

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case No: PB#171

Address: 1730 Cambridge Street

Zoning: Residence C-3 District

Owners/Applicants: President and Fellows of Harvard College, c/o  
David Zewinski, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University Hall,  
Harvard Yard, Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Application Date: April 17, 2001

Public Hearing: May 15, 2001

Planning Board Decision: May 15, 2001

Date of Filing Decision: July 18, 2001

Application: Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.23) for approximately 85,133 gross square feet of new institutional building for the Center of Government and International Studies replacing an existing 28,770 square foot building to be demolished and an approximately 5,522 square foot wood frame structure to be relocated off-site.

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

For further information concerning this decision, please call Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, TTY: 349-4621, email [lpaden@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:lpaden@ci.cambridge.ma.us).

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CITY CLERK

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**Documents Submitted**

1. Special Permit Application certified complete and submitted to the City Clerk's Office on April 17, 2001, containing the project description, supporting statement, dimensional form, supporting statements describing the public process for review as part of the MidCambridge Conservation Commission.
2. Plans of the Center for Government and International Studies (CGIS) at 1730 Cambridge Street, dated 4/17/01, by Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, Architects, LLP, including the site plan, floor plans; basement through roof plans, elevations, and building sections; various scales, as well as the landscaping plans and the tunnel proposal.
3. Site plan labeled "Knafel Center South, Cambridge, Mass" dated 4/13/01.
4. Photographs of the site and photosimulations of the proposed buildings.
5. Certificates of Appropriateness from the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission dated 9/18/00.

## **Other Documents Submitted**

1. Board of Zoning Appeal variances #8254 and 8255
2. Copy of cover letter to Owen O’Riordan, City Engineer, from Jennifer Champa, Public Approvals Manager, dated 5/11/01, re: PB application.
3. Copy of cover letter to William Schellbach, Water Department, from Jennifer Champa, Public Approvals Manager, dated 5/14/01, re: PB application.
4. FAX of draft certification letter to Owen O’Riordan, City Engineer, from Jennifer Champa, Public Approvals Manager, dated 5/15/01, re: PB application.
5. Outline of the conformance with Cambridge Zoning Ordinance Section 19.30 Urban Design Objectives.

## **Findings**

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

### **1. Conformance with Section 19.30 – Citywide Urban Design Objectives**

- *Responsive to the existing or the anticipated pattern of development.*

The building height is consistent with the heights of the existing apartment buildings on adjacent lots. The proposed CGIS building has a two story curved setback at the street facing 1730 Cambridge Street and 84 Prescott Street which allows greater amounts of light for the abutting buildings.

- *Pedestrian and bicycle friendly development.*

The main entry of the South building faces Cambridge Street. The entry façade will be well lit, with a 3 story window above the entrance doors that frames two ground floor entrances, from 1730 and 1737 Cambridge Street. The proposed crosswalk is to

be oriented to the building entries defining a clear path of travel across Cambridge Street. The tunnel connection will encourage and reinforce pedestrian travel and safety. A new bus stop is to be installed along Cambridge street in front of CGIS South. Well-lit bike racks will be located adjacent to the front entry of CGIS South along Prescott. The area will be heavily landscaped.

The Board is not convinced that the applicant has adequately estimated the likely need for bicycle facilities at the new buildings. Therefore the Board will establish a condition that a study be undertaken to determine actual demand for bike facilities and that additional facilities be provided, if that is demonstrated to be needed.

- *Building and site design mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.*

The majority of mechanical equipment is to be located below grade in the sub-basement level. Small rooftop units will be enclosed. These will be set back from the main building faces. The proposed project (consisting of two buildings facing Cambridge Street) plans for one consolidated loading facility, containing four bays, to be located below grade at 1737 Cambridge Street. All trash storage and pick up will be moved to this area.

New landscaped areas will help to mediate between the institutional activity and nearby private uses. New paving will create a unified street appearance.

- *Impact on the City of Cambridge infrastructure, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system and sewer*

The water consumption, sewer outflow and fire protection demands of the project will result in no major impact on those municipal services with construction of this new building or the project as a whole.

The project will incorporate the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards regarding Low E coatings on glass, building systems to minimize energy consumption,

operable windows, reclamation of storm water for irrigation, daylight maximization and natural cladding materials.

- *New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.*

The CGIS South Building replaces an existing institutional use, building thereby continuing the same use in this area. The CGIS South Building is part of a proposal that preserves the existing open space and protects the wood frame structures on the north side of the street.

- *Expansion of housing inventory – there is no residential component.*

While the project does not increase the housing inventory in Cambridge, it does relocate an existing residential building to a lot in the Residence B zoning district along Sumner Road and calls for the renovation of that building to a two family structure, as allowed in that district.

- *Open space enhancement and expansion.*

The CGIS project will add a significant amount of new landscaping to the sites and to adjoining private and public areas. The combined North and South Sites will be provided with new landscaping, pathways, and exterior lighting. Considerable new useable open space is being created with the landscaping replacement of the parking and loading areas. A new bus stop is being designed in front of the South Building. Approximately 200 new street trees will be planted as part of the CGIS landscaping improvements.

### **3. 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.**

With the issuance of this special permit the requirements of Section 19.30-Project Review will be met.

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

The faculty and staff who will be working in the proposed building are already located on campus and therefore already commute to this sector of the city. The primary function of the buildings already takes place in Coolidge Hall and UIS buildings. There are expected to be fewer than 5 new vehicle trips to the neighborhood during the critical morning and evening peak hours.

The City of Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department certified the traffic study prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., for the project and concluded that "the project's transportation impacts overwhelmingly fall below the 'substantial impact' thresholds established under the IPOP's five evaluation criteria ...the Knafel (CGIS) project will have minimal, if any, impacts on the surrounding transportation circulation patterns."

Three existing service entrances will be consolidated into one service and freight area to be located beneath the North Building and accessed with one existing driveway. A tunnel beneath Cambridge Street is proposed to allow safe and efficient access to the South Building by pedestrians, goods and services.

Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements are proposed for Cambridge Street with approval of the City of Cambridge. A new bus shelter will be constructed in front of the South Building and an access-compliant drop-off area adjacent to both buildings.

**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 Project is located within the Harvard University campus, replacing an existing institutional building. The siting of the South Building and setbacks help to reduce building shadows on adjacent open areas. Most of the mechanicals are located below

grade with the roof top units enclosed within a structure setback from the main building faces.

**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. All health, safety, and noise standards will be observed.

**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 development is consistent with the requirements of the Residence C-3 district. The building has been designed to respect the existing residential uses to the east and the south, and to create a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.

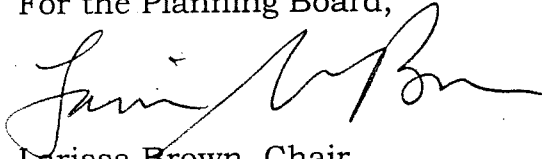
**Decision**

Based on a review of the application documents, comments made at the public hearing, and based on the above findings, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the requested Project Review Special Permit subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the plans and application documents submitted to the Planning Board as referenced above. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the Project as approved.
2. After occupancy of the project, the applicant shall conduct a demand study for the bicycle lock up facilities provided, with particular attention paid to anticipated demand. On the basis of such study, the permittee shall justify to the Community Development Department that the proposed number of spaces is adequate, or shall install additional facilities to meet demonstrated demand.

Voting in the affirmative to GRANT the Special Permit were P. Winters, associate member appointed by the Chair to act in the place of absent member, T. Anninger, H. Russell, F. Darwin, L. Brown 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 #171 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 July 17, 2001, 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