



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION • COVER SHEET

In accordance with the requirements of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits for the premises indicated below.

Location of Premises: 533 Putnam Avenue
Zoning District: C
Applicant Name: Lianne Bensley
Applicant Address: 76 High Street Newburyport, MA 01950
Contact Information: 978-463-5877 lbsley@comcast.net

Telephone #	Email Address	Fax #

List all requested special permit(s) (with reference to zoning section numbers) below. *Note that the Applicant is responsible for seeking all necessary special permits for the project. A special permit cannot be granted if it is not specifically requested in the Application.*

5.28.2 Conversion of Non Residential Structures to Residential Use
6.35.1 Reduction of Required Parking
5.28.22 Dwelling Units

List all submitted materials (include document titles and volume numbers where applicable) below.

Signature of Applicant:

For the Planning Board, this application has been received by the Community Development Department (CDD) on the date specified below:

5/23/2013

Date

Signature of CDD Staff

MERRIMACK DESIGN

Architects

14 Cedar Street, Studio 324

Amesbury, MA 01913

telephone: 978 388 8222x1, facsimile: 978 388 8220

www.merrimackdesign.com

Project: 533A Putnam Avenue Proposed Conversion

Date: May 23, 2013

Subject: Project Narrative

- **Project Overview**

The proposed project is located at 533 Putnam Avenue in a "Residence C" zoning district. It is on the South side of Putnam Avenue between Acorn and Brookline Streets.

The 4984 square foot lot is situated in a residential neighborhood adjacent to a Triple Decker abutting the east property line, across the street from David Nunez Park and a three story brick, contemporary apartment building. The lot rear abuts the rear yard of a two story wood frame house facing on Acorn Street.

The lot contains a two-story Victorian, Second Empire style, half house, built in 1869, with two apartment dwellings. On the west side of the lot there is a one-story storefront building flanked by six garage bays that are attached on the east side. The storefront on Putnam Avenue and the successive garage bays were built beginning in 1922.

The property was purchase by the current owner in 1996 and the storefront and three garage bays were converted into offices and storage space for Bensley Construction. The storefront and three of the six garage bays are currently used as rental office space.

The owner proposes to convert the existing storefront and six garage bay structure into a one family dwelling. The proposed alterations will occur entirely within the existing structure with the exception of a skylight, chimney flue and a new projecting eave, not to exceed 3-1/2 feet (Article 5.24.2), located above the new building entry along the west side. The proposed alterations will include structural repair and partial reconstruction of masonry at the southeast corner where there is structural deterioration.

The proposed conversion of a non-residential structure into a new owner occupied, single family dwelling will utilize all of the existing Gross Floor Area as defined by Article 2.00 of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

The existing parking facilities include two tandem parking spaces in the driveway and three inaccessible garage bays that are non-conforming (Article 6.43). The proposed conversion will eliminate the garage bays and provide two tandem parking spaces for three dwelling units.

The applicant is requesting a special permit for **conversion of non-residential structures to residential use** (Article 5.28.2), increasing the number of **dwelling units** on the property from two to three (Article 5.28.22) and **reduction of required parking** (Article 6.35.1).

- **Compliance with Zoning**

Article 4.0 USE REGULATION

The existing one-story storefront building is a non-conforming accessory use (Article 4.21).

The lot area occupied by the non-conforming accessory use (2000 square feet) exceeds 15% of the area of the lot (Article 4.21.g).

The existing building location on the front, side and rear lot line does not conform to the district dimensional regulations (Article 4.21.l).

Article 5.20 STANDARDS FOR DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS

The existing gross floor area of the half house is 3042 and the accessory structure is 2320 for a total of 5362 square feet. The proposed additional gross floor area will occur within the physical limits of the existing non-residential structure and is necessary to accommodate a reasonable arrangement and layout of a residential unit within the existing structure (Article 5.28.21).

There are two existing dwelling units in the half house. One additional dwelling unit is proposed for a total of three. (3) x 1800 sq. ft. min. = 5400 sq. ft. > 4984 sq. ft. (existing lot area). The proposed dwelling unit is non-conforming (Table 5-1).

The minimum ratio of private open space to lot area required is 36% (Table 5-1). The existing ratio of 7% is non-conforming. The front yard does not meet the minimum dimensional requirements for inclusion (Article 5.22.1). The proposed ratio of 16% will be achieved by reducing the length of the driveway and increasing the private open space in the rear yard. In addition, the proposed ratio of permeable open space will be 14.5% as defined by Article 2.00.

ARTICLE 5.28.22, DWELLING UNITS

The Planning Board may permit a greater number of dwelling units by dividing the gross floor area of the structure (2320) by 1100 square feet. The proposed conversion is for one dwelling unit.

