

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

EX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2013 JUN 19 AM 10 15
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	281
Address:	1201 Massachusetts Ave
Zoning:	Residence C-2B
Applicant:	President and Fellows of Harvard College c/o Alexandra Offiong, HPPM 1350 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
Owner:	Same as Applicant
Application Date:	April 12, 2013
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	June 4, 2013
Date of Planning Board Decision:	June 4, 2013
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	June 19, 2013

Application: Project Review Special Permit (CZO Section 19.20) for conversion of a 57,403 square-foot existing hotel use to institutional dormitory use accommodating up to 134 students and 5 resident tutors; special permit to modify bicycle parking requirements (CZO Section 6.108).

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

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 May 10, 2013, containing (Part 1) Cover Sheet, Ownership Certificate, Dimensional Form, Project Narrative, Correspondence with City Arborist; and drawings (Part 2) including Context Maps, Site Plans, Floor Plans, Bicycle Parking Information, Elevations and Photographs.
2. LEED Checklist and Narrative dated May 9, 2013.
3. Revised LEED Checklist and Narrative dated June 3, 2013.

Other Documents

4. Email from Steven Lush, Cambridge Water Department, dated 5/22/13.
5. Letter to the Planning Board from Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, dated 5/24/13.
6. Memo to the Planning Board from Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated 5/30/09.
7. Copy of a memorandum to John Kiely, Collegiate Hospitality, from Susan Clippinger, dated 2/23/13.
8. Letter to the Planning Board from Joseph D. Power, Business Representative Cambridge Local 40, Carpenters' Union, dated 6/3/13.
9. Letter to the Planning Board from Mark Fortune, President, Framingham/Newton Building Trades Council, dated 6/3/13.
10. Letter to the Planning Board from Peter Gibbons, Business Manager, Sprinkler Fitters Local Union 550 UA, dated 6/3/13.
11. Letter to the Planning Board from Robert Butler, Business Manager, Sheet Metal Workers' No. 17, dated 6/3/13.
12. Letter to the Planning Board from Donald Sheehan, Business Representative, Local 103, dated 6/3/13.
13. Letter to the Planning Board from Michael P. Monahan, Business Manager, Local 103, dated 6/3/13.

14. Letter to the Planning Board from Denise Jillson, Executive Director of the Harvard Square Business Association, dated 6/3/13.
15. Letter to the Planning Board from Terrence F. Smith, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Director of Government Affairs, dated 6/3/13.

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. Project Review Special Permit (19.20)

(19.25.1) Traffic Impact Findings.

The proposed project does not exceed the threshold to require a Traffic Study pursuant to Paragraph 19.24 (2) of the Zoning Ordinance. (Such threshold for a college or university facility is the creation of 150 new parking spaces or the relocation of 250 existing parking spaces, neither of which are proposed.) Nevertheless, the Applicant prepared a traffic analysis that was shared with the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department staff, who communicated to the Planning Board in a memorandum dated May 30, 2013 that the proposed change will have no adverse impact on traffic given that the traffic generated by a dormitory use is substantially less than the traffic generated by a hotel use.

The existing on-site parking will not be used as accessory parking for the dormitory, which shall be accommodated through the institutional parking pool. Some on-site parking spaces will be eliminated to provide bicycle parking. The remaining on-site garage parking will retain its commercial parking license to be used for general parking that may be needed to serve university or other functions from time to time, which will not result in any traffic patterns that are substantially different from the current use of the garage.

(19.25.2) Urban Design Findings. The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30. In making that determination the Board may be guided by or make reference to urban design guidelines or planning reports that may have been developed for specific areas of the city and shall apply the standards herein contained in a reasonable manner to nonprofit religious and educational organizations in light of the special circumstances applicable to nonprofit religious and educational activities.

The Board finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30, as described below.

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

The proposal is to change the use of an existing building, which is not historic but was designed to fit within the context of the historic Harvard Square area. The exterior of the building will not be substantially changed by the project, and the type of use, while changing from hotel to dormitory, will have a similar relationship to the area. Given that it is located adjacent to a university campus, the university use is appropriate. A letter dated May 24, 2013 from the Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission indicates that the Historical Commission has approved the exterior changes under its purview to review alterations to structures in a historic district. Furthermore, this project will enable the restoration and renovation of Harvard University's River Houses, which the Director states are "one of our city's most distinctive historic assets."

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

The exterior of the building, as noted above, will not be substantially changed and will maintain its positive relation to the streetscape. The change of the main entrance from the east side of the building, which is more vehicle-oriented, to the west side of the building, which is more pedestrian-oriented, will make the access and egress more pedestrian friendly and better aligned with pedestrian and bicycle desire lines. The installation of new exterior bicycle parking at both entrances as well as secure interior bicycle parking will make the building more bicycle-friendly to users.

