



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

Notice of Decision

(Summary)

In reference to the petition of the Putnam Court Realty Trust, Irving Fischman, applicant, for a Special Permit to allow townhouse development at 585-587 and 591 Putnam Avenue and 2-4 Putnam Court, the petition has been GRANTED by the Planning Board on August 4, 1981 with the following conditions:

1. The development shall include only sixteen (16) townhouse dwellings containing a total of twenty (20) dwelling units.
2. The general location and size of buildings and other development features shall remain as indicated in the modified site plan as filed with this decision.
3. To assure proper visibility of traffic and pedestrians, for those entering or leaving the project no fence along a front or side lot line and within fourteen (14) feet of a street line intersection or driveway shall be more than two and one-half (2½) feet in height from the curb level of the street or if said fence exceeds two and one-half (2½) feet in height it shall not be more than 30% opaque. Chainlink and wire fences are prohibited.
4. Only those variances approved as listed in the complete decision filed in the City Clerk's Office shall be permitted.
5. Final development plans submitted for acquisition of a building permit shall conform with all of the regulations set forth in the ordinance except as modified in the foregoing conditions.

A copy of the complete decision has been filed with the Office of the City Clerk on August 5, 1981. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, MGL's and shall be filed within twenty days after the date the complete decision was filed in the Clerk's Office.

Elizabeth McCarthy
Secretary to the Planning Board



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

CASE NO: PB 14
PREMISES: 585-587 and 591 Putnam Avenue
2-4 Putnam Court
ZONING DISTRICT: Residence C-1
PETITIONER: Putnam Court Realty Trust
APPLICATION DATE: June 10, 1981
PUBLIC HEARING DATE: July 7, 1981
PETITION: Townhouse Special Permit for 20 Dwelling Units,
Article 11.000, Section 11.10
DATE OF PLANNING BOARD DECISION: August 4, 1981

Application

The following documents were submitted by the applicant in support of the development plan.

1. Special Permit Application, Townhouse Development; Fort Washington Townhouses, Putnam and Sidney Streets; Putnam Court Realty Trust, Irving Fischman, authorized representative, submitted June 10, 1981.
2. Seven copies of plans and elevations, numbers 1-8 entitled "Fort Washington Townhouses" dated June 9, 1981.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 40A, Section 11 of the MGL's, on July 7, 1981 at 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, Cambridge Community Development Department, 57 Inman Street.

Applicant - Mr. Irving Fischman, applicant, summarized the general concept and scope of the proposed townhouse development which contains 16 dwellings, 4 of which are two-family dwellings. The development would contain a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom units and the approximate finish price would be \$77 to \$78 per square foot of usable space. Using a model and renderings for illustration, Mr. George Metzger, project architect, reviewed architectural details, site design and

violations from the zoning ordinance. Changes in site design since the original plans were filed included, widening of the access drive from 14.6 feet to 18 feet and location of a landscaped access from the rear of the Cambridgeport Children's Center through lot 16 to Putnam Court. In addition to the violations listed in the application, a request was made to include a violation from Article 6.000 which requires a 25 foot curb cut setback from a street intersection. The site plan shows a curb cut for unit 2, 20 feet from the intersection of Sidney and Putnam Avenue. In response to the staff's written review listing certain other violations, Mr. Metzger stated that the plans were not accurate in many respects, including:

- a. the maximum angle above 30 feet in height is 45° not 50° as shown, and
- b. the maximum height of the rear and side decks is 4 feet rather than the various height levels shown. As a result the setback and open space violations listed in the staff review are eliminated.

In response to the Traffic Department's review, the driveway width was increased from 14.6 feet to 18 feet.

Citizen Comment

1. Nancy Bellows, 4 Hastings Square, testified in favor of the project and suggested that the proposed trees along Putnam Avenue be located in the sidewalk area rather than in the proposed front yards, Stating that this would create a nicer streetscape.
2. David Shutz, 18 Peters Street, testified in support of the project and submitted a letter documenting this support. Mr. Shutz also commented favorably on the proposed fencing along Putnam Avenue, stating that the relatively low height would eliminate the "Fort Apache" atmosphere created by a high fence.
3. Ms. Linda McFee, representing the Cambridgeport Children's Center, stated her concern over the lack of discussion of the issue of emergency access from the Center which presently runs through one of the proposed yards. Ms. McFee stated that an agreement had been reached between the Children's Center and the applicant permitting the continuance of emergency access from the rear of the Center's building to Putnam Court.

Irving Fischman responded by stating that access would be permitted and a platform/walkway would be built and landscaped in the rear of the center leading to Putnam Court.

Documents - The following documents were submitted at the hearing to the Board for their consideration:

1. Copy of an agreement dated 6/7/81 between the applicant (FAR group) and representatives of Cambridgeport Child Care, Inc. outlining conditions of the proposed access, including a diagram illustrating the access.

2. Letter, Regina Sheehan, 264 Sidney Street, stating her support for the proposed development.
3. Letter, David Schutz, 18 Peters Street; Nancy Bellows, 4 Hastings Square; Bennett Jones, 345 Brookline Street; Harry Photopoulos 320 Brookline Street; Kenneth Carsen, 52 Chestnut Street; Henrietta Davis, 120 Chestnut Street; Suzann Wymelenberg, 9 Rockingham Street; Archeson Callagher, Gale Munson, 302 Brookline Street; and residence from 322 Brookline Street and 120 Chestnut Street in support of the construction of townhouses on the site.
4. Copy of a letter to the Cambridge Chronicle from Dave Schutz, 18 Peters Street, in response to a June 25 newspaper article on the proposed development.

