



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

April 2, 1981

Notice of Decision (Summary)

APR 2 10 30 AM '81  
CAMBRIDGE MASS.  
RECEIVED

In reference to the petition of Manrik Realty Trust for a Special Permit to construct eleven townhouse units on the premises at 2143 Massachusetts Avenue, the petition has been GRANTED by the Planning Board on March 31, 1981, with the following conditions:

- 1) All garage doors shall have a minimum width of nine feet.
- 2) The access drive from Massachusetts Avenue shall have a minimum width of 21 feet and shall remain free from obstructions.
- 3) The right of way leading from Russell Street shall be maintained at a width of 15 feet and free from obstructions and shall be paved to a minimum width of ten feet.
- 4) Fencing shall be provided along the northern property line and southern and western property lines abutting the lot at 3-5 Russell Street.
- 5) Access drives and walkways shall be provided and paved as indicated on the site plans.
- 6) Specific violations of the zoning ordinance are cited and granted; only those violations shall be permitted.

A copy of the complete decision has been filed with the Office of the City Clerk on April 2, 1981. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A Massachusetts General Laws and shall be filed within twenty days after the date of filing this notice in the Office of the City Clerk.

Elizabeth R. McCarthy

*Elizabeth R. McCarthy*  
Secretary to the Planning Board

ERM:sl

PLANNING BOARD DECISION

After review and due consideration of information presented by the applicant, comments made at the public hearing, subsequent discussion by the Board and the Staff, the Planning Board by a (vote) grants a special permit for Townhouse Development as detailed in the above referenced application #PB-11 with the following conditions:

1. All garage doors shall have a minimum nine (9) foot width.
2. The access drive leading from Massachusetts Avenue shall, beginning at the front building setback line, maintain a minimum width of 21 feet within which (a) no permanent obstruction to the movement of vehicles shall be placed and (b) all surfaces shall be maintained at a uniform plane.
3. That portion of the right-of-way leading from Russell Street on the applicant property shall have a minimum width of 15 feet which shall be free from any permanent obstruction including but not limited to fences, trees, other large vegetation, and automobile parking spaces.
4. All access drives shall be paved as generally indicated on the Site Plan dated January, 1981 and in the Memorandum dated February 26, 1981. The access drive along the right-of-way leading from Russell Street shall be paved to a width of at least ten (10) feet, but no wider than fifteen (15) feet. Walkways and other areas intended for pedestrian use, as generally indicated in the site plan and memorandum referenced above, shall be surfaced in a material different from areas intended principally for automobile use.
5. Board fencing not less than five feet in height shall be provided at the following locations:
  - (a) Beginning at the building setback line and running along the northern property line the full length of the access drive ; any screening provided between the building setback line and the street line shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.
  - (b) Along the southern and westerly property lines abutting the lot at 3-5 Russell Street.
6. A board fence or suitable landscaping shall be provided along the property line abutting the rear property line of no. 11 Russell Street which shall have a height not greater than three feet for a distance of fifteen (15) feet from the right-of-way boundary.

7. Any fence provided along the Massachusetts Avenue property line shall be landscaped as indicated on the Site Plan, dated January, 1981.
8. Under the authority granted by Section 11.125 the Planning Board hereby allows the following violations of the zoning regulation; the final plans and actual development shall contain only those violations explicitly stated below.
  - (a) Minimum lot area per dwelling unit in the Residence B District:  
2340 square feet/unit
  - (b) Minimum lot area for each subdivided townhouse lot:  
An average lot area of 2340 square feet with no lot less than 1700 square feet.
  - (c) Maximum ratio of floor area to lot area in the Residence B District:  
.78
  - (d) Front yard: 10 feet to the main facade of the building and a bay not exceeding 3.5 feet in depth to extend into that front yard.
  - (e) Rear yard: 17 feet to the main facade of the building and a bay not exceeding 3.5 feet in depth to extend into that rear yard.
  - (f) Cornice height: 35 feet.
  - (g) Increase in the FAR of residence at 9 Russell Street:  
.62
10. No townhouse may be further subdivided to create additional dwelling units.
11. Before the issuance of a building permit the applicant shall submit a final site plan to the Community Development Department reflecting all conditions of approval.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

