

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

Case: PB #110

Petition: Special Permit to Waive Provisions of the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District, Section 11.108

Project: 1-3 Hollis Street

Applicant: World Realty and Development

District: Business A-2 and Residence B

Application Date: October 3, 1995

Public Hearing: October 17, 1995

Date of Planning Board Decision: November 14, 1995

Date of filing the Decision: November 27, 1995

DECISION: GRANTED with conditions

A copy of this decision shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk. Appeals is any shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, Massachusetts General Laws and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

Elizabeth J. Malenfant

Authorized Representative to the Planning Board

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Documents Submitted

1. Application certified complete on October 3, 1995.
2. Plans and elevations entitled "Proposed new Townhouses for World Realty And Development, Hollis Street, Cambridge, Mass."; Scale 1/4" = 1'; dated August 9, 1995, Sheets 1-9.

Other Documents

1. Above Plans and elevations with revised sheets 3, 6, 8.
2. Landscape plan entitled "Landscape Plan, Hollis Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts"; Scale 1" = 8'; dated October, 1995
3. Memo to the Planning Board from Roger Boothe, dated October 10, 1995, entitled "Development Consultation report for townhouses proposed at 2230 Massachusetts Avenue, Special Permit #110".

Proposed Relief

1. It is proposed to reduce the amount of clear glass on the facades of the buildings facing Massachusetts Avenue and Hollis Street to less than the 25% required in Section 11.107.7 c.

2. It is also proposed not to provide the principal building entrance on the facade facing Massachusetts Avenue as required by Section 11.107.1 a.

Public Hearing

The hearing on the Proposal was held at the October 17, 1995 regular meeting of the Planning Board. Mr. Michael Zafiroopoulos, attorney for the applicant, presented the proposal along with Mr. Robert Priante, one of the partners developing the site: Four townhouses are proposed in two buildings on a lot 60' X 133'. As 70% of the frontage is on Hollis Street, it is logical that the development orient toward that street; as designed the development would be compatible with the existing residential development in the neighborhood, both in scale and use. As proposed there would be about 13.5% glass on the facades. At an FAR of 0.87 the proposal is much less dense than the 1.75 allowed in the BA-2 district for housing development.

In general Board members considered an orientation toward Hollis Street appropriate given the residential nature of the proposed use and the commercial character of Massachusetts Avenue. However, some redesign to give the Massachusetts Avenue facade some architectural weight and presence was suggested, although the facade might not in fact act as the chief means of entering the townhouse units. A more detailed landscaping plan was suggested as an alternate means to provide the desired enhancement of the public street without meeting the specific requirements for glass and doors required in the Ordinance. Mr. Michael Brandon, representing the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, indicated community support for the proposal generally and suggested a number of modifications to the plans as submitted.

At the Planning Board's November 14, 1995 meeting a revised Massachusetts Avenue facade and a landscape plan for the whole site was presented that addressed all issues raised by the Board at the previous meeting.

Findings

1. One objective of the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District, and the specific provisions that are asked to be waived in this application, is to ensure that development along Massachusetts Avenue presents a welcoming and positive relationship to the street and provides a consistently positive environment for pedestrians along the entire Avenue. The provision of entryways and windows, as required by the Overlay District, is intended to advance that objective. As modified and approved by the Planning Board, the plans for this townhouse development accomplish those objectives with the provision of a well designed landscape plan for the entire lot, the addition of an entry door to one of the units on the Massachusetts Avenue facade and an increase in the amount of glass on that same facade.
2. The facades facing Hollis Street, in combination with the landscaping plan, are

compatible with the residential development present within the neighborhood and adequately meet the objectives of the Overlay District.

3. The design as approved will serve the objectives of the Overlay District as well as a design perfectly conforming to the requirements of Section 11.107.1 and is better suited to residential use on a heavily traveled arterial street.
4. The criteria for issuance of a special permit as set forth in Section 10.43 are met as the proposal will enhance the environment for adjacent residential and commercial properties, will advance the specific objectives of the applicable zoning, and will not in any way cause a nuisance, harm, congestion or hazard or otherwise change the character of the neighborhood.

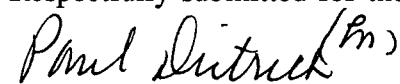
Determination

After review of the information presented in the Application and at the public hearings, comments made by the staff of the Community Development Department, and other information presented to the Planning Board, and based on the above findings, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the waiver of the requirements of Section 11.107.1 as set forth in the application subject to the following conditions

1. The final plans submitted to the Superintendent of Buildings for a building permit shall be in general conformance with the revised plans approved by the Board and referenced above. The Community Development Department shall certify such conformance to the Superintendent before issuance of any building permit.
2. The Community Development Department shall review and approve a final landscape plan, consistent with the preliminary plan referenced above and approved in this determination, that identifies all plant materials by species (and cultivar if applicable), size and quantity and sets forth the construction details of all structural elements of the plan. No Occupancy Permit shall be issued for any portion of the authorized development until the Community Development Department certifies to the Superintendent of Buildings that the landscaping plan has been installed in conformance with the Plans approved by the Department, or that some other schedule for installation of the landscaping plan has been approved by the Planning Board.

Voting to GRANT the Special Permit were Board Members A. Cohn, H. Russell, H. Salemme, C. Mieth, P. Dietrich, and W. Tibbs, constituting more than two thirds of the members of the Board.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,


Paul Dietrich, Chairman