

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	305
Address:	240 Green Street
Zoning:	Residence C-3 / Central Square Overlay District
Applicant:	Cambridge Housing Authority 362 Green St., 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139
Owner:	City of Cambridge 795 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
Application Date:	October 14, 2015
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	December 1, 2015
Date of Planning Board Decision:	December 1, 2015
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	January 6, 2016
Application:	Renovation of the existing residential building, requesting a special permit pursuant to the following Section of the Zoning Ordinance: increase the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the Central Square Overlay District (20.304.3.2).
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 1/6/16.

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

2016 JAN -6 AM 9:11  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on 10/14/15, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Narrative in support of 240 Green Street, Expanded LEED Narrative, Checklist, and Affidavit prepared by CLEARresult, email communication from City Arborist dated 9/29/15, Certification of Receipt of Plans by Cambridge Water Department dated 11/4/15, plan set titled Frank J. Manning Apartments at 240 Green Street, prepared by Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc., dated 10/14/15, Supplemental Renderings dated 11/25/15.

### City of Cambridge Documents

3. Memo to the Planning Board from Department of Public Works staff, dated 11/24/15
4. Memorandum to the Planning Board from CDD staff, dated 11/25/15

### Other Documents

5. Letter to the Planning Board from Cheryl-Ann Pizza-Zeoli, Co-Chair of the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants, dated 4/24/15
6. Letter to the Planning Board from Manning Tenant Council Board, dated 11/24/15
7. Email communication to the Planning Board from Shelley Rieman, dated 11/30/15
8. Email communication to the Planning Board from Jean Hannon, Public Housing Co-Chair, dated 11/23/15
9. Email communication to the Planning Board from Pete Bassney, dated 11/30/15

## **APPLICATION SUMMARY**

On October 14, 2015 the Applicant submitted a proposal for improvements at 240 Green Street, including renovations to the building façades, core systems, apartment interiors, and indoor and outdoor common areas, resulting in an increase in the FAR from 2.79 to 2.88. The proposal also included conversion of the existing office space on the second floor to four one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units, increasing the total number of units to 205 from 199. The base zoning is Residence C-3 and modified by the Central Square Overlay District. The requested special permit is 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. 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 addition of six new units with no additional off-street parking spaces is not anticipated to cause particular congestion or hazard. Proposed changes to the entry plaza on Franklin Street will mitigate traffic congestion by providing off-street pick-up and drop-off, while being designed in a way that does not impair pedestrian safety or comfort.

*(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 proposal does not include any change of use and hence, 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 adhere 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 existing use is encouraged by City plans for the area and the Zoning Ordinance. The proposal will create a more visually interesting facade, which will make a positive contribution to the diverse urban fabric of Central Square. The proposal will also help to activate the existing plaza space and the pedestrian connection between Green Street and Franklin Street.

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

The urban design objectives are supported in the proposal with the improvements to the existing building façade, open space and pedestrian access, preservation of housing, consistency with the established pattern of development, minimal environmental impacts on abutters and minimal impact on City infrastructure. Furthermore, the proposal is consistent with the specific development guidelines established for Central Square, as set forth below in these Findings.

## 2. Special Permit for additional FAR (Section 20.304.3)

The proposed improvements will enhance the building function and on-site amenities through a modest increase in floor area ratio (FAR) from 2.79 to 2.88. According to the Central Square Overlay District requirements, within the portion of the district with Residence C-3 base zoning, the maximum as-of-right FAR is 2.0 and the Planning Board may grant a special permit to allow a greater FAR, up to a maximum of 3.0. In granting such a special permit the Board must find that the project conforms to the Standards for Issuance of a Special Permit in the Central Square Overlay District, Section 20.305. The Board finds that the project conforms to those standards, as 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 improvements are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan. Though it will not result in any substantial change to the pattern of development in the area, the proposed improvements will help to preserve diversity in the area by retaining and investing in public housing, and will improve the physical and visual environment through improvements to the building façade and adjacent landscaping. Improvements to the adjacent plaza will result in a safer and more inviting pedestrian environment, as well as ease traffic congestion issues on Franklin Street.

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 improvements respond positively to the Urban Design Plan for Central Square contained in Central Square Development Guidelines and Central Square Action Plan by preserving an existing building and promoting affordable housing. The proposed changes in the site, in addition to enhancing the link between Franklin Street and Green Street, are anticipated to have a positive impact on the quality of the public realm and streetscape.

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

No new off-street parking spaces are proposed. No contributing buildings will be impacted, as described below.

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 building is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is not within the Central Square National Register District. The only abutting contributing buildings in the Central Square National Register District are the row of commercial and mixed-use buildings at 576-619 Massachusetts Ave, which will not be impacted by the development.

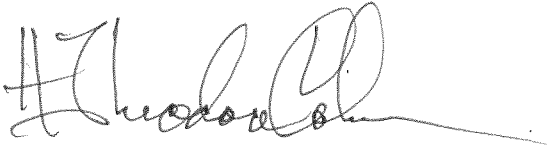
## DECISION

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 October 14, 2015, the Supplemental Renderings, and the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. 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. At a minimum, the following specific elements of the design shall be subject to review and approval by CDD prior to issuance of a Building Permit:
  - a. Final landscape details, particularly of the MLK Plaza and driveway design as it develops.
  - b. Final selection of materials and colors on building façades, which shall include a materials mock-up on the site to be reviewed and certified by CDD prior to finalizing the choice of materials. CDD shall notify Planning Board members when the mock-up is available to be reviewed.
  - c. Public realm improvements, which shall also be reviewed by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TPT) and Department of Public Works (DPW).
  - d. Final screening treatment of rooftop mechanical units.
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.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the Development Proposal were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., Catherine Preston Connolly, H Theodore Cohen, Steven Cohen, Mary Flynn, Hugh Russell and Tom Sieniewicz, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this decision PB #305 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 January 6, 2016, by Jeffrey C. Roberts, 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)	55,828	5,000	No Change	No Change
Lot Width (ft)	200	50	No Change	No Change
Total GFA (sq ft)	155,971	167,484 <sup>1</sup>	160,580	160,580
Residential Base	140,222		144,831	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	15,749		No Change	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total FAR	2.794	3.0 <sup>1</sup>	2.876	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	2.512	3.0 <sup>1</sup>	2.594	
Non-Residential Base	0.282		No Change	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Total Dwelling Units	199	1,116	205	205
Base Units	199	1,116	205	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Inclusionary Bonus Units	0		0	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	281	150	272	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	281	150	272	
Height (ft)	177	55/120	No Change	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Front Setbacks (ft)	N/A		No Change	
Side Setback (ft)	N/A		No Change	
Rear Setback (ft)	N/A		No Change	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	18	10	14	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space				
Permeable Open Space				
Off-Street Parking Spaces	269		No Change	No Change
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	30		40	40
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	29		41	41
Loading Bays	N/A		N/A	

<sup>1</sup> By special permit per Central Square Overlay District.