



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case No: PB#168

Address: 75 Amherst Street

Zoning: Industry B District

Owners/Applicants: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 77
Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Application Date: August 25, 2000

Public Hearing: September 12, 2000

Planning Board Decision: September 12, 2000

Date of Filing Decision: September 28, 2000

Application: Planning Overlay Special Permit (Section 11.500) for a
169,000 gross square foot Media Laboratory Expansion.

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 the 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 Office of the Community Development Department and the City
Clerk.

Authorized Representative to the Planning Board:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elizabeth M. Paden", is written over the text "Authorized Representative to the Planning Board:".

For further information concerning this decision, please call Liza Paden
at 349-4647, TTY: 349-4621, email lpaden@ci.cambridge.ma.us.

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Documents Submitted

Special Permit Application submitted, certified complete on August 25, 2000, containing the project description, supporting statement, dimensional form, supporting statement IPOP special permit, certification of traffic study by S. Clippinger, site photos.

MIT Media Lab Extension, Transportation Impact Study, August 2000, prepared by Rizzo Associates, Inc.

Other Documents Submitted

Copy of presentation made at the public hearing.

Findings

After review of the application documents and other documents submitted to the Board, testimony taken at the public hearing, review and consideration of the Planning Overlay Special Permit and the general special permit criteria, the Board makes the following findings.

1. Conformance to the requirements of the Planning Overlay Special Permit, Section 11.500 of the Zoning Ordinance.

a. Submittal of required documents

All requirements of Section 11.511 have been met with the submittal of a complete application, including a certified traffic study.

b. Finding of no substantial adverse impact on city traffic

The Planning Board identified five criteria that would assist in determining whether a project should be found to cause substantial adverse traffic impact: (1) project vehicle trip generation, (2) traffic generated on residential streets, (3) effect on level of service at identified intersections, (4) length of traffic queues at identified intersections, and (5) nearby locations with a high incidence of accidents.

The evaluation of the proposal shows that the project falls under all IPOP criteria for adverse impact, the project meets the conditions prescribed by the City.

The Media Lab Extension will provide office space, lecture rooms and laboratory facilities for activities that are occurring on the site and provide new exhibit and assembly area. Some trips will be relocated from other areas of the campus and some additional trips will be generated by new activities and personnel at the new building. These trips will be very limited and will generate no adverse impact on surrounding streets.

The Board concludes that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic with the implementation of mitigation measures imposed by the Board as conditions of this Decision and with the redevelopment of the project site as indicated on the approved plans.

c. Conformance with Enumerated Growth Policies

The Planning Board finds that the project is consistent with the growth policies enumerated in Section 11.500.

(1) Policy 13: Pace of development, maintenance of the tax base, adjustment to changing conditions, consistent with urban design plans, disruption of neighborhoods, overburden infrastructure.

The Board finds that the project is consistent with the urban design and other goals of the city as set forth in the Growth Policy document. The large institutions in particular are encouraged in a number of institutional policies set out in ***Toward a Sustainable Future: Cambridge Growth Policy Document*** to concentrate future development within existing core campus areas, to reduce the impact of new institutional development on the city's tax levy by utilizing already tax exempt properties more efficiently, and to provide housing for students, faculty and staff on campus. This proposal meets all those objectives. No further property will be taken off the tax rolls, students will be able to use an improved athletic facility.

MIT is currently working with the City of Cambridge Department of Public Works to combine efforts to explore a variety of storm water management alternatives.

(2) Policy 27: Affordable housing and neighborhood character.

While this proposal is not a residential use, it does not displace any existing residential uses. MIT is currently in the process of constructing undergraduate student dormitory housing and has been granted a special permit for a graduate student dormitory.

(3) Policy 39: minimize impacts on abutting neighborhoods.

The Media Lab abuts a residential building and all necessary steps will be taken to minimize any construction and other impacts on that building and its residents. The site is part of an existing high-density industrial district in transition to institutional uses as part of the MIT campus. This building abuts the existing Media Lab building and benefits from the proximity of the various student activities being concentrated on the campus.

(4) Policy 66: Open space facilities

The proposed landscape plan incorporates a series of landscaped open spaces of various sizes and configurations along the street edges and redesign of an existing plaza at

the eastern edge of the site. The space is designed to accommodate group events and passive recreational activities. Additionally, view corridors will be provided from the open space to the Charles River.

