

Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District
Special Permit

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Case No: PB #70

Premises: 1771 Massachusetts Avenue
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Proposal: Special Permit to waive Cambridge MA
CAMBRIDGE MA
(Section 11.105) at-grade front yard requirement

Zoning District: Business A-2/Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District

Petitioner: 1771 Realty Trust

Application Date: April 3, 1987

Date of Public Hearing: May 5, 1987

Date of Decision: June 16, 1987

Application

The following documents were submitted in support of the application.

1. Application certified complete on April 3, 1987.

Other Documents

1. Revised floor plans, cross sections, and perspective entitled "Retail Stores at 1771 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts"; Hardaway Associates, Architects; Scale 1/4" = 1'; dated June 15, 1987.
2. Letter to the Planning Board from Jody Garber, Chair of the Agassiz Neighborhood Association detailing the Association's opposition to the special permit request.
3. Comments on the special permit request from Charles Laverty, dated May 11, 1987.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on May 5, 1987. Mr. Laverty, representing the applicant, described the proposal briefly, indicating that the intent was to make the lower floor, used continuously for commercial purposes since the construction of the building, more accessible as primary retail space.

The proposed scheme would make the lower floor more visible, Mr. Laverty indicated, although it would be possible to contain the access fully within the building. Ms. Jody Garber, speaking for the Agassiz Neighborhood Association, expressed the Association's view that the

- b. A large expanse of windows will remain fully accessible along the length of Forest Street as will the display window on the right side of the Massachusetts Avenue frontage of the building in the revised plans.
 - c. The revised plans preserve more than half of the Massachusetts frontage of the building at grade as mandated by Section 11.105.
 - d. The revised plans, while recessing the left glass panel seven feet behind the present facade of the building, open up a large display window on the lower floor. The plans may actually provide more visible and approachable display frontage to the public street than would be the case in some alternate schemes providing internal circulation.
 - e. With careful selection of materials the proposed alterations can be a positive addition to the pedestrian environment along Massachusetts Avenue and compatible with abutting properties as they are currently developed.
3. While subject to some alteration, the basic integrity of the building will be maintained.
 4. The proposed construction provides an opportunity to upgrade the treatment of the existing setback and the abutting public sidewalk.

Decision

After review of the application, comments made at the public hearing, comments of the staff of the Community Development Department, and other information available to the Board, the Planning Board GRANTS a Special Permit under the provisions of Section 11.108 of the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District to waive the front setback requirements of Section 11.105 for the above referenced property subject to the following conditions.

1. The final plans submitted to the Inspectional Services Department for building permits shall be in general conformance with the revised plans dated June 15, 1987 and approved as part of this decision.
2. The project shall be subject to the standard design review by the Community Development Department. The quality of the design details and materials used throughout shall be of the highest caliber. The Planning Board shall review and approve the final plans before issuance of a building permit for the project. The final plans shall indicate any modifications and improvements proposed by the permittee for the existing setback of the building and the abutting public sidewalk.