CASE NO.: PB-11  
PREMISES: 2143 Massachusetts Avenue  
ZONING DISTRICT: Residence C-2 and B  
PETITIONER: Manrik Realty Trust  
APPLICATION DATE: January 26, 1981  
PUBLIC HEARING DATE: February 17, 1981  
PETITION: Townhouse Special Permit for 11 dwelling units,  
Article 11.000, Section 11.10  
DATE OF PLANNING BOARD DECISION: March 31, 1981

APR 2 10 51 AM '81  
COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was held by the Planning Board on the above referenced petition on Tuesday, February 17, 1981 at 8:30 P.M. in the Conference Room, Cambridge Community Development Department, 57 Inman Street.

Applicant - In support of the petition, the applicant submitted a Site Plan entitled "2143 Mass. Ave. Townhouse Development" HDT Architects, Scale 1"=20', dated January, 1981, plus selected building plans and elevation and a document entitled "Manrik Realty Trust: Description of Variances and Permits Required". Using a model for illustration, Mr. Steven Zecher, HDT Architects, speaking for the applicant, reviewed the proposal to build five single residence townhouses within the C-2 District and six single residence townhouses in the B District on a total lot area of 27,814 square feet. An existing dwelling and most of its existing lot will be unaltered by the proposal. Mr. Zecher reiterated the reasons for requesting the numerous variances for violations of the zoning ordinance that would be required and emphasized the petitioner's desire to retain the maximum amount of open space and existing trees on the site after full development.

Citizen Comments - The following persons made comment on the proposal at the hearing.

1. Mrs. James Mahoney, 7 Russell Street, indicated general opposition to the proposal with particular concern for increased traffic on the private right-of-way she shares with the applicant, improper parking endangering safe passage on that right-of-way, and severe disruption during construction. She favored serving all units from Massachusetts Avenue.
2. Ellen Brockman, 9 Russell Street, expressed general support for the proposal but was concerned with access and parking problems that could develop with increased use of the right-of-way.
3. Mr. Theodore Cohen, 16 Milton Street, supported the proposal as a significant improvement for the neighborhood in light of the present unauthorized use of the site as a neighborhood hang-out. He favored using the Russell Street access for the rear three townhouses.

Documents - The following documents were submitted at the hearing to the Board for their consideration.

1. Letter, Keefe Funeral Home, dated February 17, 1981, Charles Keefe, President stating his opposition to the proposal because of aggravated parking and traffic problems in the neighborhood.
2. Letter, Ellen Brockman, Larry Stroman, dated February 17, 1981 indicating general support and specific concerns.
3. Letter, City of Cambridge, Department of Traffic and Parking, Lauren Preston, Traffic Engineer, dated February 9, 1981 indicating a number of concerns about the workability of the access and parking arrangement leading from Massachusetts Avenue.
4. Copy of a letter, Peter Bruckner, HDT, Inc. to Adeline K. Mahoney, dated August 21, 1980 requesting concurrence with alterations to the existing right-of-way provisions; copy of legal description of conveyance of right-of-way hand written date of 2/19/23; copy of plot plan of subject lots entitled, "Plan of Lots, North Cambridge, Mass." Scale 1"=20', October 11, 1921, submitted by Mrs. Mahoney.
5. Copy of legal description of conveyance of right-of-way dated 2/19/23; copy of plot plan of subject lots entitled "Plan of Lots", North Cambridge, Mass. Scale 1"=20', October 11, 1921; submitted by Steven Zecher, HDT Inc.
6. Received after the public hearing: Letter, Theodore Cohen, dated February 20, 1981 restating his general approval and other comments made at the public hearing.

7. Memorandum, to Chairman, Planning Board from HDT Architects, dated February 26, 1981 addressing various issues and concerns raised at the public hearing.

#### PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION

Following the Public Hearing and at subsequent regular meetings held on March 3, 1981 and March 17, 1981 the Planning Board discussed details of the proposal and comments made at the public hearing and by the staff of the Community Development Department.

