



Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

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To: Applicants to the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood
Conservation District Commission

From: Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District
Commission

Re: Guidelines for Determining the Appropriateness
of Proposed Construction Projects

The order establishing the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District directs the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission to consider all applications in terms of the impact on the District as a whole and on the surrounding properties and immediate streetscape. The Commission is specifically directed to:

1. avoid excessive infill;
2. encourage new construction which complements existing buildings;
3. encourage preservation of neighborhood buildings;
4. protect National Register structures; and
5. enhance the economic vitality of the neighborhood.

The Guidelines listed below are formulated to assist applicants proposing construction projects. The Guidelines take the form of questions the Commission will ask of all proposed construction projects. Applicants for construction projects should be prepared to address these questions in their presentations to the Commission. For further information about this process, contact Sarah Burks or Paul Trudeau at the Historical Commission office, 617-349-4683.

I. Scope of Neighborhood

A. What is the impact of the project on the surrounding area? Physical, visual and traffic impacts should be identified. The surrounding area is defined, in its smallest dimensions, as the lots of the abutters and the abutters' abutters. However, the Commission may determine that a project may affect a larger area, depending on the scope of the project. If the Commission determines that a larger area is affected, the Commission will identify the extent of that area and the ways in which the project affects that area.

II. Development Characteristics

A. Is the project appropriate to the neighborhood and in scale with the surrounding area? Massing, bulk, height, and fenestration will be taken into consideration in determining the scale of the proposed project in relation to the surrounding area.

B. Is the height of the project appropriate considering the height of buildings in the surrounding area?

C. Is the density, or Floor Area Ratio (FAR), of the proposed project complementary to the FAR of buildings in the surrounding area?

D. Is the massing of the project appropriate to the surrounding area?

E. Are the setbacks of the project appropriate to the surrounding area?

1. What are the current and the proposed setbacks for the project?

2. Are any variances on setbacks needed?

3. What would the distance be between the proposed construction and any other buildings on the lot?

4. What would the distance be between the proposed construction and buildings on the abutting lots?

F. Are any variances of any sort needed?

III. Landscaping

A. Are any mature trees (3" caliper or over) being removed? If so, what is their approximate height and age, and what is their type and location?

B. Is any excavation and/or landfill included in the project?

C. Is there a substantial grade change along any of the lot lines?

D. Is a change of the existing grade proposed?

IV. Aesthetic Considerations

A. What is the historic character of the buildings in the neighborhood?

B. What are the architectural features of the buildings in the neighborhood? What are the architectural features of the proposed development (including materials, design, and setting)?

V. Impact on Neighborhood

A. How does the project affect parking in the neighborhood?

B. What is the parking plan for the proposed development?

C. What are the provisions for access to the proposed development by emergency vehicles?

D. What is the location and noise impact of mechanical equipment?

E. Will the project diminish light and air to the abutters? If so, what is the nature and extent of diminished light and air to the abutters?

F. How will trash be accommodated once the project is complete?

G. Do the neighbors support the proposed development?

Adopted February 2, 1988
Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission