



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2013 MAY 8 PM 1 53

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	277
Address:	100 Putnam Avenue (Martin Luther King, Jr. School)
Zoning:	Residence C-1
Applicant:	City of Cambridge 795 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139
Owner:	Same as Applicant
Application Date:	March 21, 2013
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	April 16, 2013
Date of Planning Board Decision:	April 16, 2013
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	May 8, 2013

Application: Special Permit for increased Floor Area Ratio (1.15) and height (highest portions at 63') for a Municipal Elementary and Middle (K-8) School pursuant to Subsection 5.54.2 of the Zoning Ordinance.

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: Jeffrey C. Roberts *JCR*

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, or lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit application dated March 21, 2013 containing the Cover Sheet, Ownership Certificate, Dimensional Form, Project Narrative, Supporting statements for the Special Permit, LEED summary and narrative. Plans and drawings of various scales and dates, containing site plan, existing photos and conditions, civil site plan, demolition and tree protection plan, proposed floor plans and building elevations.
2. Tree Study, L-002 and Planting Plan, L-003 dated March 21, 2013.
3. Special Permit application revised April 9, 2013 containing the Cover Sheet, Ownership Certificate, Dimensional Form, Project Narrative, Supporting statements for the Special Permit, LEED summary and narrative. Plans and drawings of various scales and dates, containing site plan, existing photos and conditions, civil site plan, demolition and tree protection plan, proposed floor plans and building elevations.
4. Power Point Presentation, dated April 16, 2013.

Other Documents

5. Parking and Transportation Demand Management Decision, F-55, signed by Stephanie Groll, dated April 15, 2013.
6. Letter to the Planning Board from Jeffrey M. Young, Ed.D, Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools, dated April 16, 2013.
7. Letter to the Planning Board from Susan E. Clippinger, Director of Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated April 16, 2013.
8. Petition dated March 30, 2013, submitted at the public hearing by J. Snyder.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The proposal is to demolish the existing building on the site of the Martin Luther King, Jr. School, with the exception of a portion of the lowest level of the existing building that is located below mean grade, which will remain and will be occupied by enclosed parking and bicycle parking for school users. A new building will be constructed that will house the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, a Middle School, a preschool facility, and community facilities for after-school programs. The new building will have a total Gross Floor Area of 169,000 square feet, while the existing Gross Floor Area on the lot is 153,736 square feet. A redesigned set of outdoor recreational areas around the school will also be constructed. A waiver of the Application Fee is requested because the Applicant is the City of Cambridge.

FINDINGS

After review and consideration of the Application Documents and other documents submitted to the Planning Board, testimony given at the public hearing, and 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. Relief to Reconstruct, Alter or Expand an Existing Municipal K-8 School (5.54.2)

The Planning Board finds that the proposed project is to reconstruct an existing municipal K-8 school and that it meets the conditions and limitations for issuance of a special permit set forth in Section 5.54.2, as enumerated below:

- (a) The proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.15 exceeds the existing FAR of 1.04, but does not exceed the maximum FAR of 1.25 set forth in Paragraph 5.54.2(a).
- (b) The entire lot is located within the Residence C-1 Zoning District.
- (c) The proposed building contains roof sections at a variety of heights, with the highest elements reaching a height of sixty-three (63) feet located substantially further than fifty (50) feet from any adjacent lot line. Otherwise, no portion of the roof exceeds the maximum limitation of fifty-five (55) feet in height.
- (d) The off-street parking provided is greater than the number of legally established parking spaces existing on the lot, which is in compliance with the regulations set forth in Paragraph 5.54.1(e).
- (e) The amount of open space on the lot is not decreased.
- (f) The proposed changes have been designed to minimize or mitigate adverse impacts on neighboring residential properties. In making this Finding, the Board refers to the material submitted in the Special Permit Application and the considerations enumerated in Paragraph 5.54.2(f):
 - (i) *Arrangement of building height and bulk within the lot.*

The building has been designed to improve the relationships to surrounding streets and neighboring residential structures. On Putnam Avenue a courtyard has been created to break down the massing on the street. On Kinnaird, the building has been moved further from the street than the existing building, and the scale of the building steps down. At Hayes Street, the surface parking lot has been eliminated, and the building massing articulated to vary the heights. On Magee Street, the building carefully responds to the curve in the road, and the small gym breaks down the scale of the building and responds to the adjacent residential neighbors to the East. The

massing has been configured so that the highest portions of the building are located as far from the lot lines as possible, and the portions abutting residential uses respond sensitively to the height and scale of those abutting buildings.

