



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS**

**PLANNING BOARD**

**CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139**

**NOTICE OF DECISION**

Case No.: PB #107, Major Amendment 1

Premises: 116-126 Hampshire/251-279 Columbia Street

Zoning District: Residence C-1

Owner: City of Cambridge

Application Date: March 17, 1994

Date of Public Hearing: April 5, 1994

Petition: Townhouse Special Permit to construct 16 units of housing, waiver of the Special Permit fee.

Date of Planning Board Decision: April 19, 1994

Date of filing the Decision: May 4, 1994

Date of Major Amendment #1 Public Hearing: July 19, 1994

Date of Major Amendment #1 Planning Board Decision: July 19, 1994

Date of Filing Major Amendment #1: July 22, 1994

Decision (summary): GRANTED with conditions.

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Application

1. Letter to the Roger Boothe, and the Planning Board from Shelly Dein, Project Manager at Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., dated June 23, 1994, requesting a Major Amendment to allow the three flats, normally classified as a multifamily structure, to be classified as a Townhouse.

Special Permit #107, Major Amendment #1,  
116-126 Hampshire/251-279 Columbia Street

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 July 22, 1994 by *Elizabeth J. Malenfant* 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.

Appeal has been filed and dismissed or denied

City Clerk, City of Cambridge

Date



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Date of Planning Board Decision: April 19, 1994

Date of filing the Decision: *May 4, 1994*

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.

Authorized Representative to the Planning Board

*Elizabeth J. Mansford*

Date

*5/4/94*

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Date of filing the Decision: *May 4, 1994*

#### Application

1. Special Permit application dated March 17, 1994
2. Plan entitled "Columbia & Hampshire Street Housing Proposal", Tise Architects, Inc., submitted showing the layout proposed facades and site plan for 16 townhouse units, various scales, no date.
3. Letter to the Planning Board from Peter Daly, Executive Director of Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., requesting that the special permit application fee be waived for the development of affordable housing.

#### Public Hearing

On April 5, 1994, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Special Permit application. Peter Daly, of Homeowner's Rehab., Inc., presented the proposal and introduced the development team: Jim Hexter, Just A Start, Jane Jones, Homeowner's Rehab, Inc., Steven Tise, Tise Architects, Inc., and the CDD staff, Roger Herzog, and Susan Schlesinger.

Roger Herzog described the site, which was developed for day care in 1970. He showed slides of the current conditions.

Peter Daly outlined the objectives for this development, which is a joint venture with the Just A Start Corporation: home ownership opportunities especially in Neighborhood 4, and the opportunity to work in a HRI targeted area, Neighborhood 4.

Susan Schlesinger outlined the process of the land disposition, which occurred last August, to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Neighborhood Study

identified the site as a homeownership opportunity. The planning and design principles were developed with the community; they became the principal elements of the Request for Proposals, which was awarded to HRI and JAS.

Peter Daly indicated there will be 16 dwelling units of permanent homeownership in the neighborhood consisting of flats and duplexes; one unit is barrier free. They are designed for families with incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Mr. Daly indicated that because this is an affordable housing development the applicant is using not only the Townhouse Special Permit but also to waive the Special Permit fee.

Steve Tise, the architect, discussed the qualities of the site that influence the design: the availability of frontage to the streets which allows for private entrances, front yards, open space and the location of parking spaces at the rear of the site; the use of the townhouse design allows it to be compatible with the existing neighborhood. There will be three 2-bedroom townhouses, three 2-bedroom flats; one of which is barrier free, ten duplexes, and a parking area accessed from Columbia Street.

The Planning Board discussed issues of materials, the cost of maintenance as it relates especially to the intent to prevent a negative "project" feel on the site, and the possibility of basements if the soil conditions do not make it cost prohibitive, (the 28,000 square feet of development requested includes full basements).

The construction schedule has a target start date of September; there would be a 10 to 12 month construction schedule, with occupancy after that.

There was discussion of the open space behind the houses facing Hampshire Street; and a possible trade off of rearranging the parking spaces with the turn around space, with the open space to allow a larger open space and a smaller area of asphalt.

A portion of the site to be licensed to the abutters will be surveyed and worked in such a way as to benefit use of both abutting properties and this development.

