

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

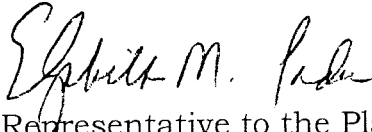
CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case No: 191  
Address: 15 Oxford Street  
Applicant/Owner: Presidents and Fellows of Harvard College,  
c/o David Zewinski, Associate Dean for Physical  
Resources and Planning  
Zoning District: Residence C-3  
Date of Application: September 18, 2003  
Date of Public Hearing: October 7, 2003  
Date of Planning Board Decision: October 21, 2003  
Date of Filing the Planning Board Decision: November 14, 2003  
Application: Project Review Special Permit for an 118,800 square foot  
Laboratory for Interface Science and Engineering (LISE).

DECISION: 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 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 the Community Development Department and the City  
Clerk.

  
Authorized Representative to the Planning Board

11/14/03  
Date

For further information concerning this decision, please call Liza Paden  
at 617-349-4647, TTY: 617-349-4621, email: lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
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Documents Submitted:

1. Special Permit Application, certified as complete, on 9/18/03
2. Memo the Planning Board from Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated 10/6/03, reviewing the applicant's traffic impacts.

Narrative

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) laboratory proposal is for 118,800 square feet of research, classroom and office space. This building will connect the existing Cruft and McKay laboratory buildings, with two thirds of the proposed space to be built below grade. The portion built above grade will have five floors. There will be a net increase of 60 employees at the site.

FINDINGS

After review of the application documents and other documents submitted to the Board, the public hearing presentation and after review and consideration of the special permit criteria, the Board makes the following findings:

## **1. Conformance with Urban Design Objectives required in Section 19.25.2**

*19.31: New projects should be responsive to the existing or the anticipated pattern of development*

The LISE is located in the core of the Harvard University campus, surrounded by other institutional buildings. The closest residential zone is approximately 850 feet north of the site on Everett Street. The historical context is respected by placing LISE further away from the traditional brick Cruft and Pierce laboratory buildings. The height is consistent with the adjacent building heights.

*19.32: Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with positive relationship to its surrounding.*

The ground floor is 100% transparent and accessible from all directions. The portico is pedestrian friendly and bicycle accessible. There will be no vehicle access. The loading dock consolidation removes servicing and loading activities from the area. The existing surface parking will be moved into the new Oxford Street underground garage.

*19.33 The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.*

The LISE design mitigates adverse environmental impacts. A 10-foot high parapet wall will screen the rooftop mechanical systems. Roof elements have been arranged to minimize the visual impact from the public way.

Air handling equipment has been placed as far from public view as possible, and attenuation treatments will be installed to meet the Cambridge Noise Ordinance requirements. Silencers will be fitted into the penthouse units and oriented away from residential areas. The roof will have a screen wall system to block the radiation of the sound from the fan housing.

Trash and recycling will be held within the building. The loading dock will be located approximately at the same location as the existing Science Center loading dock. One loading bay will be added to consolidate the functions of the entire area. All truck turns will be made on the site.

The LISE facility will incorporate a 30,000-gallon stormwater retention tank that minimizes runoff. With this tank the surface runoff from a 25-year storm will have an equivalent impact on the sewer system of a 2-year storm.

The new landscape plan increases the ratio of green areas to paved areas with a net increase of 5,000 square feet of green area.

*19.34 Project should not overburden the city infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system and sewer system.*

The LISE project average daily sewage flow is estimated to be 30,000 Gallons Per Day; maximum water usage in the building is 250 Gallons Per Minute (GPM). Fire flow, based on the requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code, is 1000 GPM. The waste stream anticipated for the building will be reviewed by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority and Department of Environmental Protection as well as the City Engineer when the sewer connection is made into Oxford Street.

The small quantities of chemicals planned for use in the building will fully comply with the EPA and state DEP requirements.

*19.35 New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.*

LISE is sited within the existing Harvard University campus surrounded by science buildings, with two thirds of the building below grade. The design of the building enhances open spaces by improving pedestrian connections in and around the area.

*19.36 Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.*

The LISE proposal does not include a housing component.

*19.37 Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.*

The LISE design elevates the above ground portions of the building mass above grade to permit uninterrupted pedestrian circulation through the landscape as well as to provide lighting to the underground elements of the structure.

A significant portion of the LISE is underground, which allows the creation of open space for social and public gatherings at grade above the building, while the plaza area under the portico provides covered outdoor space. Removing the existing surface parking results in a net increase in open space.

**2. Conformance with General Special Permit Criteria in Section 10.43:**

*A special permit will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except when the particulars of the location or use, not generally true of the district or of the uses permitted in it, would cause granting of such permit to be to the detriment of the public interest because:*

*(a) The requirements of the Ordinance will be met.*

The project has been designed to be in compliance with the Residence C-3 zoning and to be consistent with the urban design objectives outlined in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, as indicated above. Zoning relief is required from the Board of Zoning Appeal because the building will be connected to the nonconforming McKay Laboratory building. The nonconforming yard setbacks will not be made worse, and the design will address many of the functional issues that characterize the site's current conditions; therefore, the Planning Board encourages the Board of Zoning Appeal to grant the relief.

