



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
**PLANNING BOARD**

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

**NOTICE OF DECISION**

**Amended Notice (clerical error)**

Case No: 239  
Address: 2419 Massachusetts Avenue  
Zoning: Business A2 (BA2)  
Owner: Oaktree Acorn, LLC 129 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA  
Applicant: Oaktree Acorn, LLC 129 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA  
Application Date: July 8, 2009  
Public Hearing: August 18, 2009  
Planning Board Decision: September 22, 2009  
Date of Filing Decision: October 26, 2009

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Application: Request for a Project Review Special Permit, Section 19.20, as required in Sections 19.22 and 19.23

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:

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Liza Paden at 617 349 4647 or [lpaden@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lpaden@cambridgema.gov).

## **APPLICATION MATERIALS SUBMITTED**

Planning Board Special Permit application dated July 8, 2009, containing Cover Sheet, Summary of Application, Project Narrative, Plan Submittal Requirements, Ownership Certificate, Fee Schedule, Dimensional Form, Architectural Plans, Elevations, Sections, Site Plan, Existing Photos, Space Program, a Descriptive Narrative of the Building, and Traffic Study.

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS SUBMITTED**

Memo to L. Paden from Paul Ognibene, dated 7/31/09

Letter to the Zoning Board from McNamara Buck and Michael Rome, dated 8/12/09

Letter to the Planning Board from abutters, Antoinette Ramdath, et al, dated 8/13/09

Memo to L. Paden from the Bicycle Committee (Rosalie Anders), dated 8/14/09

Letter to the Planning Board from Dr. William Phares, dated 8/14/09

Letter to the Zoning Board and L. Paden from Ron and Kristen Jackson, dated 8/17/09

Letter to the Planning Board from Combustion Service Company of New England, dated 8/17/09

Email to L. Paden from Michael Brandon, dated 8/18/09

Email to L. Paden from Michael Brandon, dated 8/18/09

Memo from Susan Clippinger, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, to the Planning Board, dated 8/24/09

Email to L. Paden from Charles Marquardt, dated 9/6/09

Letter to the Zoning Board and L. Paden from John Peter James

## **PROJECT APPLICATION AND SUMMARY**

On July 8, 2009 Oaktree Acorn LLC submitted an application for a Large Project Review Procedure and a Project Review Special Permit to develop a 46,535 square foot, 4 story multifamily residential building at 2419 Massachusetts Avenue. The project will include the demolition of an existing 1 story warehouse building. The site is currently part of a larger parcel that includes 19 and 29 Camp Street in addition to 2419 Massachusetts Avenue. The site is adjacent to Linear Park and within the BA2 base zoning district as well as the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District. The new residential building will consist of a total of 37 one and two bedroom units with 38 parking spaces below grade.

## **FINDINGS**

After review and consideration of the application documents and supplemental documents submitted to the Board, testimony taken at the public hearing, and the general special permit criteria, the Board makes the following findings.

### **1. 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. It appears that the requirements of the ordinance cannot or will not be met.*

With the issuance of the Special Permit, the project does meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance [existing development on portions of the lot in the Residence B district exceed the amount of FAR allowed in that district but have pre-existing nonconforming status]. The developer will seek a subdivision variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals in order to divide the property into two separate lots. Should the variance not be granted, the developer will create two separate condominiums out of the entire lot (one for the project site and one for the portion within the Residence B district) in order to keep the project site conforming to the Zoning Ordinance.

*b. The traffic generated or patterns of access or egress will cause congestion hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character.*

Vehicle site access will be provided via one driveway from Fair Oaks Street, located at its intersection with Camp Street. The entrance to the site will be controlled via electronic access and will be accessible by residents' vehicles, loading and delivery vehicles and service vehicles. The project will not result in a significant change in traffic patterns over existing conditions.

*c. The continued operation of, or development of, adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use.*

The project is a residential redevelopment of a vacant commercial/warehouse site that will fit in with the generally residential land uses in the immediate area. The neighborhood currently features triple-deckers and other multifamily residential structures that are in relatively close proximity to each other. The new building will be moved back from abutting properties and landscaping will be added for enhanced privacy. Adding residential use to this location is a positive change for the neighborhood that is encouraged by the incentives built into the applicable zoning; it will also help enliven an important section of Linear Park.

*d. Nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety, and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City*

No nuisance or hazard will be created. There will be a written plan regarding the handling of soils and an environmental consultant will be on hand to address any issues with the soils during construction.

*e. For other reasons the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance*

The site is located in a Business A-2 zone which allows multifamily residential uses. The project conforms with the requirements of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in regards to size, scope, setbacks, gross floor area (GFA), usage, number of units, number of parking spaces, and open space. The proposed design appropriately breaks up the massing of the building and is respectful towards abutters and existing 2 and 3 family homes in the neighborhood. It will contribute to the growing cluster of higher density housing in the Trolley Square area, strengthening a new urban node at this location.

