



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

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NOTICE OF DECISION

Case No.: PB #104  
Premises: 55 - 75 Richdale Avenue  
Zoning District: Industry A-1  
Owner: Payne Project, Inc., c/o 93 Winslow Avenue,  
Somerville, MA 02144  
Application Date: August 18, 1993  
Date of Public Hearing: September 7, 1993  
Petition: Multifamily Special Permit in the Industry A-1 District  
for 18 residential units/artist's lofts.  
Date of Planning Board Decision: September 7, 1993  
Date of filing the Decision: 9/22/93  
Decision (summary): 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 date of filing of the above referenced  
decision with the City Clerk.

Copies of the complete decision and final plans, if applicable,  
are on file with the office of Community Development and the City  
Clerk.

*Elizabeth Malenfant*  
Authorized Representative to the Planning Board

9/22/93  
Date

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Application

1. Special Permit application dated 8/17/93, certified as complete on 8/18/93.
2. Maps and Plans submitted 8/18/93, dated August 7, 1993, nine sheets; Map 1: project area location, SD-1: existing site survey, SD-2: proposed site plan, A-1: Proposed first floor, A-2: proposed second floor, A-3: proposed loft plan, A-4: elevations, A-5: sections; various scales.
3. Undated photographs showing the site and the abutting area.

Other Documents Submitted

1. Letter to the Planning Board from Deputy Traffic Director Lauren M. Preston, dated August 30, 1993, reviewing the proposed parking plan and recommending some curb cut changes.
2. Copy of report to the Cambridge Historical Commission, from Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Historical Commission, RE: Case D-568, dated 9/9/93.

Public Hearing

One September 7, 1993, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the multifamily Special Permit #104 at 55-75 Richdale Avenue. Julie Holbrook, Development Consultant, presented the application for a multifamily special permit in the Industry A-1 District consisting of 18 dwelling units/artist loft spaces. The project would renovate the existing Payne Elevator Company, currently

being used to fabricate parts for elevators. A section of the brick building at one end would be demolished, as would the metal shed building at the other end, both to be replaced in part by parking facilities. There would be 18 parking spaces provided on the site; of the three existing curb cuts, one would remain, one would be relocated slightly, and one would be eliminated. All units would be accessed from the first floor. Building C, would remain the same, Building B, currently one story would have a second floor added within the bulk of the existing building, and Building A, 45 feet tall, would have third floor loft space added as well as a second floor, all also within the existing volume of the building. All units are under agreement with the potential owners.

The variances requested are related to the constraints imposed by reusing an existing industrial building. The requested Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.35, to make use of the high ceilings in portions of the building. There are two parking regulation waivers requested: one to permit parking within five (5) feet of the rear and side property lines. The rear property line abuts the existing and active commuter rail line, the side property line abuts a chain link fence and the parking area of the abutting property on one side, and the wall of another industrial building on the other side. The second parking waiver requested is from the dimensional requirements for the parking space angles and aisle widths.

There was a discussion of the neighborhood meetings which had occurred to date; there was full support of the proposed reuse of the building at those meetings. There was no opposition to the project expressed.

#### Questions from the Board

H. Russell asked about the lack of windows at the first floor for one of the units. The architect, Fred Todd of HKT, explained that the first floor of that unit consisted of all work space, not living space; living space with windows associated with that unit was located on the second floor.

A. Callaghan asked if there were dividing walls between each of the three buildings. The architect indicated that there were.

P. Dietrich asked if the applicant had addressed the concerns of the Traffic and Parking concerning egress from Lot C as outlined in a letter to the Board from Lauren Preston. The architect pointed out that the spaces are to be individually owned and used by a particular occupant; therefore the inconveniences of the parking layout can be accommodated by the owners.

H. Russell asked if any children were going to be in residence, wondering whether there would be any facilities for them.

David Kalan, the artist's representative said that so far there would be one year round resident and two would be part time residents. The applicants indicated that there are city parks in the vicinity which would be appropriate for children.

During discussion of the proposal, H. Russell asked if some additional floor area above that requested by the applicants should be allowed so that any additions to loft space would not require another public hearing process. Any additions could be conditioned on being contained within the existing building, without change to the number of units, with perhaps no more than 1,000 additional square feet total allowed.

Julie Holbrook explained that the unit sizes were discussed with each potential occupant, and their needs were already in the calculations of the floor area; at this point what was actually built would depend on the costs at the time of construction and that not all of the floor area may be developed at once.

Board members had no objection to the notion that additional floor area might be constructed within the building in the future but it was thought to be too complicated to allow for such additional floor area within the limits of this permit.

A number of persons spoke in favor of the proposal; no one spoke in opposition.

The Board moved that the special permit and variances be granted and requested that the text of a decision be drafted granting the special permit to be submitted to the Board for review.

### Findings

1. The residential use proposed is appropriate at this location. The Industry A-1 district was designed to encourage the transformation of old industrial areas, now poorly located for contemporary industrial or commercial use, to residential use. Similar conversions to residential use have been authorized by the Planning Board along Richdale Avenue (at 1-11 Richdale Avenue and 129-205 Richdale Avenue) in the past. With approval of this residential development, much of this Industry A-1 district along Richdale Avenue will be converted to housing use, as envisioned at the time of adoption of the district, and in a manner compatible with the residential neighborhood that abuts the site.

