



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	August 20, 2013
Subject:	Popper-Keizer, et al. Zoning Petition (Special District 8A)
Recommendation:	The Planning Board strongly DOES NOT RECOMMEND adoption of the proposed zoning amendment.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

The Planning Board considered this proposed zoning amendment at a public hearing on June 18, 2013 and continued deliberation on August 20, 2013. The proposal would amend the Cambridge Zoning Map to rezone a portion of the current Special District 8A (SD-8A) to Residence C-1. The Board has also reviewed, but has not yet approved at the time of this Recommendation, an application for development at 240 Sidney Street, a site that would be impacted by the proposed rezoning.

After consideration of the petition, testimony given at the public hearing and other materials provided to the Board, it is the Board's opinion that the current zoning for this area is appropriate and that it would not be in the City's interest to rezone the area in the manner proposed. The current zoning allows housing at a scale that is somewhat higher than the adjacent residential neighborhood in order to encourage a conversion from commercial uses to residential buildings that would be compatible with the residential neighborhoods to the north while buffering the neighborhoods from the more intensive commercial uses to the south. Reducing the allowed scale of residential development to Residence C-1 would likely discourage this transition, because it would be more valuable to the property owners to retain the existing buildings as legally nonconforming commercial uses.

Furthermore, the Board believes that it would be detrimental to the planning process in this case to take a rezoning action whose principal effect would be to inhibit a property owner's ability to proceed with a proposed development that conforms to current zoning. The appropriate scale of development for that area was considered when the City Council created the Special District 8A zoning district in 2001. Development has been proposed on a property in the district that conforms to a set of zoning requirements that have been in place and known for many years, and the Board does not believe it is appropriate as a matter of policy to change the rules now that a proposal has been put forward.

Therefore, the Board strongly recommends against adoption of the proposed zoning amendment.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Russell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hugh Russell, Chair.