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Sean D. Hope Esq.

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Mr. Hugh Russell, Chairman
Cambridge Planning Board
Cambridge, MA 02139

January 11, 2012

Re: 40 Norris Street Special Permit #252

Dear Mr. Russell,

In response to comments from the Planning Board and members of the public at the December 20th 2011 Planning Board meeting enclosed are modifications and clarifications to the project plans in preparation for the January 17th Planning Board meeting.

We believe these changes are responsive to the comments of the Planning Board and will provide for an adaptive reuse that is financially viable and consistent with the stated goals of the Amended 5.28.2.

1. Reduction of Unit count from Twenty Seven to Twenty Five Units

The number of dwelling units has been reduced below the allowed number of units (27) to provide Twenty Five dwelling units and two commercial units. This reduction was achieved by incorporating the third floor wing large studio style units with the second floor flats below. This modification more clearly defines the bedrooms into the units below; making for a series of grand master bedroom suites. Additionally it removes any ambiguity as to where studies can occur.

2. Reduction in the Parking Spaces from Twenty Eight to Twenty Seven parking spaces

The proposed reduction to Twenty Five total dwelling units allows the parking area to utilize two of the spaces for visitor parking and / or the commercial spaces on the lower level. Consistent with the feedback from the Cambridge Traffic and Parking Department the commercial parking spaces can be shared in off peak hours with the residents providing visitor spaces to alleviate any additional off-street parking congestion. Additionally the revision allows more area for landscape and temporary snow storage by providing an additional 115 square feet of landscape adjacent to the enclosed dumpster area. Further, the emergency access gates along Drummond place to the rear of the building has been modified to sliding gates instead of swing gates.

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The parking site plan and layout was created after a parking study was conducted by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. and reviewed by Cambridge Traffic and Parking which included availability of off-street parking on Norris and surrounding streets. The Traffic department memo (see attached) found that the parking layout containing Twenty Eight Cars was functional and *“recommend the 28 parking spaces be managed the most efficient and flexible way to accommodate the building’s parking needs, including residents and two commercial units.”*

As evidenced in the Parking Study, the property is located within 300 yards to public transportation and a short walk to several Zipcars. The addition of Zipcars on the lot was reviewed by the owner and after consultation with Cambridge Traffic and Parking. It was determined the adding Zipcars would convert the parking area to a commercial lot because the Zipcar spaces would service the public requiring zoning relief. Further the addition of Zipcars would expose the owner increased liability and undue expense.

The Traffic and Parking Department also reviewed the ratio of compact to standard size spaces and found the ratio was appropriate and was in compliance with all zoning and ADA requirements.

3. Clarification of plans to increase understanding and eliminate ambiguity

The amended plans attached hereto have been distributed to the neighborhood for review. The issues regarding bedroom labels and other inconsistencies in the plans have been changed to eliminate ambiguity. The sleeping areas are appropriately labeled as bedrooms which are distinct from areas that to be used for study/office within the units.

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and Community Development Department has preliminarily reviewed the Gross Floor Area calculations and will again review when applicant applies for a building permit.

A three dimensional sketch and pictures has been provided to aid in understanding the cross-sections of the building and third floor lofts spaces.

4. Privacy and Lighting considerations

The lighting poles for the rear parking lot have been reduced from 20’ to 14’ to lessen any excess glare on rear and side abutters as suggested by Mr. Hugh Russell. Additional vegetation (evergreens) for the front yard cooling unit has been added to help with screening during winter months when the unit is most visible.

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5. Snow and Waste Management Plans

The snow management and removal will be handled internally utilizing the owner's full time construction staff and snow removal equipment to pick up snow and remove it from the site to the extent possible. Similar to other parking areas in Cambridge, proper use of the driving isles for snow plow/pickup and the frequency of salting and sanding measures will help manage the snow throughout the winter.