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

The project will make use of existing mechanical equipment and bulkheads, and will involve the installation of two low profile exhaust fans on the roof behind an existing bulkhead where they will be shielded from view. Otherwise, mechanical equipment and trash storage will be located in the basement, and loading operations will occur through the existing hotel loading area. No trees will be removed.

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

No changes are proposed that would impact the provision of utilities to the existing use. Having been built relatively recently, it may be assumed that city utilities are adequately provided and that any minor changes will be made as required by the Cambridge Water Department or the Department of Public Works prior to any building permit approval. The interior renovations will include the installation of water-saving plumbing features, and the renovations will otherwise be designed to conform to the applicable Green

Building standards. As noted above, there will be improvement rather than adverse impact on automobile traffic patterns.

The project will be LEED certified.

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

The proposal is to convert an existing building to a new use that is consistent with the existing character of the neighborhood, with minimal changes to the building itself. The project will encourage active pedestrian traffic to and from the site.

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

The proposed project does not expand the inventory of housing, but will enable the renovation of historic university housing resources.

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

The proposal is to substantially retain the existing landscaping on the site, which will continue to relate positively to the nearby public open space at Quincy Square.

2. Modification of Bicycle Parking Requirements (6.108)

The new use, as proposed, would require a minimum of seventy (70) long-term bicycle parking spaces and seven (7) short-term bicycle parking spaces pursuant to Section 6.107 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Applicant has sought approval from the Planning Board pursuant to Section 6.108 to modify the requirements to provide forty-one (41) long-term bicycle parking spaces at the basement level and forty-eight (48) total short-term bicycle parking spaces distributed at the building's two entrances. Therefore, a reduction in the minimum number of long-term bicycle parking spaces is requested, but more total bicycle parking spaces will be provided than required. Otherwise, the proposed bicycle parking spaces meet all applicable zoning requirements.

The Board finds that the proposal is consistent with the intent of Section 6.100 and will satisfactorily serve the proposed use, based on the information provided in the Application Documents and the response from the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department dated May 30, 2013. The Applicant has found from observation of other Harvard dormitories that outdoor short-term bicycle parking tends to be more heavily utilized than indoor bicycle parking. The Board finds this to be a reasonable expectation in this case given that long-term bicycle parking may only be provided at the basement level, which may be less desirable for students who make frequent use of their bicycles. Of the short-term parking, 16 spaces are provided near the main entrance and at least 20 spaces are protected under an overhang near

the rear entrance. The short-term spaces will have reasonable security due to Applicant's personnel staffing the building at the ground floor. Given that the total number of required bicycle parking spaces is exceeded, a substantial amount of long-term bicycle parking will be provided, and the proposed short-term bicycle parking will be convenient, reasonably secure and partially covered, the needs of the building's users should be adequately served.

However, the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department has recommended, and the Planning Board has incorporated as a Condition of this Special Permit, that the Applicant will conduct yearly counts of bicycle parking utilization and report that information to the City to inform future planning related to bicycle parking demand.

3. General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit (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 issuance of the requested special permits, 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 ...

As noted above in these Findings, the project will have no substantial adverse impact on traffic, access or egress, and will include improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.

(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 existing building will not be substantially altered and the proposed use will not impact adjacent uses, many of which are university-related.

(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 project will meet all applicable health and safety requirements and will not cause any nuisance or hazard.

(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 proposed use is allowed within the district and will not negatively impact other uses that are allowed in the district.

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

The project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives, as set forth above in these Findings.

DECISION

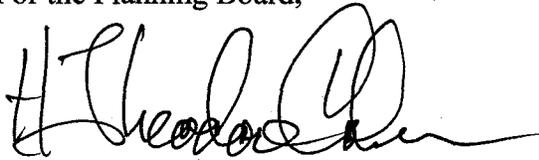
Based on a review of the Application Documents, testimony given at the public hearings, and the above Findings, the Planning Board hereby GRANTS the requested Special Permits subject to the following conditions and limitations. Hereinafter, for purposes of this Decision, the Permittee shall mean the 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 dated May 10, 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 any 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. 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.
5. As set forth in the memorandum dated May 30, 2013 by Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TPT), the Permittee shall conduct annual surveys of bicycle parking utilization beginning within one year after building occupancy as a dormitory and continuing for a minimum of five years. The Permittee shall count the number of bicycles parked within the long-term and short-term bicycle parking facilities and provide the

results to CDD and TPT. Counts shall be made both during the early morning (before students leave for classes, e.g. 5:00 am) and at noon once per year, on a date when the dormitory is fully occupied and students can be reasonably expected to be using their bikes; this should be either in fall (mid-September - mid-October) or mid-spring (April) and during a week of regular classes and reasonable weather. More than one day of counts and data are welcome but shall not be required.