(ii) Access and egress for pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles, including pick-up and drop-off areas for buses and cars.

The access and egress to the school have been designed to maintain the existing patterns of drop off and pick up at the site and to improve functionality and safety where possible. On Putnam Avenue a new raised crosswalk is proposed opposite the new entry courtyard. At Kinnaird, the street is widened to facilitate parent drop-off without impeding traffic flow. On Magee the street is widened so that school buses can wait without impeding traffic, and the non-optimal right angle parking is eliminated in favor of a traditional curb line improving safety and functionality. Vehicular access to the site is maintained via Kinnaird. Although the total number of proposed parking spaces is approximately the number of spaces utilized at the existing school, all but six of the proposed parking spaces will be located below grade, with access via an existing curb cut. This enables closing of one of the curb cuts on Kinnaird. Substantial bicycle parking is provided meeting the City's standards, including spaces in close proximity to all the building entries.

(iii) Location and screening of functions such as parking, loading, trash handling, and mechanical equipment.

Most of the surface parking will be eliminated and relocated in the existing school basement. The existing loading dock location is maintained, and is screened similarly to the existing condition by its location and the site topography, as is the proposed trash storage, which is also maintained in a similar location to that of the existing school. Minimal amounts of mechanical equipment are located on the building roofs and will be visually and acoustically screened.

(iv) Current impact of existing buildings and existing patterns of use on the site.

The proposed building improves upon the existing patterns of use on the site by creating better organized patterns of access and egress for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles, replacing disorganized surface parking with below-grade parking and more on-grade landscaping, and providing bus drop-off areas in a safe location that will not impede through traffic, among other improvements.

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

With reference to the narrative provided in the Special Permit Application, the Planning Board finds that the project meets the General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit, as enumerated 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 ...

The requirements of the Ordinance will be met, with the Planning Board's approval of the requested increases in Floor Area Ratio and Height.

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

The project has been designed to follow the existing traffic patterns on the site, with several small changes made to improve safety and functionality for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus drop-off activities. Roadway improvements will be completed on Magee, Putnam and Kinnaird. The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department reviewed the Applicant's traffic analysis and submitted a memorandum commenting favorably on the proposed modifications. The proponent is implementing an approved Parking and Transportation Demand Management plan as part of the project.

(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 principal use of the site will not change, and the new building is designed to mitigate impacts on adjacent uses to the greatest degree possible, as set forth further above in these Findings.

(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 principal use of the site will not change, and no nuisance or hazard will be created by the reconstruction of a municipal school building on the site.

(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 municipal school use is permitted in the base zoning district, and the proposed building is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Ordinance, particularly the goals of Section 5.54, adopted in 2012 to apply specifically to the reconstruction or alteration of municipal school sites in residential districts.

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

With reference to the narrative provided in the Special Permit Application, the Board finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30, as enumerated below.

(19.31) New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.

The new building is sensitively designed to fit within its context. The height and setbacks respond to abutting residential structures and streets. Where additional height is required, it is located at the center of the site. On Putnam Avenue, the building has a conventional relationship to the street for a Residence C-1 zone, where the minimum 10' setback pertains. The courtyard that leads to the school entrances breaks up the mass of the building as it presents to Putnam. On Kinnaird, the building is designed to recede from the street and present a significant area of new trees and landscaping to replace the existing unsightly parking that directly abuts the street. Relocation of the curb improves the ability of traffic to flow past vehicles that are dropping off children, while providing more on street parking at non drop off times. At Hayes Street, the elimination of the parking means that the playgrounds separate the school from the street down the entire east side of the site. At Magee Street, the school respects the typical 10' Res C-1 setback, while the geometry of the new school carefully responds to the curve in the street. The curb lines of the street have been reconfigured for safer bus pick-up and traffic circulation, including the elimination of problematic end-on parking at the south side of the street. While the design is contemporary, it respects historical precedents regarding site design and pedestrian movement.

(19.32) Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.

