



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	215
Address:	235 Albany Street
Zoning:	Special District 8
Applicant:	Massachusetts Institute of Technology 77 Massachusetts Avenue Bldg. NE49-2100 Cambridge, MA 02139-4307
Owner:	(Same as Applicant)
Application Date:	May 31, 2006
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	June 20, 2006
Date of Planning Board Decision:	June 20, 2006
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	August 30, 2006
Application:	For construction of a new graduate student residence hall with 560 beds; Requires Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20)
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 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 Community Development Department and the City Clerk.

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: *Jeffrey C. Roberts*

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Liza Paden at 617 349 4647, or lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Application Documents

1. Cover Letter from Kelley Brown, Senior Project Manager for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, dated May 31, 2006.
2. Special Permit Application dated May 31, 2006, containing: Application Form; Introduction and Project Description; Conformance with Cambridge Zoning Ordinance; Dimensional Table; Conformance with Article 19.20: Project Special Review Permit; Supporting Statement for Special Permit; Traffic Impact Analysis; Assessor's Plat; Ownership Certificate; and Community Meeting Notes. Also containing Plans and Drawings listed: Survey of Existing Conditions; Site Plan: Level I Plan; Level II Plan; Level III Plan; Level IV Plan; Level V Plan: Elevations + Building Sections.
3. Plan Drawings dated May 31, 2006, including: Survey (Existing Conditions) Preliminary 5-25-06; C-1.02 Layout & Materials Plan; C-1.03 Grading & Drainage Plan; C-1.04 Site Utility Plan; C-1.05 Civil Details I; C-1.06 Civil Details II; C-1.07 Civil Details III; A-0.03 Site Plan; A-1.01 1st Floor Plan; A-1.02 2nd Floor Plans; A-1.03 3rd Floor Plans; A-1.04 4th Floor Plans; A-1.05 5th Floor Plans; A-3.01 Building Elevations & Sections; A-3.02 Building Elevations & Sections; A-3.03 Building Elevations & Sections.
4. Certification of Receipt of Plans, Cambridge Department of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, signed S. E. Clippinger for the Traffic, Parking and Transportation department, dated May 31, 2006.
5. Certification of Receipt of Plans, City Arborist, signed Catherine Mitrano for the City Arborist, dated June 1, 2006.
6. Print Copy of Presentation to the Planning Board by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (the Applicant) and William Rawn Associates on June 20, 2006.

Other Documents

1. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, City of Cambridge, dated June 20, 2006.

FINDINGS

Based on its review of the application documents, supplemental materials, and other documents submitted to the Board, testimony taken at the public hearing and submitted in written form to the Board, and the review and consideration of the relevant special permit criteria, the Planning Board makes the following findings:

1. Traffic Impact Findings – Section 19.25.1

The Planning Board finds that the proposed project does not exceed the Threshold for Required Traffic Study by Land Use Type as set forth in Section 19.23 – Table I. The project as proposed will not create new parking spaces and will relocate 144 parking spaces, 10 on-site and 143 off-site, which is below the 250-space threshold for relocated spaces that would require a traffic impact study for an institutional use. Nevertheless, the Applicant has prepared and submitted a Traffic Impact Analysis, and based on the information presented in that analysis and comments made by City staff, the Board finds that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area. The Board also finds that the proposed project will provide adequate facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

2. Urban Design Findings – Section 19.25.2

The Planning Board finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, as further elaborated below in Part 4 of these Findings.

3. Conformance with the General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit – Section 10.43

As provided in Section 10.43 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance:

Special permits will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except when 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) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met.

The Planning Board finds that the proposed project conforms to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance with the granting of this special permit.

(b) Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress will cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character.

Based on information presented in a Traffic Impact Analysis and on comments made by City staff, the Planning Board finds that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area. Moreover, based on the analysis presented in the Traffic Impact Analysis, the proposed project may reduce automobile traffic and congestion in the area by converting some property from its present commercial use to dormitory use, which has been shown to generate less traffic.

(c) The continued operation of the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance will be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use.

The proposed project is compatible with the adjacent uses, which include two existing graduate student dormitories. The Board also finds that the proposed dormitory use will not have an adverse impact on surrounding commercial, high-density residential, and social service uses.

(d) Nuisance or hazard would 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.

The Planning Board finds that no nuisance or hazard will occur as a result of the project. Moreover, the addition of more graduate student residents in an area already hosting many students and other residents will help to enliven the area and to increase the feeling of safety within the neighborhood.

(e) For other reasons, the proposed use will impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district or otherwise derogate from the intent or purpose of this ordinance.

The proposed dormitory use is fully consistent with the intent of the SD-8 zoning district and compatible with the existing uses in the district.

(f) The new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

The proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, as further elaborated below in Part 4 of these Findings.

4. Conformance with the Citywide Urban Design Objectives – Section 19.30

The Planning Board finds that the proposed project satisfies the Citywide Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance as enumerated in the application documents and as summarized below:

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

The placement of buildings, along with the heights, setbacks, façade design, and streetscape design respond appropriately to the existing pattern of development in the area. The project is intended to help continue the transformation of the area from an industrial district into a residential district with graduate student housing and other residential development.

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

The design of the project will improve the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Streetscapes are designed to be pedestrian-friendly, with landscaped setbacks, new sidewalks, a lobby and common areas located at a highly visible location (specifically, the Albany/Pacific intersection), transparency at the ground floor and particularly into common areas, open courtyard spaces visible from the street, and limited at-grade parking, which is located behind the building and appropriately landscaped. The project is also designed to be easily accessible by bicycle and to include appropriate bicycle storage facilities.

