



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

**NOTICE OF DECISION**

Permit No: #196  
Address: 60 Aberdeen Avenue  
Applicant/Owner: 60 Aberdeen Place. LLC, c/o James Rafferty, Esq.,  
187 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138  
Zoning District: Residence C-1/MXR Overlay  
Application Date: July 13, 2004  
Public Hearing: September 7, 2004  
Planning Board Decision: October 5, 2004  
Date of Filing Decision: November 24, 2004

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
RECORDS & COMMUNICATIONS

Application: Special Permit for Multifamily housing. Section 4.26.1, for 57 units of housing and 57 parking spaces. 50 units to be in an existing nonresidential building and 7 units of new townhouse construction. Special Permit to permit the alternation of a non-conforming structure by adding more than 10% to the existing Gross Floor Area, Section 8.22.2 (c).

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 with the City Clerk and the Community Development Department, 344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

Authorized Representative to the Planning Board

For more information regarding this special permit, please contact Liza Paden at the Community Development Department, 344 Broadway, Cambridge, 617 349 4647, TTY 617 349 4621, or [lpaden@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lpaden@cambridgema.gov).

### Submitted Documents

Special Permit application including Ownership Certificate; description of the conformance to the special permit criteria, drawings A000, A001 Summary Sheet and location map with dimensional form, S001 existing conditions plan, SP1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 site photos, existing conditions; C-1 site plan, C-2 detail sheet, L-1 Landscaping plan; A100 Site plan, A101 and A102 Mill Building Floor Plans, A201 and A202 exterior elevations, Mill building, A300 Site Section, Looking North, A301 Building, A401 Loft Unit Types, Mill Building, A111 New Building Floor Plans, A211 Exterior Elevations, A311 Building Sections, all dated July 30, 2004 and at various scales; Survey pages 1 and 2 dated April 10, 2001.

### Other Documents Submitted

1. Letter to the Planning Board, from Roland Theriault, VP Real Estate for Guilford Transportation Industries, dated 7/26/04.
2. Letter to Liza Paden for the Planning Board, from Larry Parnell, 195 Binney Street, dated 7/29/04 re: the possible bike path from Watertown.
3. Letter to the Planning Board, from Roland Theriault, VP Real Estate for Guilford Transportation Industries, dated 8/17/04.
4. Email to the Planning Board from Barbara DeLutis, dated 9/7/04.
5. Email to the Planning Board from Craig Kelley, dated 9/7/04.
6. Memo to the Planning Board from Susanne Rasmussen, Director for Environmental and Transportation Planning, dated 9/7/04 re: pedestrian, transportation demand management and MultiUse Path Access.
7. Amended drawings as listed above, dated September 29, 2004, dimensional form revised 9/29/04 and Structural Engineer's letter concerning the condition of the retaining wall dated 9/13/04.
8. Letter to the Planning Board from John Lodge, 56 Aberdeen Avenue, dated 10/4/04, re: driveway issues.

### Findings

#### **1. Conformance to the Requirements of Section 4.26 – Multifamily Special Permit Applicability.**

The Planning Board finds that the proposal is subject to the special permit provisions of Section 4.26 as there are more than 12 dwelling units proposed in the Residence C-1 district.

## 2. Conformance with General Special Permit Criteria in Section 10.43:

*A special permit will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except when the 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. The requirements of the Zoning Ordinance can be met.*

The project, as amended on September 29, 2004, consisting of 55 units complies with the use regulations and dimensional requirements of the Residence C-1 district and the provisions of Section 8.22.2 (c). The existing building will be expanded by 4,588 square feet (exclusive of the inclusionary housing bonus GFA permitted in Section 11.200 of the Ordinance). The number is slightly larger than the 4,438 square feet (10% of the existing GFA) that would be permitted without a special permit in Section 8.22.1. The clerestory addition to the roof is a conforming addition with a setback of more than 17 feet exceeding the side yard setback requirement of 10.33 feet.