Article 6.30 PARKING REQUIREMENTS

The existing parking requirement is 2 spaces (1 per D.U.) for an existing two family dwelling (Article 6.36.1) and 3 spaces (1 per 800 square feet minimum) for general office accessory use (Article 6.36.4.d).

The current existing, non-conforming off street parking facilities (Article 6.43.2) include one twelve foot wide driveway extending to the rear property line with two tandem parking spaces dedicated to the business tenants. There is insufficient maneuvering area to access the three existing garage bays within the accessory structure due to an egress stair addition (to the apartment dwelling) and a rear yard deck. The garage bays have historically been used for storage because of this inaccessibility. The apartment tenants currently use on street parking.

The proposed conversion of the accessory use (including the three garage bays) into a single family residence and reduction of driveway to increase green area will result in a reduction of required parking to one automobile off street parking space according to the requirements in Section 6.30.

However, the proposed conversion will include two non-conforming tandem automobile parking spaces which cannot be used to satisfy the parking requirement because moving a car is required (Article 6.43.2).

Three off street bicycle parking spaces will be provided (Article 6.37.1) in compliance with the City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

Article 8.20 NONCONFORMANCE

The proposed alteration of an existing non-conforming structure to accommodate a new conforming use will occur entirely within the existing structure. Demolition of portions of the structure will not increase or otherwise affect the non-conformity (Article 8.22.1).

- **Compliance with Criteria Specific to Special Permits Being Sought**

Provision of Parking

The proposed conversion of the accessory use (including the three garage bays) into a single family residence and reduction of driveway to increase green area will result in a reduction of required parking from three (1 per dwelling unit) to one automobile off street parking space according to the requirements in Section 6.30. However, two non-conforming tandem automobile parking spaces are proposed which do not satisfy the parking requirement because moving a car is required (Article 6.43.2).

Three off street bicycle parking spaces will be provided (Article 6.37.1) in compliance with the City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

In addition, the property is located in close proximity to public transportation including bus routes 47 and 64 on Brookline on Magazine Street.

The proposed change from a non-residential accessory structure to a residential use will positively impact the neighborhood by eliminating the on street parking demand of business tenants, thereby improving public safety, while providing positive environmental benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood.

Privacy Considerations

Existing window openings along the south and east abutting properties will be restored with new fixed, fire rated steel windows. The proposed building access and prevailing daylight openings are oriented toward the existing driveway and rear yard thereby maintaining a reasonable level of privacy for abutters (Article 5.28.28.1.b). The private open space within the rear yard will be screened with planting materials to increase privacy to the owner and abutters at 6-8 and 10 Acorn Street.

Reduction in Private Open Space

The proposed alterations will increase private open space from 7% to 16%.

Community Outreach

The owner has contacted and solicited input from the abutters. A copy of the letter is included with the attached application (Article 5.28.28.1.d).

- **Compliance with General Special Permit Criteria**

The existing accessory structure does not meet the requirements of the City of Cambridge zoning Ordinance. See “Compliance with Zoning” above.

The proposed conversion of the non-conforming accessory use structure into a single family residence will not impact traffic patterns or change access and egress to the property and will enhance the neighborhood residential character by removing a non-conforming use.

The proposed conversion will remove a nuisance and hazard to the neighborhood by rehabilitating a deteriorated structure, improving energy efficiency and increasing green area open space.

The proposed conversion is consistent with the integrity of the Residence “C” district.

Urban Design Objectives

The proposed conversion satisfies Urban Design Objectives by limiting alterations primarily to the interior of the one story structure. The existing storefront will be preserved with no change to the streetscape.

Bicycle parking is provided in compliance with the City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

The building entrances and access are on the west side of the proposed residence, within a new expanded yard and reduced driveway. Improved access to building tenants is provided via convenient and safe designated pathways including a secure bicycle storage enclosure.

Report by: Gregory Colling, AIA

DIMENSIONAL FORM

Project Address:

Application Date:

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)				
Lot Width (ft)				
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)				
Residential Base				
Non-Residential Base				
Inclusionary Housing Bonus				
Total Floor Area Ratio				
Residential Base				
Non-Residential Base				
Inclusionary Housing Bonus				
Total Dwelling Units				
Base Units				
Inclusionary Bonus Units				
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)				
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)				
Building Height(s) (ft)				
Front Yard Setback (ft)				
Side Yard Setback – Side? (ft)				
Side Yard Setback – Side? (ft)				
Rear Yard Setback (ft)				
Open Space (% of Lot Area)				
Private Open Space				
Permeable Open Space				
Other Open Space (Specify)				
Off-Street Parking Spaces				
Bicycle Parking Spaces				
Loading Bays				

Use space below and/or attached pages for additional notes: