to grant the requested Special Permits were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Steven Cohen, Catherine Preston Connolly, Hugh Russell, and Tom Sieniewicz, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board. Planning Board Member Mary Flynn voted in the negative.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Preston Connolly". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "For the Planning Board,".

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair

A copy of this decision PB #361 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, Massachusetts General Laws, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the above decision has been filed on July 27, 2021 with the Office of the City Clerk, by Swaathi Joseph, duly authorized representative of the Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty days have elapsed since the above decision was filed in the office of the City Clerk and:
_____ no appeal has been filed; or

_____ an appeal has been filed within such twenty days.

The person exercising rights under a duly appealed special permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone. This certification shall in no event terminate or shorten the tolling, during the pendency of any appeals, of the periods provided under the second paragraph of G.L. c. 40A, §6.

Date: _____, City Clerk

Appeal has been dismissed or denied.

Date: _____, City Clerk

Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart

| | Existing | Allowed or Required | Proposed | Permitted |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| Lot Area (sq ft) | 10,553 | None | No Change | No Change |
| Lot Width (ft) | 86.89 & 121 | None | No Change | No Change |
| Total GFA (sq ft) | 26,877 | 42,212 ¹ | 40,432 ¹ | 40,432 |
| Residential Base | 0 | 42,212 | 24,758 | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Non-Residential Base | 26,877 | 31,659 | 15,674 | |
| Inclusionary Bonus | n/a | n/a | 0 | |
| Total FAR | 2.54 | 4.0 | 3.83 | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Residential Base | 0 | 4.0 | 2.35 | |
| Non-Residential Base | 2.54 | 3.0 | 1.48 | |
| Inclusionary Bonus | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| Total Dwelling Units | 0 | n/a | 0 | 0 |
| Base Units | n/a | n/a | n/a | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Inclusionary Bonus Units | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft) | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft) | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| Height (ft) | 49.75 | 80 ¹ | 80 | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Front Setbacks (ft) | 0 | 0 | No change | |
| Side Setback (ft) | 24.83 & 0 | 0 & 0 | 1.167 & No change | |
| Rear Setback (ft) | n/a | n/a | n/a | |
| Open Space (% of Lot Area) | 0 | 0 | 0 | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Private Open Space | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Permeable Open Space | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Off-Street Parking Spaces | 0 | 11 | 0 ¹ | 0 ¹ |
| Long-Term Bicycle Parking | 0 | 8 | 8 | Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements |
| Short-Term Bicycle Parking | 0 | 6 | 0 ² | |
| Loading Bays | 0 | 1 | 0 ¹ | |

¹ With Planning Board Special Permit and a cash contribution to the Square Improvement Fund for an amount that will be established by the City of Cambridge as equal to fifty percent of the cost of construction of the parking spaces not provided.

² Provided by making a contribution to the City's Public Bicycle Parking Fund for 3 bike racks.