



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: September 4, 2019

Re: Special Permit **PB #350, 810 Main Street (804-830 Main Street)**

IRAM FAROOQ
*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

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Chief of Administration*

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This memo contains an overview of the proposed project at 810 Main Street, the special permits being requested, and related comments.

Summary of Proposal

The applicant is proposing to construct an addition to the existing non-conforming building located on the parcel 804-830 Main Street to accommodate a utility vault and update the electrical system. The addition will result in a net increase of 9,965 square feet in Gross Floor Area (GFA) consisting of a below-grade basement and three floors above grade.

The site is within the Central Square Overlay District, requiring review by the Central Square Advisory Committee, whose report is attached to this memo. The existing building is a potentially contributing structure within the Central Square National Register District. The Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) staff has reviewed the application and provided some comments to CDD.

The project is seeking variances from the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) to construct loading bays less than 50 feet in length, to exceed the curb cut width, to increase the existing non-conforming GFA, and to expand the existing non-conforming use.

Requested Special Permits

The project is located in the Business B (BB) District within the Central Square Overlay District and is seeking Special Permits for additional building height per Section 20.304.2.2(a). Applicable sections of the zoning are provided in an appendix.

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Special Permit for additional building height in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.2.2(a))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements are in conformance with objectives contained in <i>Central Square Development Guidelines and Central Square Action Plan</i> (see next page). • No National Register or contributing building is demolished or altered as to terminate or preclude its designation (either now or within the past 5 years). • Building and site designs adequately screen the parking provided and are sensitive to the contributing buildings in the vicinity.
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43.

Area Planning and Zoning

The site is located in the Business B (BB) District and the Central Square Overlay District. BB is a mixed-use district allowing a range of residential and commercial uses at a relatively high density (2.75 FAR non-residential / 3.00 FAR residential) and a maximum height of 80 feet; however, in the Central Square Overlay District, exceeding a height of 55 feet requires a special permit from the Planning Board. The site is entirely within the Central Square National Register District and the building is considered to be potentially contributing.

The goals of the Central Square Overlay District include preservation and enhancement of the unique functional environment and visual character of Central Square, mitigation of the functional impacts of new development on adjacent residential neighborhoods, and maintenance of the present diversity of development and open space patterns and building scales and ages. The Central Square portion of the Kendall Square Central Square or “K2C2” Planning Study complemented the goals of the original Central Square Overlay District zoning with the goals of promoting public spaces to build community, diversity in retail, non-profit and cultural institutions, increased housing and residential diversity, connecting people to the square, and encouraging sustainable development choices. In 2017, the City Council adopted a package of zoning changes known as the “Central Square Restoration Zoning Petition” to restore the historic status of Central Square as a commercial hub and strengthen its identity as a cultural district, with specific objectives to increase the potential for housing, expand the local retail footprint, enliven side streets, and activate the streetscape.

Comments on Proposal

Consistency with Planning and Zoning

As it exists, the lot is currently non-conforming with regard to use and dimensional requirements. The Applicant has reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission, who have

concluded that the project does not require a formal hearing by the Commission and have communicated to CDD that they are generally supportive of the proposal. The proposed addition will require multiple variance approvals from the BZA, the most significant of which is for the enlargement of a non-conforming use. Although this use has a unique status as the last of the many candy manufacturing plants that used to be prevalent in Cambridge, manufacturing uses are generally prohibited in the BB district.

The main reason for the Planning Board's review is that the proposed addition will exceed the allowed as-of-right building height of 55 feet in the Central Square Overlay District. In Central Square, the Planning Board may issue a special permit for additional building height up to 80 feet with appropriate setbacks from the street line and if it results in an urban design outcome that is in keeping with the goals for Central Square. The addition is proposed to be 65 feet high to match the existing building height and meets the setback requirements from the street line.

The proposed addition, because it is over an existing parking lot, will reduce the total number of off-street parking spaces from 125 to 100, though it will still conform to minimum parking requirements. All parking will be accommodated in the existing private parking lots on Cherry Street and Columbia Street, which were previously designated accessory off-street parking for the existing use at 810 Main Street. Since the proposed addition is less than 15% of the existing GFA, this project is exempted from new bicycle parking requirements. However, the proposal would add 8 short term bicycle parking spaces in the parking lot on Cherry Street.

Urban Design

Staff are very supportive of the expansion of one of the city's historic food manufacturing facilities. While there are site and design limitations associated with the food manufacturing activities, the Applicant has worked with staff to develop a proposal that responds to the surrounding context and enables the business to remain in Central Square.

The Cambridge Brands factory was built in 1908 and expanded to its present dimensions in 1919. CHC staff made note that the modest expansion is considered architecturally appropriate for its context. The addition is well set back from Main and State Streets, and reflects the concrete-frame structure of the existing factory. In particular, the cornice, masonry base, and the applied column and beam trim reference the architectural features of the original building. It appears that most of the facades will be clad in EIFS, which is an exterior insulation and finish system that is often considered a synthetic stucco. While the use of stucco-style panels is discouraged in the *Central Square Development Guidelines*, the proposed EIFS will only be used above the ground floor, and due to the generous site setbacks the EIFS will not be highly visible from the public realm.