*(b) The traffic generated or patterns of egress will not cause congestion, hazard or substantial change in established neighborhood character.*

Harvard University is voluntarily conducting a comprehensive transportation study for the entire North Campus as part of a commitment to implement the University's approved Parking and Transportation Demand Management Plan. The traffic associated with the proposal will be distributed among walking, bicycling and auto modes and will not have a significant effect on any one mode. The consolidated loading dock will reduce the frequency of delivery trucks on Oxford Street.

*(c) The continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance will not be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed uses.*

The LISE building is an institutional use among other institutional uses. The project has been designed to have minimal impacts on the adjacent activities

*(d) No Nuisance or hazard will be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupants of the proposed use or the citizens of the City.*

No nuisance or hazard will occur as a result of the proposed project. The project meets the health, safety and noise standards.

*For other reasons, the proposed use would not impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district or otherwise derogate from the intent or purpose of this ordinance:*

The LISE building is an institutional educational use located in the core of the Harvard campus, is compatible with its surrounding institutional buildings and with its underlying Residence C-3 zoning district. It is an allowed use and located within the Institutional Use Overlay District.

### Decision

After review of the application documents and discussion at the public hearing and subsequent Planning Board meetings, and based on the above findings, the Planning Board GRANTS a Project Review Special Permit subject to the following limitations and conditions:

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the plans and application documents submitted to the Planning Board as referenced, dated 9/18/03. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.

The development herein approved and the dimensional features summarized in Appendix I require the granting of variances from the Board of Zoning Appeal.

2. The project shall continue to be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (CDD). *In that process, particular note shall be paid to the final design details of the loading dock area.* The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department recommendations as noted in the memorandum dated October 6, 2003, (*Proposed LISE Building at Harvard University*), shall be addressed as part of that discussion.

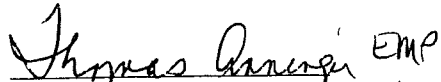
3. Before issuance of each Building Permit for the project, the CDD shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that the final plans submitted to secure that Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this permit.

4. The following improvements relating to the transportation impacts of the development are incorporated as conditions of the permit:

- The proposed courtyard improvements and the welcoming nature of the entry portico under the portion of the LISE building located above grade serve to improve the amenities for pedestrians moving between the North Yard and Harvard Square. These improvements enhance MBTA transit access to this part of campus. However, the pedestrian corridor is interrupted at Oxford Street, where no crosswalks exist in the vicinity of the LISE building today. *Harvard shall identify where pedestrian crossings are needed on Oxford Street between Everett Street to the north and the crossing at the Science Center to the south. Harvard shall design those crosswalks identified as needed, which design(s) shall be approved by the City and thereafter be installed by Harvard as site work for the LISE is being completed.* During construction of the LISE, pedestrian access patterns through the area will be disrupted. *Harvard shall submit a construction management plan, to be approved by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department prior to issuance of a building permit. The plan shall include the provision of temporary crossings of Oxford Street, to be installed before building construction staging begins.*
- The new consolidated loading facility is a valuable improvement that restricts conflicts between trucks and pedestrians to one location on Oxford Street. Currently, eastbound pedestrians waiting to use the existing crosswalk that runs east from the newly renovated Science Center south of the loading driveway are shielded from the view of southbound motorists by trucks using the loading dock, especially when the trucks are backing into or out of the dock. The proposed loading facility will improve existing traffic conditions by allowing most of the trucks enough turning radius on site, thereby enabling them to enter and exit Oxford Street in a forward direction. *Once the loading facility is operational, Harvard shall evaluate the need for a curb extension at the existing crosswalk with the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department staff.*
- Harvard's site plan does not indicate the location of the proposed bicycle parking spaces. *Harvard shall identify where this parking will be located prior to the issuance of the Building Permit. The University is encouraged to consider installing more than the required 7 spaces. All spaces should be secured and covered where possible.*
- To further encourage the use of transit, *Harvard shall install a bus shelter for the Harvard University shuttle in the vicinity of this project.* The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department will work with Harvard to designate and sign curb space where needed.

Voting to GRANT the special permit were T. Anninger, H. Russell, B. Shaw, P. Winters, L. Brown, T. Carpenter, and J. Hrabchak, associate member appointed by the chair to act on this case, constituting at least two thirds of the membership of the Board.

For the Planning Board,

  
Thomas Anninger, Chair

A copy of this decision #191 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 after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the above decision filed with the Office of the City Clerk on November 14, 2003, by Elizabeth M. Paden, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have likewise been filed with the City Clerk on such date.

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

DATE:  
City Clerk  
City of Cambridge