#### FINDINGS

After receiving comments made at the public hearing, reviewing documents in support of the petition, discussions by the Board and Staff review, the Board makes the following findings:

1. In accordance with the requirement of Subsection 10.43 of the Zoning Ordinance, Criteria for the Granting of a Special Permit, the Board finds that:
  - a. The townhouse proposal will result in the violation of a number of dimensional requirements of the zoning ordinance. Generally the Board feels that such violations are relatively minor, will result in an improved environment within the development and the neighborhood, and would not permit a development contrary to the intent of the zoning ordinance.
  - b. Traffic generated will be consistent with developed properties elsewhere in the neighborhood and will not cause congestion or hazard.
  - c. The development is compatible with present and future land uses in the neighborhood and will be of a density consistent with surrounding developed lots.
  - d. The development will provide a safe and suitable environment for its future occupants, and will remove conditions which have been identified by abutters as a nuisance and a hazard.
  - e. The development conforms to the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance for this site and the neighborhood.
2. In accordance with Subsection 10.464 of the Zoning Ordinance, Criteria for Approval of Townhouses, the Board finds that:
  - a. Significant numbers of existing trees will be retained; removal of existing mature trees as identified on the site plan will be kept to a minimum.
  - b. The location and massing of the proposed buildings is sensitive to the presence of the several abutting single family detached homes. Both in siting detail and scale, the proposed buildings are compatible with the uses on adjacent properties.

- c. The proposed site plan provides ample green space of benefit to the neighborhood as a whole as well as to future residents.
  - d. As indicated in the Site Plan dated January, 1981 eight foot garage doors and large landscape features in the drive serving the eight townhouses from Massachusetts Avenue are inadequate to provide safe and convenient auto access to the required parking spaces. Access to the three rear townhouses along a private right-of-way from Russell Street and parking facilities serving them are adequate.
3. The following violations of zoning requirements customarily requiring a variance were contained within the development as described in the documents supporting the application dated January 26, 1981.
- a. Minimum lot area per dwelling unit in Residence B District (Table 5-1)  
required: 2500 s.f./unit  
proposed: 2340 s.f./unit
  - b. Minimum lot area for each subdivided townhouse lot in Residence B District (Table 5-1 and Section 11.15)  
required: 2500 s.f.  
proposed: average 2340 s.f.; range 1712 s.f.-3120 s.f.
  - c. Maximum ratio of floor area to lot area in Residence B District (Section 11.152)  
permitted: .60  
proposed: .78
  - d. Yard requirements in Residence B and Residence C-2 Districts (Table 5-1 and Section 11.154).
    - (1) Front Yard  
required: 18.85'  
proposed: 10' and 6½' with bay
    - (2) Rear Yard  
required: 20'  
proposed: 17' and 15' with bay
  - e. Parking Requirements (Section 6.50)  
Space width  
required: 8.5'  
proposed: 8.0'
  - f. Cornice Height (Subsection 11.153)  
permitted: 30'  
proposed: 33'

## g. Existing Residence in Residence B District (Table 5-1)

Floor Area Ratio  
existing: .59  
proposed: .62

The Board finds that while the minimum lot area per unit and the ratio of floor area to lot area requirements in the Residence B District are violated the density of development as a whole is well below that permitted in both the Residence C-2 and Residence B Districts combined. Taken as a whole the development as proposed will have less impact on the neighborhood and is more on keeping with its existing developed character than would be the case with more intense and permitted alternate development schemes.

The Board also finds that the proposed variances to front and rear yard requirements permit more effective preservation of existing vegetation on the site, a better arrangement of private open space, and more functional and pleasant individual housing units.

The Board finds that violation of the cornice height requirement and the increase in the non-conformance of the floor area ratio of the existing house at 9 Russell Street make possible a more desirable site plan arrangement and livable housing units without violation of the intent of the zoning ordinance.