*b. Traffic and patterns of access and egress will not cause hazard or congestion or change in neighborhood character.*

The traffic generated by the residential units will be significantly less than the existing office building if it were fully occupied. Traffic access patterns into the site will not change. Moreover, the existing driveway will be modified with a vehicle speed bump to improve pedestrian safety along Aberdeen Avenue. Significant parking above the minimum required will be provided benefiting existing residents on Aberdeen Avenue and elsewhere who depend on existing on-street parking.

*c. The operation or development of adjacent uses will not be adversely affected.*

The proposal abuts an existing multifamily apartment building, two family houses, an office building and a railroad right of way. All of these uses will continue to function in the past and will not be adversely impacted by the mill building conversion to residential use.

*d. No nuisance or hazard will be created to the detriment of the health, safety and welfare of future residents or citizens of Cambridge.*

The project will comply with the applicable health, safety and building code requirements. No hazard or nuisance will be created.

*e. The use will not impair the integrity of the District or adjoining districts or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance.*

The conversion from office use to residential is consistent with the intent of the zoning ordinance (the area having been recently rezoned from Business A-1 to Residence C-1).

*f. The new use or building construction is not consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.*

The new use is consistent with those objectives:

(i) The reuse of the building is responsive to the existing and future pattern of development in the area with the introduction of residential use into a building formerly used for commercial uses, the enhancement of a formerly uniformly paved parking lot with new green space, enhanced pedestrian access to Aberdeen Avenue, and with the creation of upgraded outdoor patio facilities in the narrow setback between the building and the houses on Aberdeen Avenue.

(ii) The building's relationship to its surroundings will be enhanced through its restoration, through the introduction of substantial landscaping on the lot, and with improved pedestrian and vehicular access to Aberdeen Avenue.

(iii) The former mechanical equipment on the roof will be removed and reduced better organized and screen equipment will be substituted.

(iv) The conversion will not overburden existing infrastructure.

(v) The conversion will expand the inventory of housing in the City while preserving an interesting historic industrial structure.

### **3. Conformance with the Criteria Approval of Townhouse Development and Multifamily Dwellings - Section 10.47.4**

*a. Key features of the natural environment should be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal should be minimized and other natural features of the site, such as slopes, should be maintained.*

The minimal existing landscaping on the site will be improved; large amounts of surface parking will be removed and replaced with landscaping in both the parking lots and along the railroad right of way. No significant natural features are present on the site.

*b. New buildings should be related sensitively to the existing built environment. The location, orientation and massing of structures in the development should avoid overwhelming the existing buildings in the vicinity of the development. Visual and functional disruptions should be avoided.*

There are no new buildings being constructed. The existing historic building will be sensitively restored and its presence enhanced.

*c. The location, arrangement, and landscaping of open space should provide some visual benefits to abutters and passersby as well as functional benefits to occupants of the development.*

The landscaping has been planned in such a way as to screen the remaining transformers on the site, buffer the existing parking lot at 625 Mount Auburn Street, and to screen the dumpster from the abutters. There will be landscaping improvements to the railroad right of way as well as along the rear yards of the Aberdeen Avenue neighbors. The site is located well back from a public way and is primarily visible to abutters.

*d. Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.*

The proponent will make improvements to the driveway onto Aberdeen Avenue to provide pedestrian access to Aberdeen Avenue as well as vehicular access into the two parking areas. Traffic calming measures will be developed at the entrance.

*e. Parking area landscaping should minimize the intrusion of onsite parking so that it does not substantially detract from the use and enjoyment of either the proposed development or neighboring properties.*

Landscaping along the common property lines and in the parking lots will minimize the negative visual impacts of the parking lot.

*Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.*

The dumpster will be located in such a way as to be shielded from the abutters either by the Mill Building itself or by landscaping features.

### 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 Special Permit for Multifamily Housing Section 4.26 and permits expansion of a non-conforming structure as permitted in Section 8.22.2, 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 reference above and dated September 29, 2004. 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, the 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 Permit.