To reduce the impact of snow drifts falling from roof additional snow cleats and snow fencing will be added to the extent permitted by the Cambridge Historical Commission. It should be noted that the building currently has very limited snow fencing and that the proposed additional fencing will be installed around all sides of the building in compliance with industry recommendations.

A dumpster located in the rear of the property is sufficient size to handle the trash for the residential and commercial units. A private waste disposal company will handle the pick and will sort the recyclable materials off-site eliminating the need for separate recyclable containers.

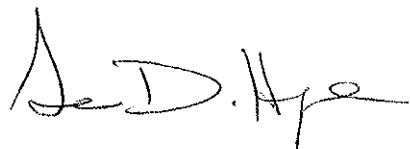
6. Other Miscellaneous Revisions

- a. The number of washer and dryers has been increased to 4 washers and 4 dryers.
- b. There is a minimum of 115 cubic feet of basement storage area provided per unit.
- c. The community room facilities are 1032 square feet. This is a proportionally appropriate and comfortable allocation of space for this use given the total number of units in the proposal.
- d. It is essential to the potential success of the work / live option for the use of the commercial / office space to have residential units directly adjacent to the space; IE: the basement units. This has been exhibited in other work live situations in Cambridge and Somerville.
- e. The ratio of bicycle parking to units is 1.32 bikes per unit. The ordinance requires 0.5 spaces per unit. Additionally the more than adequate individual storage lockers are another opportunity to store additional bikes if needed.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

Sean D. Hope Esq.





CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
344 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Susan E. Clippinger, Director
Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director

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MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Sue Clippinger, Director
Date: December 20, 2011
Re: 40 Norris Street

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department has reviewed the Planning Board application for 40 Norris Street. The project is an adaptive reuse of the former 45,654 sf North Cambridge Catholic High School into 27 dwelling units, 28 parking space, and 27 indoor and 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces near the building entrance. We have the following comments on this project:

1. The project did not require a Traffic Impact study.
2. The project meets zoning minimum parking requirement. Because the project is a conversion from non-residential use to a residential use it also requires parking analysis pursuant to 5.28.2. A parking analysis was completed by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. and found that the average auto ownership from 5 comparable projects in the area was approximately 0.87 automobiles per unit, with a range from 0.6 to 1.1 automobiles per unit. The study found that night-time on-street parking occupancy for Norris Street was 86% (about 50 on-street spaces and 43 cars parked at 10:30-10:45 pm).
3. We believe the project's parking layout will be functional and we recommend the 28 parking spaces be managed the most efficient and flexible way to accommodate the building's parking needs, including residents and two commercial units.
4. We support the transportation demand management (TDM) measures the proponent proposes to implement to reduce parking demand, including:
 - a. To encourage new residents to establish a pattern of using available public transportation services, a coupon for a MBTA Charlie Card (valid for local bus and subway travel) for the first month of occupancy will be provided, free of charge, for each rental.
 - b. At the time of move-in, a map of available transportation alternatives will be provided to each new rental.

The Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. parking analysis memo dated November 23, 2011 is attached.

CC: Adam Shulman, TPT; Susanne Rasmussen, Stephanie Groll, Cara Seiderman, CDD; Mouhab Z. Rizkallah, David Black, VHB Inc.; Sean Hope.



Memorandum

To: Sue Clippinger, Director
Traffic, Parking and Transportation Dept
City of Cambridge

Date: November 23, 2011

cc: Adam Schulman

Project No.: 11831.00

From: David Black

Re: Proposed Residential Development
40 Norris Street, Cambridge
Parking Analysis

VHB has performed a parking analysis for the above project in response to the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TP&T) Department's memorandum dated November 4, 2011. The proposed development includes 27 residential units and 2 commercial units, along with supporting automobile and bicycle parking. The existing and proposed site plans are shown on the attached Plans S-1 and P-1, respectively. The analysis findings are summarized below, organized in the order of the information as requested in the TP&T memorandum.