*f. The new use or building construction is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30*

The project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives of Section 19.30:

## **2. Conformance with the Required Project Review Special Permit Criteria in Section 19.30**

19.31. *New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated patterns of development.*

It is reasonable to expect that the existing building on the site, which featured warehouse uses and is now vacant, will change use at some point, given the character of, and recent residential development in the surrounding neighborhood. The new residential use will be a positive alternative for the neighborhood. The proposed project will consist of a new 37 unit, four story multifamily building, with a parking garage below grade, and will fit in with the 2 and 3 family homes and multifamily developments that already exist in the neighborhood.

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

Primary pedestrian access to the building will be from Linear Park, which offers bicycle and pedestrian links to Alewife Station, the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, Davis Square, and the Somerville Community Path. The Davis Square MBTA subway station is a short walk from the project site. Necessary curb cuts for bicycle access on the project site will be maintained until the Massachusetts Highway Department and the City complete improvements to the Linear Park crossing in the area, including a raised device on Cameron Avenue. There will be 19 indoor bicycle parking spaces and 4 short term bicycle outdoor parking spaces. The design of the bicycle parking provides adequate space between bicycles and for maneuverability.

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

The main pedestrian entrance to the new building will be along Linear Park and will help visually extend the park through added plantings and landscaping. An existing solid wall that abuts a residential development will be removed and replaced by a building with architectural detail, windows and balconies that will be further set back and landscaped.

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

The project will not overburden the City's infrastructure services.

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

Although the proposed building is not necessarily a traditional design, it appropriately addresses issues of scale and compatibility for the area in a contemporary way given the size and challenges of the site layout. The building design respects the 2 and 3 family homes that exist in the area, particularly by using different materials, and planes and balconies to create the appearance of a series of structures and pavilions rather than a single building.

19.36. *Expansion of the inventory housing in the City encouraged.*

The project will include 37 units of housing, including 4 units that are affordable to low and moderate income residents through the City's Inclusionary Housing Program. There will be 11 one bedroom and 26 two bedroom units.

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

The project will help to visually extend the triangular section of Linear Park at the location, through an increased setback and additional landscaping and plantings at the main entrance. New street trees and plantings will be added along Cameron Avenue and Fair Oaks Street, as well as additional plantings along the property line with abutting residential properties. The addition of a residential use, and in particular providing pedestrian access directly from Linear Park, will help to enhance the park at this location.

### **3. Conformance with the Urban Design Findings of Section 19.25.2**

The Board finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of Section 19.30 as set forth above.

### **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 Project Review Special Permit, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. All uses, 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, dated July 8, 2009.

The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (CDD). Before issuance of the 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 All authorized development shall conform to the requirements of the City of Cambridge Noise Control Ordinance, Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code.
4. Before issuance of a Building Permit for construction authorized by this Special Permit, the Permittee shall prepare a Construction Management Plan consistent with the requirements of Section 18.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, which Plan shall be submitted to the Community Development Department for review and approval.
- 5 If additional gross floor area (GFA) becomes available and is proposed to be added to the project as a consequence of the granting of a subdivision variance that additional Gross Floor Area shall only be permitted after the granting of an amendment to this permit.
6. The mitigation recommendations of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, as outlined in the letter to the Planning Board from Susan Clippinger dated August 24, 2009 shall be implemented by the Permittee as a condition of this Permit.

Voting in the Affirmative to **GRANT** the Special Permit were Planning Board Members W. Tibbs, P. Winters, T. Cohen, T. Anninger, H. Russell, S. Winter, and P. Singer, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Planning Board, necessary to grant a Special Permit.

For the Planning Board,



William Tibbs, Chair

A copy of this decision #239 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 - October 26, 2009, 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 # 239**

**Address: 2419 Massachusetts Avenue**

	Allowed/Required	Existing	Proposed	Granted
<b>Total FAR</b>				
<b>Residential</b>	1.75	N/A	1.75	1.75
<b>Non-Residential</b>	1.0			
<b>Inclusionary Bonus</b>				
<b>Total GFA in Sq. Ft.</b>	46,540	22,520	46,535	46,535
<b>Residential</b>		0	46,535	46,535
<b>Non-Residential</b>				
<b>Inclusionary Bonus</b>				
<b>Max. Height</b>	45 ft. above grade	18 ft. above grade	45 ft. above grade	45 ft. above grade
<b>Range of heights</b>				
<b>Lot Size</b>	None	25,997 s.f.	25,997 s.f.	25,997 s.f.
<b>Lot area/du</b>	600 s.f. / lot area	N/A	703 s.f. / lot area	703 s.f. / lot area
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	55	0	37	37
<b>Base units</b>	43 + 6 bonus	0	29 + 4 bonus	29 + 4 bonus
<b>Inclusionary units</b>	6	0	4	4
<b>Min. Lot Width</b>	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Min. Yard Setbacks</b>				
<b>Front</b>	5	0	5	5
<b>Side, Left</b>	10	0	10	10
<b>Side, Right</b>	10	0	10	10
<b>Rear</b>	20	0	20	20
<b>Total % Open Space</b>	None	13% open	49% open	49% open
<b>Usable</b>				
<b>Other</b>				
<b>Off Street Parking</b>				
<b>Min #</b>	1 per d.u.	N/A	38	38
<b>Max #</b>				
<b>Handicapped</b>	2		2	2
<b>Bicycle Spaces</b>	1 per 2 d.u.	N/A	19	19
<b>Loading Bays</b>	N/A	1	0	0