



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

To: Planning Board
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: October 3, 2017
Re: 907 Main Street (PB #324)

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on September 27, 2017 to review and comment on an amendment to Planning Board Special Permit Case #324, by Patrick Barrett (the "Applicant") for Sean Casey, LLC. This proposal converts the existing mixed-use building – housing with ground floor retail – at 907 Main Street into a 67-room hotel with ground floor retail and a rooftop bar. The project consists of the renovation of the existing residential and retail building and a 5-story (5,264 square foot in gross floor area) addition along Columbia Street. The current Special Permit grants exemptions for the basement and cellar spaces (*Article 2.000, Gross Floor Area*) and for parking in the Central Square Overlay District (the "District") (*Section 20.304.6(2), Minimum Parking and Loading*).

The Applicant wishes to amend the Special Permit issued in March 2017 in response to the new zoning considerations introduced by the Central Square Restoration Zoning Petition (*Section 20.304.2(2), Special Permit for Additional Height*), and raise the building's height from the previously approved 55ft to 59.5ft. The project concept includes changing the residential uses on the upper floors to a hotel uses composed of 67 rooms (an increase from the original 58 rooms) distributed in the upper floors, a lobby on the ground floor, and the addition of a small garden patio area in the rear of the structure that will serve as shared outdoor seating/dining for use by the hotel and all restaurant tenants in the building. The Applicant does not believe that the proposed changes impact the reliefs granted under the current Special Permit, but that they are now allowed by right.

The site area is 9,505 square feet and the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) allowed in the District, which was previously 2.75, is now 4.00 for residential uses. Under new zoning considerations, the maximum GFA for this site is 38,020 square feet. The project will be 29,767 square feet in gross floor area at a site FAR of 3.14. Plans and images of the project, dated 9/20/17, were distributed for the discussion.

While presenting the proposal to the Committee, the Applicant expressed a desire to change the windows on the north-east façade of the existing building, facing the proposed courtyard, into bay windows. The Applicant also shared the possibility that the wall would be deemed structurally unsound and unfit to introduce bay windows. If so, the existing wall would have to come down and be rebuilt to house the bay windows, forcing the existing tenant, Toscanini's, to temporarily relocate until the building is completed. Since the Applicant wishes to avoid any scenario that compels Toscanini's to relocate, the existing windows and façade would remain, aside from general renovation work to the entire building's façade.

As before, the Committee continues to enthusiastically support this proposal and is unanimously in favor of the project regardless of the design outcome pertaining to the bay windows.

Members of the public in attendance were also in favor of this project highlighting the importance of this development to the identity of Central Square and the City, particularly its historical aesthetics and value in contrast with newer, larger development projects.



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The City's Community Development Department approves of the project as proposed, noting that it meets the overall goals of the *Central Square Development Guidelines* and the *Central Square Action Plan*, does not unduly impact the surrounding neighborhood, and will provide a strong urban presence in its location.

Committee Members Present:

- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent:

- Joel Altstein
- Melissa Greene
- Drew Kane
- Michael Monestime

Submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wendell Joseph, *Neighborhood Planner*
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