#### PLANNING BOARD DECISION

After review and due consideration of information presented by the applicant, comments made at the public hearing, subsequent discussion by the Board and the Staff, the Planning Board by a unanimous vote grants a Special Permit for Townhouse Development as detailed in the above referenced application #PB-11 with the following conditions:

1. The general location and size of building shall remain as indicated in the Site Plan dated January , 1981.
2. All garage doors shall have a minimum nine (9) foot width.
3. The access drive leading from Massachusetts Avenue shall, beginning at the front building setback line, maintain a minimum width of 21 feet within which (a) no permanent obstruction to the movement of vehicles shall be placed and (b) all surfaces shall be maintained at a uniform plane.
4. That portion of the right-of-way leading from Russell Street on the applicant property shall have a minimum width of 15 feet which shall be free from any permanent obstruction including but not limited to fences, trees, other large vegetation, and automobile parking spaces.
5. All access drives shall be paved as generally indicated on the Site Plan dated January, 1981 and in the Memorandum dated



February 26, 1981. The access drive along the right-of-way leading from Russell Street shall be paved to a width of at least ten (10) feet, but no wider than fifteen (15) feet. Walkways and other areas intended for pedestrian use, as generally indicated in the site plan and memorandum referenced above, shall be surfaced in a material different from areas intended principally for automobile use.

6. Board fencing not less than five feet in height shall be provided at the following locations:
  - (a) Beginning at the building setback line and running along the northern property line the full length of the access drive; any screening provided between the building setback line and the street line shall not exceed three (3) feet in height along this property line.
  - (b) Along the southern and westerly property lines abutting the lot at 3-5 Russell Street.
7. A board fence or suitable landscaping shall be provided along the property line abutting the rear property line of no. 11 Russell Street which shall have a height not greater than three feet for a distance of fifteen (15) feet from the right-of-way boundary.
8. Any fence provided along the Massachusetts Avenue property line shall be landscaped as indicated on the Site Plan, dated January, 1981.
9. Under the authority granted by Section 11.125 the Planning Board hereby allows the following violations of the zoning ordinance; the final plans and actual development shall contain only those violations explicitly stated below.
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  - (d) Front yard: 10 feet to the main facade of the building and a bay not exceeding 3.5 feet in depth to extend into that front yard.

(e) Rear yard: 17 feet to the main facade of the building and a bay not exceeding 3.5 feet in depth to extend into that rear yard.

(f) Cornice height: 35 feet.

(g) Increase in the FAR of residence at 9 Russell Street:  
.62

10. No townhouse may be further subdivided to create additional dwelling units.

11. Before the issuance of a building permit the applicant shall submit a final site plan to the Community Development Department reflecting all conditions of approval.

Respectfully submitted,

For the Planning Board

*Arthur C. Parris*  
Arthur C. Parris  
Chairman

Attest: A true and correct copy of the decision filed with the office of the City Clerk on April 2, 1981 by Elizabeth McQuay, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board.

Twenty days have elapsed since the \_\_\_\_\_ date of filing this decision. No appeal has been filed \_\_\_\_\_. Appeal filed and dismissed or denied \_\_\_\_\_.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk, City of Cambridge

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION - 2143 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE  
TOWNHOUSE DEVELOPMENT

UNIT DENSITY

		<u>PERMITTED</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
C-2	8537 s.f. lot area (600 s.f. / unit)	14.23 units	5 units proposed
B	14,040 s.f. lot area (2,500 s.f./unit)	5.62 units	6 units * proposed

FAR

		<u>PERMITTED</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
C-2		14,939 s.f. 1.75	8788 s.f. 1.03
B		8424 s.f. .6	10,944 s.f. .78*
(C-2+B)		23,363 s.f. 1.03	19,732 s.f. .87)
EXCESS FLOOR AREA IN B DISTRICT		2520 s.f.	or 420 s.f./unit

YARDS

		<u>REQUIRED</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
Front		18.85-20'	10*
Side			
C-2		8.5-11.9'	≥ 17'
B		7.6	
Rear		20'	17' *

OPEN SPACE

All lots exceed 25% requirement except lot 8 which just meets the minimum (711 s.f.)

PARKING

		<u>REQUIRED</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
Number		1/unit	1/unit
Aisle width		20-22 s.f.	20 feet* (reduced to 16' at some locations)

\*variance required

HEIGHT

REQUIRED

PROPOSED

30' cornice

33' cornice\*  
(35' measured)

40' total

40' total  
(41' measured)

EXISTING RESIDENCE

PRESENT

PROPOSED

lot area

5237 s.f.

5004 s.f.

FAR

.59

.62\*

\*variance required