Ownership, currently by the Affordable Housing Trust, will be conveyed to JAS and HRI after the approvals are in hand and the financing is secured; they in turn will convey title to the individual homeowners as condominiums.

There were requests from the public for a traffic study on Columbia Street, especially as to the access to the site, the curb cut location. Concern was expressed for the safety for children; and the abutting uses as this intersection backs up frequently. The development team suggested that the residential impacts from 16 dwelling units are expected to be less than a 60 child day care site with staff; CDD staff is continuing a review with on these issues the Traffic and Parking Department.

The driveway landscaping should be reviewed to determine is the access if clearly visible to the oncoming drivers on Columbia Street.

The Board asked that the sidewalk right of way for pedestrians be treated as the sidewalk, not as the driveway, to show that the pedestrians have the right of way.

The Board also asked that the impacts of the traffic at the intersection on the first floor of the housing be studied, an issue of liveability. The applicant agreed that would be taken into consideration when allocating amenities to the units; the unit most impacted is the barrier free one and will be upgraded to market the unit.

Most units are 4 feet above grade; and the barrier free unit will be 2 feet above grade (with a wall and a wrought iron fence on top to strengthen the edge).

There was discussion of the basement heights, and possibly improving direct access to the back yards for the better movement of children with bikes and toys or a review of the unit layouts for better access to rear yards. Direct access could mean less open space and be cost prohibitive.

The Board suggested that the quality of this development needs to be as high as possible, when taking into account the maintenance questions.

Statements in support  
Jacqueline Carroll  
Julia Gregory, 11 Market Street  
Donald Shambroom, Columbia Street

There were no statements in opposition.

### Findings

1. The proposal meets all requirements of Section 11.10.
  - a. The 16 dwelling units in the Residence C-1 District subject to the development of special permit approval per Section 11.12.2.
  - b. The dimensional standards for this development meet the controls as outlined in section 11.15. The lot area is 36,608 square feet exceeding the minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet necessary to allow an .825 Floor Area Ratio. The FAR is proposed to be .76. This includes a proposal to construct 8,000 square feet of full basements as defined in the Building Code, if the soil conditions are not cost prohibitive. The total gross floor area to be constructed would be 28,000 square feet.
  - c. The maximum height proposed is 40 feet, as allowed in section 11.15.3.
  - d. The yard requirements have been met as permitted in Section 11.15.4; the minimum front yard is ten feet. There are two front yards in this corner development, two side yards and no rear yard.


- e. The Open Space requirement is met by providing 13,500 square feet, as required in section 11.15.5.
  - f. The Parking Standard is met at one parking space per dwelling unit as required in section 11.16. There is one area designated as a turning space which is to be kept clear and is the responsibility of the development to keep clear for the purpose of allowing adequate space for cars to reverse direction once inside the parking lot. The parking lot will be landscaped as required in section 11.16.4.
  - g. The Board finds that there are no fences exceeding four feet in height in any of the front yards, and all the townhouse units will have a principal entrance on a facade facing a street with the exception of the duplexes which have the principal entrance at the which archway faces the street. (section 11.17)
2. The Board finds that a waiver of the fee is reasonable in the circumstances as the development is sponsored by the Affordable Housing Trust, an agent of the City of Cambridge, with the express intent of making more affordable housing units available to the citizens of Cambridge.
3. The criteria for issuance of a townhouses or multifamily special permit, outlined in Section 10.47.4 have been met.
- a. The site was previously developed and the building demolished. Existing trees will be saved where possible; significant landscaping will be provided.
  - b. The new buildings have been specifically designed to extend the character of the existing neighborhood to this site.
  - c. Open space will be provided to each unit and certain abutters will be granted the right to make use of portions of the site as private open space.
  - d. The parking and access arrangements are reasonable. Alternate arrangements which might reduce pavement areas will be explored.
  - e. Parking will be behind the buildings and landscaping will screen it from residential abutters.
  - f. Service facilities will be adequately handled.

### Decision

The Planning Board GRANTS the Townhouse Special Permit and waives the application fee subject to the continuing review of the design by the Community Development Department staff. The CDD staff shall certify that the final plans are consistent with this decision before issuance of a building permit.

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

For the Planning Board,



Paul Dietrich, Chair

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