A key urban design concern in Central Square is the creation of active frontages to help animate the public realm. The existing building currently lacks ground floor activity, and it is understood that due to the nature of the manufacturing being undertaken on site an active presence is not possible. Given these limitations, the Applicant has adopted other approaches to improve the visual appearance of the site. The proposed historic plaque, Main Street planters, and public art installation at the Cheery Street lot will enhance the site and have a positive impact on the public realm.

The need to mitigate the negative impacts of the loading docks is another urban design focus area. While preference would be to enclose all loading within the building, the Applicant has advised that the site constraints and loading vehicle size requirements make this unfeasible. Instead, efforts have been made to mitigate the impacts of the loading area on Main Street with the addition of a landscape strip and ornamental fence, which will provide some buffering benefits to passersby. Similarly, the loading area on State Street will also include an ornamental fence, which will have a positive visual impact.

Continuing Review

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends as conditions for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- Review of all exterior materials, alterations and details with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission.
- Review of rooftop mechanical equipment, and materials and details of any necessary visual/acoustical screening.
- Review of all landscaping details, including planters and fencing.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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SANDRA CLARKE
*Deputy Director
Chief of Administration*

To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 3/15/2018
Re: Cambridge Brands Inc. – 810 Main Street

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on February 15, 2018 to review and comment on the Cambridge Brands Inc. proposal to expand their operations at 810 Main Street, pursuant to the provisions outlined in Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The Committee is appointed by the City Manager to undertake all large project reviews of variances and special permits for activities within the Central Square Overlay District, and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study.

Cambridge Brands Inc. (the “Applicant”) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tootsie Roll Industries Inc., a manufacturer of candy for 120 years. The manufacturing of candy has been a staple of Central Square for well over a century. Although Tootsie Roll Industries has been located at 810 Main Street since 1993, candy has been produced at this location since 1908 by the Lydian Confectionery Co. which later merged with the Boston Confectionery. The initial building (814-822 Main St) was constructed in 1908, a second structure was built in 1911 after the merger, and the final buildout in 1919 included a third section (804 Main St) and the combination of all three sections into the current 5-story complex.

The Applicant is proposing to expand its operations due to a pressing need to upgrade its current electrical system. The current electrical distribution system is over 60 years old, is deteriorating, and has less than a 10% capacity left for growth. The approximately 3,600 sq.ft. addition will house electrical equipment in a vault approved by utility companies and will allow the Applicant to install a state-of-the-art electrical system to all floors in the building.

As part of its presentation to the Committee, the Applicant addressed the architectural and urban design considerations of the proposal – the use of similar, but newer and more efficient materials that will mimic the pattern of the existing building, and that blends with neighboring structures – as well as parking considerations which includes a shift in usage in the lots on Main Street, next to the existing building, and on Columbia Street.

Committee members who were present spoke in favor of the proposal and of the Applicant’s work with the local community through various charitable programs and events. The Committee also suggested the Applicant further explore the following:

- subsidized Charlie Cards and MBTA passes for employees who take public transit
- on-site charging stations for electric vehicles and mounted solar panels on shading devices in the parking lots
- opportunities to add features on the building (i.e. a plaque) or around the site (i.e. murals or public art) that speak to the history of manufacturing in Central Square and ties in to its designation as a Cultural District

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There were no additional comments by Committee members not in attendance.

Committee Members Present

- Joel Alstein
- Melissa Greene
- Tahir Kapoor
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent

- Michael Monestime
- Esther Hanig

Guest Presenters

- Jamie Cairns, *Cambridge Brands, Inc.*
- Diana White, *Cambridge Brands, Inc.*
- Johanna Schneider, *Rackermann, Sawyer, and Brewster*
- Gail Woodhouse, *Imai Keller Moore Architects*
- Scott Haenssler, *The Coastal Group*
- Dan Simonelli, *The Coastal Group*

submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Wendell Joseph, *Neighborhood Planner*
Community Development Department

Joseph, Swaathi

Subject: FW: Project Review PB-350_810 Main St

From: Sullivan, Charles M. <csullivan@cambridgema.gov>

Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2019 2:43 PM

To: Joseph, Swaathi <sjoseph@cambridgema.gov>

Subject: RE: Project Review PB-350_810 Main St

Swaathi,

Cambridge Brands occupies a factory that was originally built in 1908 and expanded to its present dimensions in 1919. The building is not subject to CHC jurisdiction, but the owner began reaching out to us about the current proposal in 2017. CHC staff provided information and illustrations for the proposed murals, and we have agreed to review them for content and accuracy.

I support the proposed project. One of Cambridge's last (if not the last on many) traditional manufacturers has proposed a modest expansion that I find architecturally appropriate for its context. The proposed explanatory panels will provide a clear public benefit by displaying the history of this once nationally important industry.

Charles Sullivan

Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
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