1. *Describe the project in detail, including number of units and type of housing (rental or condo), market rate or below market rate, number of vehicle and bicycle parking spaces, size and proposed use of commercial units, site plan of vehicle and bicycle parking layout.*
 - a) 27 market rate residential rental units
 - b) 2 commercial rental units (Total 1,800 SF, lower level), to be occupied as studio/work space by building resident(s)
 - c) 28 surface vehicle parking spaces (14 full size, 14 compact)
 - d) 16 bicycle parking spaces immediately adjacent building entrance
 - e) 27 bicycle parking spaces in lower level bike room
 - f) See Plan P-1 for external vehicle and bicycle parking layout
 - g) See Plan A100 for internal bike room layout

2. *Estimate the projects parking demand for peak time (we presume nighttime) by finding two or more comparable project (i.e. similar number of units) and determine auto ownership rates and peak parking occupancy rates. We will work with you, and obtain residential parking permits and auto registration, if available, at those facilities.*

The following projects were identified as potential comparables with similar numbers of residential units and transit characteristics:

- a) 69 Harvey Street (17 units)
- b) 2440 Massachusetts Avenue (42 units)
- c) Tyler Court, 2456-2560 Massachusetts Avenue (28 units)
- d) 113 Richdale Avenue (20 units)
- e) 25-31 Wheeler Street (72 units)

These projects vary in size, but have very similar locations in relation to transit. As is the case for 40 Norris Street, projects (a), (b) and (c) are served primarily by MBTA bus service on Massachusetts Avenue, and, like 40 Norris Street, they are within half-a-mile from Davis MBTA station, and therefore accessible by Red Line. Projects (d) and (e), 113 Richdale Avenue and 25-31 Wheeler Street, also are served by MBTA bus service, although they are located somewhat closer to Red Line stations at Porter and Alewife, respectively.

Parking supply, resident permit data, and numbers of registered vehicles (where known) for each project are summarized in Table 1. In addition, parking occupancy was surveyed between 10:30 and 11:00 PM on Thursday November 17 at two locations, (69 Harvey Street and 25-31 Wheeler Street). It was not possible to access the below-grade garages at the remaining three projects to determine parking occupancy at those locations.

As shown in Table 1, the parking ratio is 1 space per unit at most of these projects, although it is slightly higher at 1.15 for the Richdale Avenue project. By comparison, information from the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) indicates an average of 0.8 vehicles registered per unit in 2011. If the Wheeler Street project is not included in the calculation (because only 2010 RMV data are available for that project), the average is 0.87 vehicles registered per unit.

It is useful to note that the 2006-2008 American Community Survey indicates a Cambridge city-wide average of 0.92 vehicles per household, down slightly from the 2000 Census average for Cambridge of 0.98 vehicles per household. In addition, data indicate that car-ownership is slightly higher for condominiums compared to rental units, and since all of the comparable projects analyzed are condominiums it would be expected that the car ownership for rental units at 40 Norris Street might be slightly lower by comparison.

The number of City of Cambridge 2011 resident parking permits obtained by residents of the projects varies from 0.7 to 1.1 per unit, with an average of 0.87 resident permits per unit. This shows some consistency with the number of registered vehicles.

Finally, the night-time parking occupancy counts performed at 69 Harvey Street and 25-31 Wheeler Street showed that parking occupancy at those locations was 59% and 81%, respectively (average 70%). In both cases, there could of course be some residents parking on street, so the occupancy does not necessarily reflect the total parking demand per unit. At the Wheeler Street project, 4 vehicles were observed to be parked on-street, most likely associated with those residential units given the absence of other abutting land uses. Taking those vehicles into consideration yields a parking demand of approximately 0.86 vehicles per unit.

For the 40 Norris Street project, the parking supply ratio is 1 space per unit, plus 1 space shared between the 2 commercial units. Based on the preceding analysis, it is likely that the peak (night time) parking demand for the residential units will be in the order of 24 spaces, based on 86% occupancy. Any additional demand associated with the work spaces would be for daytime visitors, when parking availability is not an issue.