Voting in the affirmative to GRANT the Special Permits were Planning Board Members H Theodore Cohen, Steve Cohen, Tom Sieniewicz, William Tibbs, and Associate Members Ahmed Nur and Catherine Preston Connolly, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board, necessary to grant a special permit.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

H Theodore Cohen, Vice Chair (Acting as Chair for this Case #281).

A copy of this decision #281 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 June 19, 2013, by Elizabeth M. Paden, 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:

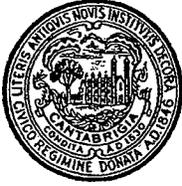
City Clerk of Cambridge

Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart

	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	30,902	5,000	No change	No change
Total GFA (sq ft)	57,403	54,078	No change	No change
Residential Base	None	N/A	No change	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	57,403	N/A	No change	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total FAR	1.86	1.75	No change	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	None	N/A	No change	
Non-Residential Base	1.86	N/A	No change	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total Dwelling Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dormitory Units	None	N/A	Up to 134 student beds + 5 tutor apartments	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Lot Width (ft)	84 – 190	50	No change	No change
Height (ft)	40	45	No change	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Front Yard – Mass Ave (ft)	47.97	35.6	No change	
Front Yard – Harvard St (ft)	41.5	41.08	No change	
Front Yard – Quincy Sq (ft)	54.1	18.22	No change	
Side Yard	Varies	N/A	No change	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Permeable Open Space	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	58	18	18 + 50 ¹	Consistent with Application Documents and other applicable requirements
Long-Term Bicycle Spaces	0	70	41 ²	
Short-Term Bicycle Spaces	0	7	48 ²	
Loading Bays	1	1	No change	

¹ 18 parking spaces provided off-site from institutional parking pool to serve dormitory use; 50 on-site garage spaces to be used in conformance with existing commercial parking license; 8 on-site garage spaces eliminated.

² Modification of bicycle parking requirements approved by Planning Board pursuant to CZO Section 6.108.



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

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Susan E. Clippinger, Director
Brad Gerratt, Deputy Director

Phone: (617) 349-4700
Fax: (617) 349-4747

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Sue Clippinger, Director 
Date: May 30, 2013
Re: 1201 Massachusetts Avenue, Project Review Special Permit
Conversion from Inn at Harvard to Dormitory Use

Harvard University is requesting to convert the Inn at Harvard, located at 1201 Massachusetts Avenue, to a dormitory containing 70 rooms to house 134 students and 5 resident tutors. We have been working with Harvard and support their project with the following comments.

Use Change: We support the change in use from an Inn to a dormitory because it will not have an adverse impact on traffic. The project is not required to do a traffic study under Article 19.24. A study for Harvard by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. found that the change in use will reduce the site's daily vehicle trips by approximately 46% or about 67 less daily vehicle trips.

Auto Parking:

Existing: The Inn at Harvard currently has 58 parking spaces in a below grade garage. The site has a Commercial Parking Permit for 50 spaces. The remaining 8 spaces are accessory spaces for the Inn. All 58 spaces are required to meet the zoning minimum for the Inn.

Future: Zoning minimum for the dormitory is 18 spaces, which can be provided at a parking facility for institutional use within 3,000 feet of the project. Harvard must identify the location of the 18 spaces prior to their Building Permit. 8 spaces in the garage will be eliminated for bicycle parking. The remaining 50 spaces in the garage will remain as Commercial Parking Spaces for all uses allowed under City Ordinance Article 10.16.

Bicycle Parking: The project requires 77 total bicycle parking spaces (70 long-term and 7 short-term) under the current bicycle zoning petition. We appreciate Harvard's proposal to install 89 total bicycle spaces, which is more than minimum zoning. They are seeking a special permit to adjust the ratio of long- and short-term spaces.

Harvard proposes a modification to the requirements, with 41 long-term bicycle spaces (located in the parking garage) and 48 short-term spaces near building entrances. While this is a departure from the requirements, the zoning does allow for proposed modifications under a special permit, provided there is a clear rationale for the variation. We are willing to accept the long- and short-term ratio in this situation with some conditions.

Because the project is a renovation and not a new building, the location of the long-term is less than ideal so we can understand that the short-term rack location may be more appealing for regular users, particularly those 20 short-term spaces under an overhang that will provide some weather protection. In order to ascertain the long-term viability of such a solution, we recommend that a survey be done to assess the use of the racks. Beginning one year after occupancy of the dormitory and for five years, Harvard should count the number of bicycles parked to the

long-term and short-term racks and provide the findings to CDD and TPT. Counts should be done both during the early morning (before students leave for classes, e.g. 5 am), and at noon, once per year, on a date where the dormitory is fully occupied and students can be reasonably expected to be using their bikes; this should be either in fall (mid-September – mid-October) or mid-spring (April) and during a week of regular classes and reasonable weather. More than one day of counts and data are welcome but not required.