Planning Board Discussion

Following the public hearing, the Planning Board discussed details of the proposal and comments made at the public hearing.

Findings

1. In accordance with the requirements of subsection 10.43 of the Zoning Ordinance criteria for the granting of a special permit, the Board finds that
 - a. The proposal has relatively few minor zoning violations. The Board finds these violations will result in an improved living environment and superior architectural design.
 - b. Traffic generation and the pattern of access and egress would not cause congestion, hazard or a substantial change in the neighborhood. However, the proposed six foot high board fencing around the parimeter of the lot may block the visibility of street or pedestrian traffic from vehciels leaving the development.
 - c. The proposed residential use is compatible with and will not adversely affect existing or proposed uses in the district.
 - d. The construction of townhouses on this site would eliminate hazards and nuisances characteristic of vacant unsightly lots while creating a pleasant living environment which would benefit both future occupants on the site and citizens of the city.
 - e. The proposed development conforms to the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance for this district.
2. In accordance with subsection 10.464 of the zoning ordinance, criteria for approval of townhouses, the Board finds that:
 - a. The site is covered with asphalt and does not contain any natural landscape features worth preserving. The proposed landscaping will add significantly to the aesthetic amenities of the site.

- b. The two proposed townhouse buildings are oriented in an east-west axis in keeping with the existing structures in the neighborhood. The location and massing is also sensitive to abutting structures as well as to each proposed new building.
 - c. The proposed usable open space for each unit is located and arranged in such a manner that it will provide visual benefits to abutters and offer functional benefits to the residents. Building 1, along Putnam Avenue, offers front yard space visible to passersby and Building 2 provides deck areas in the rear of the proposed units screened from abutting residences by fencing.
 - d. Required off-street parking will be provided in enclosed individual garages. The proposed 18 foot driveway provides access to 14 units and extends from Sidney Street to Putnam Court. The other 2 units have direct access to Putnam Avenue. The Board finds this parking and access arrangement a safe and convenient alternative.
3. The following violations of zoning requirements customarily requiring a variance were contained within the development as documented in the application dated June 10, 1981, and requested by the applicant at the public hearing on July 7, 1981.
- a. Minimum lot area/size per dwelling unit in a Residence C-1 district. (Sections 11.15 and Table 5-1)

Required: 1200 s.f./unit
Proposed: 1015 s.f./unit (minimum)
 1646 s.f./unit (maximum)
 1330 s.f./unit (average)
 - b. Maximum cornice height. (Subsection 11.153)

Required: 30' cornice line
Proposed: *34'

*The maximum height of the cornice line of the principle front wall plane exceeds 30 feet to permit small gables or dormers.
 - c. Front Yard requirement - unit 16. (Section 11.154)

Required: 10 feet
Proposed: 3 feet
 - d. Curb cut - unit 2. (Section 6.434)

Required: 25' from Sidney St./Putnam Ave. intersection
Proposed: 20' from Sidney St./Putnam Ave. intersection

e. Open space dimensions (Section 11.155)

Unit 16 has an open space area with a minimum dimension of 8'4".

The Board finds the above violations minor and necessary in order to achieve a quality design both architectural and site design, on this lot.

4. The Board has considered the issue between the Cambridgeport Children's Center and the applicant over emergency access for the Center's building and finds the preliminary agreement between those parties a suitable arrangement.

Planning Board Decision

After consideration and review of the information and plans submitted by the applicant, comments made at the public hearing, discussion by the Board and Staff, the Planning Board by a unanimous vote grants a special permit for the construction of sixteen (16) townhouse dwellings as detailed in the application as modified (P.B.#14) with the following conditions:

1. The general location and size of buildings and other development features shall remain as indicated in the modified site plan as filed with this decision, dated August 4, 1981.
2. To assure proper visibility of traffic and pedestrians, for those entering or leaving the project no fence along a front or side lot line and within fourteen (14) feet of a street line intersection or driveway shall be more than two and a half (2½) feet in height from the curb level of the street or if said fence exceed two and a half (2½) feet in height it shall not be more than 30% opaque. Chainlink and wire fences are prohibited.
3. Under the authority granted by Section 11.125, the Planning Board may waive certain zoning requirements. The final plans shall contain on those zoning violations cited in finding number 3 above.
4. Final development plans submitted for acquisition of a building permit shall conform with all of the regulations set forth in the ordinance except as modified in the foregoing conditions.
5. Plans submitted with the application be amended to indicate the proposed changes necessary to accomodate the emergency access needs of the adjacent Cambridgeport Children's Center.

- 6. Revised Final Development Plan documents shall be submitted to the Community Development Department reflecting all conditions of this Decision which Plan shall be filed with this Decision at the Office of the City Clerk. Where necessary for clarity, heights, angles and other dimensions critical to zoning compliance shall be clearly labeled on the plans.

Respectfully submitted,

For the Planning Board



Arthur C. Parris
Chairman

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the decision filed with the office of the City Clerk on _____ by _____, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board.

Twenty days have elapsed since the date of filing this decision. No appeal has been filed _____. Appeal filed and dismissed or denied _____.

Date: _____ City Clerk, City of Cambridge