3. *Provide maps showing distance to alternative transportation options in the area (including MBTA transit and bus, bike facilities, car-sharing services).*

The location of the project site in relation to alternative transportation is shown in the attached Plan 1, including the following:

- a) MBTA Bus routes and stops
- b) MBTA Red Line stations
- c) Car-sharing locations (Zipcar)
- d) Bicycle facilities

As shown, the 40 Norris Street project is well served by the MBTA 77 bus route on Massachusetts Avenue, and the 83 bus route on Rindge Avenue. Both bus routes connect with the Red Line and Commuter Rail at Porter Square, although the Red Line is also accessible at Davis Square, less than a 10-minute walk.

There is a total of 10 Zipcars available within a 15-minute walk of 40 Norris Street.

4. *Describe any proposed parking management (i.e. fees, parking allocation, etc.)*

The following parking management strategies are proposed as part of the project:

- a) Parking spaces will be rented separately from the residential units
- b) Market rates will be charged for all parking spaces

5. *Describe measures, if applicable, that will be implemented to reduce parking demand for private automobile use.*

The following parking and transportation demand management measures will be implemented as part of the project:

- a) To encourage new residents to establish a pattern of using available public transportation services, a coupon for a MBTA Charlie Card (valid for local bus and subway travel) for the first month of occupancy will be provided, free-of-charge, for each rental.
- b) At the time of move-in, a map of available transportation alternatives (similar to Plan 1) will be provided to each new rental.

6. *On-street parking availability study on Norris Street*

An on-street parking survey was performed between 10:30 - 10:45 PM on Thursday November 17, 2011. There are approximately 45 Resident permit spaces plus 5 un-restricted parking spaces, totaling approximately 50 on-street spaces over the full length of Norris Street. The following parked vehicles were observed:

34 cars displaying resident stickers in Resident Permit spaces
2 cars displaying resident stickers in un-restricted spaces
1 car displaying resident sticker blocking a driveway
1 car with visitor card in Resident Permit space
4 cars without resident stickers in Resident Permit spaces
1 car without resident sticker in unrestricted spaces
7 vacant parking spaces (5 resident permit, 2 un-restricted)
TOTAL 43 cars parked

The survey yields an on-street parking occupancy of 86%, indicating some availability of on-street parking, both resident permit and unrestricted. In addition, it was observed that there were 7 cars parked in off-street driveways.