All school entrances are designed to be both bicycle and pedestrian friendly. There is short-term bicycle parking at all entrances as well as long-term bicycle parking in the garage, and building entry points at each street respond to the pedestrian flows to and from the school. Almost all surface parking has been eliminated (only 6 spaces remain) and the remaining spaces are now located in a reused portion of the existing school basement. This enables the removal of large areas of impervious surface, and landscaping and play spaces replace almost all the surface parking previously visible from Kinnaird. The fenestration of the school maximizes positive day lighting for classrooms while minimizing energy consumption, and provides varied and articulated street facades. The building responds to the desired access lines of pedestrians and cyclists accessing the school from the multiple streets that abut it, and includes a forecourt on Putnam in response to the need to provide a pedestrian "anteroom" for the main entrance to the school. The project is designed to provide a safe and convenient access to the project for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians in a manner consistent with local street patterns and prior usage and to help integrate the building into surrounding streetscapes. Kinnaird Street will continue to be used for child drop off by parents in vehicles. Bus drop off will be on

Putnam, where widening of the sidewalk and the provision of a generous landscaped courtyard will better accommodate the use. Hayes Street will continue to provide access for pedestrians and cyclists. At Magee Street it is proposed to realign and replace the curb to simplify traffic patterns and better support the bus pick up that will continue to occur at the south entry door. All pedestrian access routes, including sidewalks at Kinnaird, Magee and Putnam, will be modified to improve usability and safety.

(19.33) The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.

The school is targeting a Net Zero Energy design and almost all of the roof will be covered with PV's (Photovoltaics). Accordingly, the majority of mechanical HVAC equipment will be located indoors and within dedicated rooms on the lowest level of the facility in an effort to mitigate adverse environmental impacts upon neighbors. A limited quantity of mechanical HVAC equipment will be located outdoors at roof level and will be sited to minimize visual and acoustical impacts upon neighbors. Garage exhaust fans and transformer vault fan will have discharge sound attenuation devices to acoustically buffer from neighbors. No at-grade mechanical HVAC equipment will be provided.

Trash areas are concealed from view from the street and are located adjacent to the loading dock. The loading dock is in the same location as for the current school and is concealed from street view. The facility is significantly below street grade at Kinnaird which helps conceal it from view and mitigate noise.

The site drainage will be designed to meet the provisions of the MassDEP Stormwater Management Policy for a redevelopment project. Stormwater runoff will be mitigated as required by the City of Cambridge standards and standard engineering practices for Massachusetts. Where possible, site stormwater will be directed into porous landscaping surfaces to promote increased infiltration. Further, because a majority of the site currently drains to sewer systems which discharge to the combined sewer main in Western Avenue, the project intends to reroute drainage discharges to dedicated storm sewers to decrease the amount of stormwater flow being discharged to combined systems in the vicinity of the project site. During construction, standard engineering practices for erosion and sedimentation control will be implemented on site. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan ("SWPPP") will be prepared for the site per the requirements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("US EPA") National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Construction General Permit ("CGP") as project construction will disturb more than one acre. The SWPPP will also be used to document compliance with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") Sustainable Sites Prerequisite for Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

The bulk of the building is moved away from the north boundary line (Kinnaird Street) and closer to the south boundary line (Magee Street), reducing shadow impacts. The highest portions of the building are kept to the center of the site which also reduces shadow impacts. The mass is broken up by stepping forward and back to create bays and

to reduce the length of the long facades to a size and scale in keeping with the neighborhood. The areas of window are carefully modulated to provide articulation to the building facades.

All light fixtures will employ full cut-off optical systems to direct light downwards to eliminate light trespass issues with adjacent residences. Building exterior lighting will provide for safe and pleasant arrival and entry into the school.

A tree protection plan and a tree study have been submitted to the City Arborist and will be applied in accordance with applicable City regulations. The removal of two (2) street trees along Putnam Avenue was approved at a Tree Hearing on March 7, 2013. The proposed Landscaping Plan anticipates that five (5) to seven (7) street trees will be installed along Putnam Avenue in this area.

(19.34) Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.

The project will employ low-flow plumbing fixtures, a rainwater collection and reuse cistern, and reduced or eliminated irrigation by use of native, tolerant plant species to improve water use efficiency. The application materials indicate that the municipal water service will be adequate to serve the proposed new building with regard to domestic water and fire protection. The Applicant will continue to work with the Cambridge Water Department to determine any necessary water service improvements.