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

The design of the project will not create adverse environmental impacts to neighboring properties. Rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened and shielded from view from the street level, the loading dock will be located at the rear of the building and within an open landscaped area, outdoor lighting will be provided primarily at ground level in order to support the emerging residential character of the area but not to contribute significantly to light pollution, and many new trees will be planted where none currently exist. Also, the site will include a stormwater management system consistent with the provisions of the Department of Environmental Protection's Stormwater Management Policy, and will reduce stormwater runoff by adding about 1.2 acres of pervious surface within the open courtyards and planting areas. However, the Board notes that while the proposed project will have minimal shadow impact on neighboring buildings, in winter months it may cast a shadow over the open area to the north of the building, which is planned to become a public multi-use path. While such shadows will be difficult to avoid, they should be taken into consideration when the bike and pedestrian facilities are planned and installed.

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

The design of the project will not create adverse impacts to public infrastructure services. The project will pursue the equivalent of a Silver Rating by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, and will include water-conserving plumbing technologies. The capacity and condition of drinking water infrastructure will be investigated and corrective measures will be taken if it is found to be inadequate. The City is in the process of improving sanitary sewer service as part of its sewer improvement program.

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

The design of the project will enhance the urban character of the district. The proposed graduate student dormitory use will be located among other existing graduate student dormitories, and will contribute to a more active pedestrian environment than currently exists. The project will not adversely impact the area with regard to historic character, since the site currently contains no buildings of historic interest; the scale and design of the building will complement the inventory of large industrial buildings along Albany Street that have been substantially upgraded and reused for a variety of uses over the past several decades.

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

The project will add to the city's housing inventory by providing housing for approximately 560 graduate students who might otherwise occupy housing in Cambridge neighborhoods.

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

The project will include open space amenities serving the new residents of the dormitory directly and the general public indirectly. Landscaped setbacks and open spaces surrounding the building will provide public benefit, and interior courtyard areas will be available for use by residents of

the proposed project, connected to entrances and access points for pedestrians and bicyclists, and visually accessible to the general public.

DECISION

Based on a review of the application documents, comments made at the public hearing, and the above findings, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the requested Special Permit subject to the following conditions and limitations:

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 above and dated May 31, 2006. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the Project as approved.
2. The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (CDD). 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 the Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this Permit.
3. The Applicant will continue to work with Community Development Department staff to review the detailed design of the streetscape along the Pacific Street and Waverly Street edges. Pacific Street is expected to be a significant pedestrian way for students, and Waverly Street is intended to serve as part of a multi-use path, and so those edges should be designed with consideration towards supporting and enhancing those functions.
4. The Applicant shall do the following as set forth in the Memorandum from the Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) Department to the Planning Board referenced above.
 - (a) Reconstruct the intersection at Albany and Pacific Streets so as to provide accessible crosswalks and reduce speeding at this intersection to a design acceptable to the TP&T department
 - (b) Reconstruct the Albany Street sidewalk from the limit of the Cambridgeport Roadways work to the intersection with Pacific Street, and
 - (c) Cooperate with and support the City in developing the design and funding for the proposed multi-use path on the existing unused Waverly Street railroad spur.
5. All authorized development shall conform to the requirements of the City of Cambridge "Noise Control Ordinance", Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code.

Voting in the affirmative to GRANT the Special Permit were Planning Board Members B. Shaw, H. Russell, W. Tibbs, S. Winter, and P. Winters, and A. Finlayson, Associate Member appointed by the Chair to act on this Application, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Planning Board necessary to grant a Special Permit.

For the Planning Board,

Barbara Shaw

(JCR)

Barbara Shaw, Chair

A copy of this decision #215 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 August 30, 2006, by *Jeffrey C. Roberts* Jeffrey C. Roberts,
authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision
have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

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

DATE:

City Clerk of Cambridge

Appendix I – Dimensional Form

Special Permit # 215 Address: 235 Albany Street

	Allowed/Required	Existing	Proposed	Granted
Total FAR	1.75	0.29	1.71	1.71
Residential				
Non-Residential	1.75	0.29	1.71	1.71
Inclusionary Bonus				
Total GFA in Sq. Ft.	251,843 sf	42,175 sf	246,900 sf	246,900 sf
Residential				
Non-Residential	251,843 sf	42,175 sf	246,900 sf	246,900 sf
Inclusionary Bonus				
Max. Height	60'	Ca 35'	52'8"	52'8"
Range of heights			33'8" to 52'8"	
Lot Size	5,000 sf	143,910 sf	143,910 sf	143,910 sf
Lot area/du	NA		NA	
Total Dwelling Units	NA		NA	
Base units				
Inclusionary units				
Min. Lot Width	50'	190'	190'	190'
Min. Yard Setbacks				
Front Waverly	5'		5'	5'
Front Pacific	5'		15'	15'
Front Albany	5'		15'	15'
Side	0'		As shown on plans (ca 120')	
Total % Open Space	NA		50%	50%
Usable				
Other			50%	50%
Off Street Parking		141		
Min #	47		47*	47*
Max #	385			
Handicapped			2	2
Bicycle Spaces	5		160	160 minimum
Loading Bays	3		3	3

* Ten spaces on site with the remainder assigned to the Institute's pool.