TABLE 1

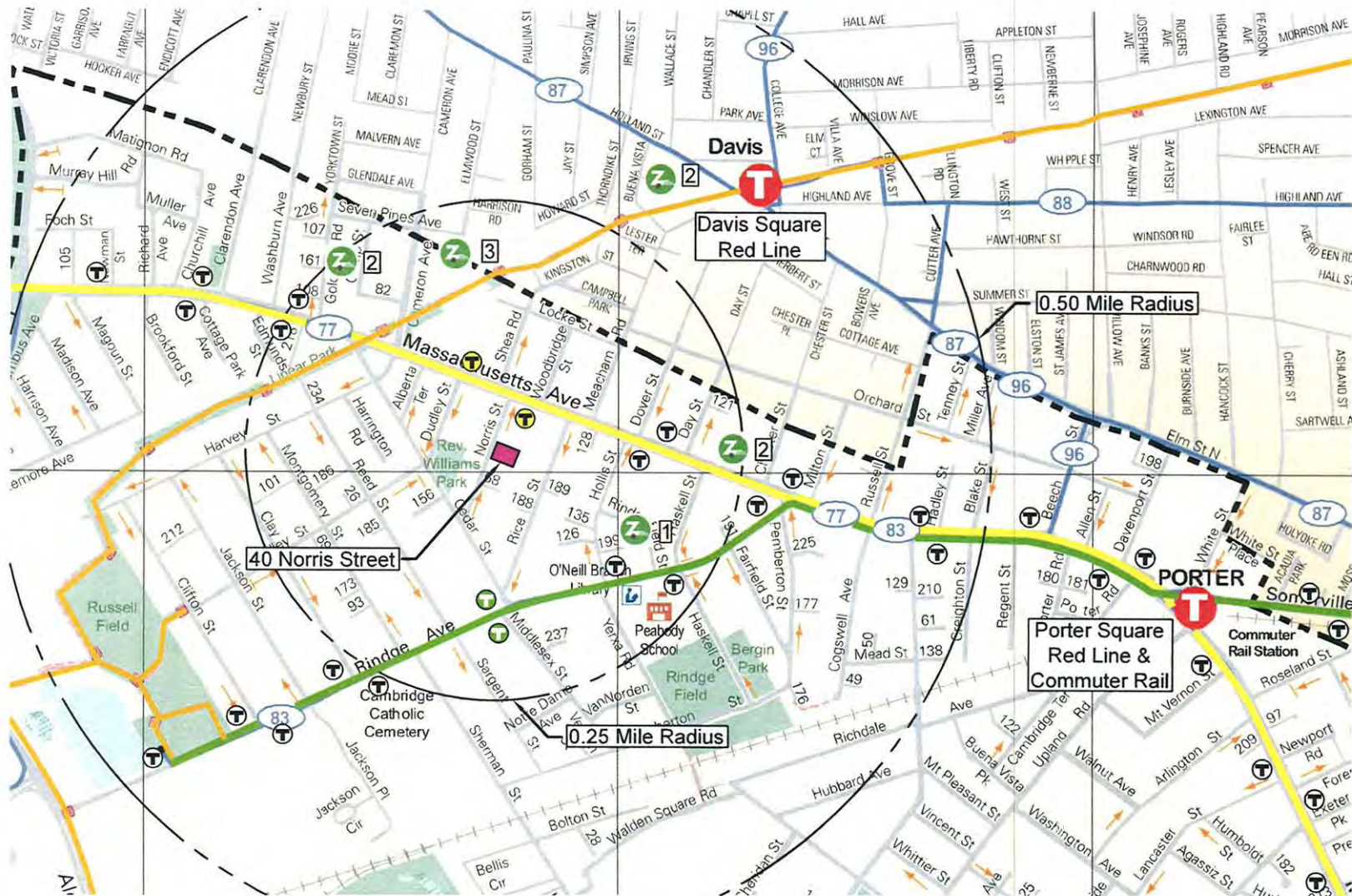
40 Norris Street Residential Project
 Parking Supply & Demand Comparison
 November, 2011






Project Address	Residential Units	Parking Spaces		Registered Vehicles		Resident Permits		Night-time Occupancy *	
		#	Ratio	#	Per Unit	#	Per Unit	#	Ratio
69 Harvey Street	17	17	1	18	1.1	18	1.1	10	0.59
2440 Mass Ave.	42	42	1	26	0.6	28	0.7	N/A	N/A
2456/2460 Mass Ave.(Tyler Ct.)	28	28	1	26	0.9	23	0.8	N/A	N/A
113 Richdale Avenue	20	23	1.15	N/A	N/A	20	1.0	N/A	N/A
25-31 Wheeler Street	72	72	1	43	0.6	58	0.8	58	0.81
Average	35.8	36.4	1.03	28.25	0.80	29.4	0.87	34.0	0.70

Ave. excluding
 Wheeler St. 0.87

* November 17, 2011
 10:30 - 11:00 PM

Note: Registered vehicles for 25-31 Wheeler Street are for 2010

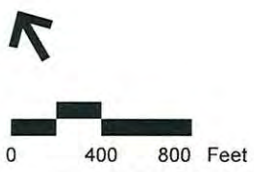


-  Zipcar Location **Number of Cars**
-  MBTA Bus Stop
-  Bike/Multi-Use Path
-  MBTA Bus Route #77
-  MBTA Bus Route #83