The proposed stormwater management system will be designed in a manner that will meet or exceed the provisions of the MassDEP Stormwater Management Policy for a redevelopment project and the requirements of the City of Cambridge Stormwater Policy.

Sewer service will be provided via an existing sewer main in Kinnaird Street, which will redirect a portion of the sewage flow from older systems in Magee and Hayes Streets and Putnam Avenue, which discharge into combined sewers in Western Avenue. The project sewerage service locations will continue to be discussed and reviewed with the City of Cambridge Department of Public Works.

The project is pursuing a Net Zero Energy Goal with a minimum of LEED Silver Certification. A Sustainability narrative and LEED Checklist are included in the Special Permit Application as required by Section 22.20 of the Zoning Ordinance.

(19.35) New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.

The new building will continue the municipal school use that has historically existed on the site, and the new building is sensitively designed to fit within the context of its surroundings, as set forth further above in these Findings.

(19.36) Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.

No housing is proposed as part of this municipal school reconstruction.

(19.37) Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.

The project will recreate existing play areas and networks for pedestrians and bicycles. As is currently the case, the play areas will serve the school during school hours and other school functions and the larger community during non-school hours. Play area entrances will be improved to comply with accessibility requirements.

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 Permit subject to the following conditions and limitations. Hereinafter, for purposes of this Decision, the Permittee shall mean the Applicant for the requested Special Permit 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 dated April 9, 2013, and all supplemental documents and information submitted by the Applicant to the Planning Board as referenced above. 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.

In particular, the following aspects of the final design shall be reviewed by CDD staff prior to issuance of a Building Permit:

- a. The specific materials and colors to be used on the exterior façades of the building, especially where they are highly visible from abutting streets and residential lots.
- b. Fenestration of portions of the building on Putnam Avenue, so that the building contributes to a pedestrian-friendly streetscape to the extent possible while appropriately supporting the interior school program and the energy-efficiency goals of the project.

- c. The location, selection, placement and screening of any external mechanical equipment, to mitigate potential visual and noise impacts on neighbors.
3. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).
4. 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.

Additionally, the Planning Board hereby waives any Special Permit Application Fee that may be applicable to this project.

Voting in the affirmative to GRANT the Special Permit and Application Fee Waiver were Planning Board Members H Theodore Cohen, Steve Cohen, Hugh Russell, Steven Winter and Pamela Winters, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board, necessary to grant a special permit.

For the Planning Board,



Hugh Russell, Chair.

A copy of this decision #277 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 filed with the Office of the City Clerk on Enter Filing Date, by Enter Name of Filer, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty (20) days have elapsed since the filing of the decision. No appeal has been filed.

DATE:

City Clerk of Cambridge

Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart

	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	147,534	5,000	Unchanged	No Change
Total GFA (sq ft)	153,736	184,418 ¹	169,000	169,000
Residential Base	None	N/A	None	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	153,736	184,418 ¹	169,000	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total FAR	1.04	1.25 ¹	1.15	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	0	N/A	0	
Non-Residential Base	1.04	1.25 ¹	1.15	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total Dwelling Units	None	N/A	None	None
Lot Width (ft)	<i>As in site plan</i>	50	Unchanged	No Change
Height (ft)	50	55-65 ²	Up to 63	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Front Setbacks (ft)	<i>As in site plan</i>	10	<i>As in site plan</i>	
Side/Rear Setbacks (ft)	<i>As in site plan</i>	15	<i>As in site plan</i>	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	<i>As in site plan</i>	<i>As in Zoning</i>	<i>As in site plan</i>	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space	None	N/A	None	
Permeable Open Space	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	39	39 min ³	43 ⁴	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Bicycle Parking Spaces	N/A	11 long-term 63 short-term	11 long-term 64 short-term	
Loading Bays	1	1 ³	1	

¹ The maximum FAR is 1.25 with Planning Board approval pursuant to Section 5.54.2(a).

² The maximum height is 55 feet, with allowed increases to 65 feet at least 50 feet away from abutting lots, with Planning Board approval pursuant to Section 5.54.2(c).

³ The minimum numbers of off-street parking spaces and loading bays are the existing numbers on the lot, pursuant to Sections 5.54.1(e) and 5.54.1(f).

⁴ The proposed project will include 43 complying parking spaces; however, the site will operationally accommodate 75 private cars by way of tandem parking arrangements as shown in the Application Documents.