2. The three variations from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance requested are minor in nature and permit better use of the site; and at least in regard to the Article 6.000 variations requested they reduce the potential impact of the conversion to residential use on the abutting residential properties.

a. The FAR will be increased from the 1.25 permitted in an

Industry A-1 District to 1.35. All additional gross floor area will be created within the walls of the existing industrial building. The additional floor area will not increase the number dwelling units provided (in fact the proposed number of units is well below that which is permitted) but will permit better residential use of an industrial building not designed efficiently for such residential use

b. Parking within five feet of the property lines will permit more efficient use of the site for parking, will permit the provision of one parking space for each residential unit proposed, and reflects existing parking conditions which have existed for some time. In addition, significant improvement in the parking lots will be made through landscaping and demolition of minor industrial buildings.

c. The provision of parallel parking on lot A with an eleven foot aisle width permits a reasonable layout of parking spaces in a very limited space without undue burden on abutting properties and to the benefit of the neighborhood as a whole in that all units will have an assigned parking space.

3. The criteria for issuance of a multi-family special permit as outlined in Section 10.47.4 will be met.

a. No large or significant trees or other landscaping exist on this industrial site (except those which exist along the west property line, which will be retained) and therefore will not be destroyed.

b. No new buildings will be constructed and all new construction will be limited to the interior of an existing industrial building or along the facade of the building to render it more appropriate for residential use.

c. The site is principally occupied by the building itself. Minimal landscaping will be provided within the new parking lots to be provided; an unattractive industrial shed will be demolished to make way for one such parking lot.

d. The parking provided will be safe and adequately designed and located.

e. The trash storage area is located so as to minimize its impact on residential abutters

4. The general requirements for issuance of special permits are also met.

a. With the granting of the requested variances the development will meet all the requirements of the Ordinance.

b. The development will eliminate the industrial grade traffic characteristic of the previous industrial use. The residential use will not cause congestion or hazardous conditions.

c. The conversion to residential use will strengthen the residential character being established within the Industry A-1 District, as intended by the Ordinance.

d. No nuisance or hazard will be created.

e. The residential use will enhance the integrity of adjacent residential districts and will strengthen the residential character of the IA-1 District.

#### Decision

After review of the application documents, the testimony presented at the public hearing, based on knowledge generally available to members of the Planning Board, and based on the Findings presented above, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the requested Multi-family Special Permit and, as authorized in Section 10.45 of the Zoning Ordinance, **GRANTS** a variance to permit an increase the permitted FAR to 1.35 and **GRANTS** the variances necessary from the provisions of Article 6.000 as outlined in the application to permit the parking layout as presented on the above referenced application plans, subject to the following conditions and limitations.

1. The Final Development Plan submitted to the Inspectional Services Department for a building permit shall be generally in conformance with the plans submitted in the application documents and shall be in conformance with the dimensional standards detailed in Appendix I attached to this Decision. The Community Development Department shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that those plans conform to all conditions and requirements of this Decision before any building permit may be issued and shall also certify that final construction conforms to all requirements and conditions of this Decision before any Certificate of Occupancy may be issued.

2. The provisions of Section 4.28.1 b, paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 shall apply to all arts and crafts studios and activities conducted at this site.

Voting to GRANT the Permit were: V. Mathias, H. Salemme, A. Cohn, H. Russell, P. Dietrich and A. Callaghan, being at least two thirds the membership of the Board.

For the Planning Board,



Paul Dietrich, Chair

A copy of this decision shall be filed with the Office of 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 of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the decision filed with the Office of the City Clerk on 9/22/93 by Elizabeth M. Benfant authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referenced in the decision have likewise been filed with the City Clerk on such date.

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

City Clerk, City of Cambridge

Date

Dimensional Form

	<u>Allowed/Required</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Granted</u>
Floor Area Ratio (Floor Area)	<u>1.25</u> ( 39,748 )	<u>1.25</u> (37,218 )	<u>1.35</u> ( 43,044 )	<u>1.35</u> (43,044)
Max. Height	<u>45'</u>	<u>40'</u>	<u>40'</u>	<u>40'</u>
Max. Angle Above Cornice Line	NA in I-1 district	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>
Min. Lot Size	<u>5000 s.f.</u>	<u>31,798 s.f.</u>	<u>31,798 s.f.</u>	<u>31,798 #</u>
Min. Lot Area per d. u. (may be reduced to 900 s.f.)	<u>1200 s.f.</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>1766 s.f.</u>	<u>1,766 #</u>
Max. No. d. u.	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>
Min. lot width	<u>50'</u>	<u>286'</u>	<u>286'</u>	<u>286'</u>
Min. yard setbacks	<u>NR</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>NR</u>
Front	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Side L	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
R	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>
Rear	<u>0</u>	<u>1 - 4'</u>	<u>1 - 4'</u>	<u>0</u>
Ratio Usable Open Space (Area)	<u>none</u> ( )	<u>NA</u> ( )	<u>NA</u> ( )	<u>( )</u>
Off-Street Parking Minimum No. Spaces	<u>1/d.u.</u>	<u>16 (approx.)</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>
Maximum No. Spaces	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>0</u>
No. Handicapped Spaces	<u>NR</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Bicycle Spaces	<u>1/2 d.u.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
No. Loading Bays	<u>NR</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>NR</u>