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Plan 1 November 2011

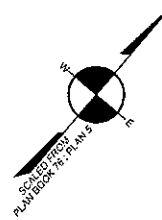
Proposed Residential Project
40 Norris Street
Cambridge, MA



I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN WAS MADE FROM AN INSTRUMENT SURVEY ON THE GROUND BETWEEN THE DATES OF JANUARY 19 AND JANUARY 11, 2011 AND ALL STRUCTURES ARE LOCATED AS SHOWN HEREON.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PROPERTY LINES SHOWN ARE LINES DERIVED FROM EXISTING OWNERSHIP AND THE LINES OF STREETS AND WAYS ALREADY ESTABLISHED AND THAT NO NEW LINES FOR THE DIVISION OF EXISTING OWNERSHIP OR FOR NEW WAYS ARE SHOWN.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

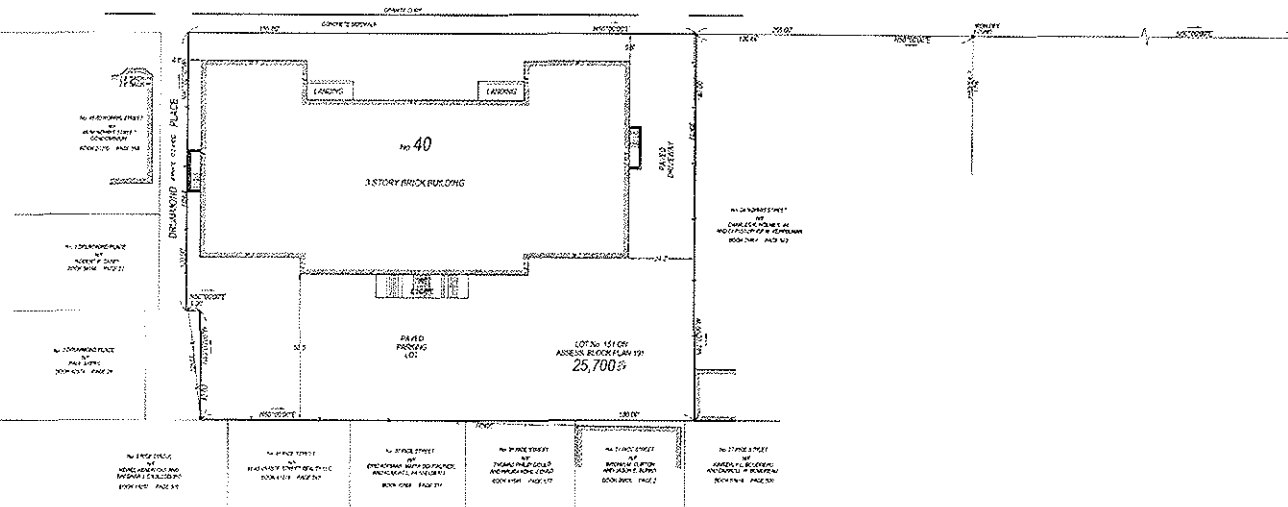


REGISTRY OF DEEDS USE ONLY

GEORGE C. COLLINS, P.L.S. DATE:

NORRIS (PUBLIC - 40' WIDE) STREET

MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE



LEGEND
 — MEASURED DISTANCE
 - - - RECORD DISTANCE

DATE: JANUARY 13, 2011

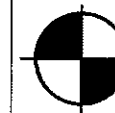
REVISION	DATE

REFERENCES:

DEED: BOOK 55397 , PAGE 563
 PLAN: PLAN BOOK 76 ; PLAN 5 (A OF 2)
 PLAN IN BOOK 20300 ; PAGE 356

**SITE PLAN OF LAND
 LOCATED AT
 40 NORRIS STREET
 CAMBRIDGE, MA**

PREPARED FOR:
 DR. RIZKALLAH
 40 NORRIS STREET
 CAMBRIDGE, MA



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