2. Conformance to the general criteria for the issuance of special permits contained in Section 10.40 of the Zoning Ordinance

A special permit will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except where the particulars of the location or use, not generally true of the district or of the uses permitted in it, would cause granting such permit to be to the detriment of the public interest because of the following.

a. The requirements of the Ordinance cannot be met.

The building is being designed to meet all of the use regulations, development standards, off street parking and loading requirements, and sign and illumination regulations of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. A variance is being sought from the Board of Zoning Appeal for the supplementary loading area, should that prove to be necessary.

b. Traffic generated or patterns of access and egress will cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character.

Section 11.500 of the Ordinance establishes a higher standard for traffic impact than is required by Section 10.40. As proposed, and with the mitigation measures set forth as conditions of this permit, no substantial impact on neighborhood character will result, nor will the project cause congestion or hazard.

The traffic impact of the Media Lab on the surrounding neighborhood will be minimal. The project will generate an estimated 38 am peak hour trips and 38 pm peak trips. It is anticipated that the majority of trips associated with the project will be students walking and cycling to and from the facility. With bus services and pedestrian and bicycle facilities in close proximity to the site, it is anticipated that the majority of students, faculty and staff will use alternative (non-auto) modes of transportation.

The building service activities will be located in building 19 on Main Street. Materials will be brought into and out of the building

by way of an existing underground tunnel system. The special purpose loading dock will be used for the pick up and delivery of artwork on display in the existing building and for the occasional delivery of large objects in the Media Lab.

Therefore the Board finds that no nuisance or hazard will be created or substantial change in the character of the neighborhood caused by the traffic generated by this project.

c. The continued operation of or development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance will be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use.

The zoning district within which this project will be built is intended to accommodate high density institutional uses to serve the public policy objective of concentrating such activity at existing campus locations and discouraging expansion of such uses into valuable commercial areas or residential neighborhoods. The development of the Media Lab is consistent with most of the adjacent uses, which are educational in nature.

Therefore the Board finds that with this project, continued operation of adjacent uses or future development will not be negatively impacted.

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.

No nuisance or hazard will be created.

e. For other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or the adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance.

The proposed use is consistent with the uses allowed in the Industry B district, as well as the adjoining Residence C-3 District.

Decision

Based on a review of the application documents, comments made at the public hearing and other comments received by the Board, and based on the above findings, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the requested Planning

Overlay Special Permit subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in general conformance with the plans and application documents submitted to the Planning Board as referenced above and dated August 25, 2000. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The project shall continue to undergo design review with the staff of the Community Development Department. Before issuance of the first building permit for the project the Community Development Department shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that all conditions of this Decision have been met.
3. The following mitigation strategies as outlined in the letter of September 7, 2000 from Susan E. Clippinger, Director of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Departments shall be required:
 - a. New bicycle and pedestrian counts shall be done in September 2000 at all the count locations and times identified in the above referenced letter.

These counts shall be made available to the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department when complete.

- b. Bicycle parking shall be provided on or adjacent to the site and should comprise no less than 120 spaces. The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department should approve the design and location of the bicycle parking facilities.

- c. Pedestrian and handicapped access enhancements, designed by MIT and approved by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, shall be built by MIT at the following locations:

Ames and Amherst Streets
Ames Street at Building E66/E16 ("infinite corridor")
Deacon and Charleton Streets

- d. MIT, in cooperation with the Charles River Transportation Management Association (CRTMA), shall financially support shuttle service to the North Station commuter rail.

e. MBTA pass subsidies shall be brought to at least 50% of the cost of such subsidies or the maximum amount allowed under the Federal Tax Code for fringe benefits.

f. MIT will report to the city annually on the following:

(i) The number of on and off campus MIT affiliates in MIT-owned buildings who are residents of Cambridge, the number of autos registered to MIT affiliates in those buildings, the number of parking spaces maintained by the Institute for affiliates, and parking fees charged.

(ii) The MIT shuttles and Saferide routes and frequency of service and ridership and parking rates for MIT parking facilities. MIT shall also provide the PTDM Officer with a copy of the annual rideshare report.

Voting in the affirmative to **GRANT** the Planning Overlay Special Permit were P. Winters, associate member appointed by the Chair to act in the place of an absent member, L. Brown, T. Anninger, F. Darwin, W. Tibbs, H. Russell and B. Shaw, constituting more than the two thirds of the members of the Board necessary to grant a special permit.

For the Planning Board,


Larissa Brown, Chair

A copy of this decision #168 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 September 28, 2000, by Elizabeth M. Paden, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have likewise been filed with the City Clerk on such date.

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

DATE:
City Clerk, City of Cambridge