3. Modifications to the driveway from Aberdeen Avenue shall be reviewed and approved by Traffic, Parking and Transportation with the objective of determining an appropriate alignment and width that serves the needs and interests of the project as well as immediate abutters.

4. The applicant shall make a good faith effort to secure an additional 19 parking spaces for evening and weekend use to be made available to the occupants of 60 Aberdeen Avenue through a lease with the owners of the abutting office building at 625 Concord Avenue. for a period of 99 years.

5. The project shall be designed and maintained in such a way as to not preclude the installation of a multiuse path for pedestrians and bicyclists across the site from Aberdeen Avenue to the railroad right of way if such a path is developed along the railroad right of way that abuts this project.

6. All authorized development shall conform to the requirements of the City of Cambridge "Noise Control Ordinance", Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code.

Voting in the Affirmative to GRANT the Special Permit were B. Shaw, H. Russell. P. Winters, L. Brown, W. Tibbs, and J. Hrabchak, Associate member appointed to sit on the Board for absent Planning Board members, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Planning Board necessary to grant a Special Permit.

For the Planning Board



Barbara Shaw, Chair

A copy of this decision, #196, shall be filed with 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 November 24, 2004 by Elizabeth M. Paden, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date or as part of the original application.

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

DATE:

**Appendix I – Dimensional Form**

**Special Permit #196**

**Address: 60 Aberdeen Avenue**

|                             | Allowed/Required | Existing         | Proposed         | Granted          |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total FAR</b>            | 0.975            | 0.68             | 0.89             | 0.89             |
| Residential                 | .75              | 0                | .75              | .75              |
| Non-Residential             |                  | .68              | 0                | 0                |
| <b>Inclusionary Bonus</b>   | .0225            | na               | .14              | .14              |
| <b>Total GFA in Sq. Ft.</b> | 63.658           | 44.380           | 58.426           | 58,426           |
| Residential                 | 48.968           | 0                | 48.968           | 48,968           |
| Non-Residential             | 0                | 44.380           | 0                | 0                |
| <b>Inclusionary Bonus</b>   | 14.690           |                  | 9.458            | 9,458            |
| <b>Max. Height</b>          | 35'              | 31' 0"           | 35'              | 35'              |
| <b>Lot Size</b>             | 5.000            | 65,290           | 65.290           | 65,290           |
| <b>Lot area/du</b>          | 1500/1187 (inc.) | 0                | 1500/1187 (inc.) | 1500/1187 (inc.) |
| <b>Total Dwelling Units</b> | 55               |                  | 55               | 55               |
| Base units                  | 43               |                  | 43               | 43               |
| Inclusionary units          | 12               |                  | 12               | 12               |
| <b>Min. Lot Width</b>       | 50'              | 143'10"          | 143'10"          | 143'10"          |
| <b>Min. Yd Setbacks*</b>    |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Front                       | 47.91' / 10' min | 143'10" / 15'    | 143'10" / 15'    | 143'10" / 15'    |
| Side, Right                 | 17.9'            | 0 min / 7'7" avg | 0 min / 7'7" avg | 0 min / 7'7" avg |
| Side, Left                  | 17.9'            | 95'3"            | 95'3"            | 95'3"            |
| Rear                        | 49.91' (30' max) | 99'8"            | 99'8"            | 99'8"            |
| <b>Total % Open Space</b>   |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Usable                      | 30%              | 3.7%             | 30%              | 30%              |
| Other                       |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>Off Street Parking</b>   | 55               | 119              | 83               | 83               |
| Min #                       | 55               |                  | 55               | NA               |
| Max #                       | NA               |                  | 83               | 83               |
| Handicapped                 |                  |                  |                  | 1                |
| <b>Bicycle Spaces</b>       | 28               | 0                | 28               | 28               |
| <b>Loading Bays</b>         |                  | 1                | 0                | 0                |

\*New clerestory addition to roof set back 17.58 feet from side yard; 10.33 feet required.