



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Planning Board

From: Jeff Roberts, Senior Manager for Zoning and Development
Erik Thorkildsen, Urban Design Planner
Swaathi Joseph, Associate Zoning Planner

Date: January 9, 2018

Re: Special Permit **PB #333, 114 Inman Street**

This memo contains an overview of the proposed project at 114 Inman Street, the special permit being requested, and related comments.

Summary of Proposal

The applicant is proposing to convert the existing church building into a multi-family residential building with four dwelling units. The site also contains a semi-detached single family dwelling, originally build for residential use, that formerly served as the rectory and will be altered. The project will provide off-street parking for 5 cars in a surface lot, lockers for 5 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 2 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project also includes the addition of dormers and decks outside the envelope of the existing structure that will require a variance for additional gross floor area from the Board of Zoning Appeal. The site is within the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conversation District, and the alterations were reviewed and approved by the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission in September, 2016.

Requested Special Permit

The project is located in the Residence C-1 District and seeks a Special Permit to modify base zoning requirements to convert a non-residential building to residential use, which is allowed pursuant to Section 5.28.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicable special permit findings are summarized below. Applicable sections of the zoning are provided in an appendix.

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Conversion of non-residential structures to residential use (Section 5.28.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of dwelling units will not increase on-street parking demand in the neighborhood. • The location, orientation, and use of the structure and yard of the new housing use will not impact the privacy of residential neighbors. • Due consideration has been given to address the impacts of reduction in private open space. • Reasonable efforts have been taken to address concerns raised by abutters and neighbors. <p>(See full 5.28.28.1 criteria in appendix)</p>
Townhouses and multifamily dwellings (Section 10.47.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key features of natural landscape are preserved. • New buildings relate sensitively to existing built environment. • Open space provides visual benefits to abutters and passersby and functional benefits to occupants. • Parking, access and egress are safe and convenient. • Intrusion of onsite parking is minimized. • Services such as trash collection and utility boxes are convenient yet unobtrusive. <p>(See full text in appendix)</p>
General special permit criteria (Section 10.43)	<p>Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest because the proposal would (unlike uses or development otherwise allowed in the district) either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not comply with the Zoning Ordinance; • cause traffic congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established character; • adversely affect the continued operation or development of adjacent uses; • create nuisance or hazard to the detriment of health, safety and/or welfare; • impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance; or • be inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30. <p>(See full text in appendix.)</p>

Area Planning and Zoning

The site is located in the Residence C-1 District within Mid-Cambridge. Inman Square, a main commercial center with bus stations, is within walking distance from the parcel. Inman Street connects directly to Massachusetts Avenue in the south near Central Square, which features a variety of retail, office, and residential uses. The presence of medical facilities near Inman Square also brings visitors to the area. This area zoned Residence C-1 has predominantly residential uses with a mix of housing types, generally two or three story wood-frame houses with some larger residential buildings as well. The Cambridge Growth Policy for residential neighborhoods promotes maintaining the prevailing pattern of development, building density and scale that has evolved historically. It also recommends conversion of underused non-residential buildings to residential use if there is a demand for housing, especially in areas with good access to public transportation.

Background on Requested Special Permits

Ordinarily, the conversion of a non-residential structure to residential use would trigger many dimensional non-conformities requiring variances. During the Citywide Rezoning in 2001, a provision was added under Section 5.28.2 allowing the Planning Board to approve such non-conformities by special permit, rather than variances, when altering a building originally built for non-residential use to accommodate a residential use. The rationale is to allow existing buildings to be preserved in a way that is economically feasible and generally consistent with the allowed uses in the district, and to maintain some of the historic character of the neighborhoods. Such relief can only be granted for development occurring within the original structure; additions outside of the structure have to conform to zoning requirements or seek variances. The criteria for approval, which were amended in 2011, are meant to address concerns such as parking impacts where the density of the project is greater than what is typical in the neighborhood, privacy of abutters in cases where normal setbacks are reduced, and provision of adequate landscaping where the amount of private open space is less than usual for the district.

Proposed Project

As it exists, the lot is currently non-conforming with regard to side and rear setbacks and some other dimensional requirements. The existing buildings are over 100 years old. The Applicant has reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission and the project has undergone review by the Mid-Cambridge Conservation District Commission (MCNCD), which issued a certificate of appropriateness (attached to this memo).

Multifamily residences are allowed by right in the base zoning district. With all four new units (plus the former rectory) being three-bedroom units, the proposal supports the city's policy to encourage development of units that can accommodate families with children.

The proposed dormer addition is designed to conform to the base zoning requirements for height, but not for setbacks, and will further increase the non-conforming FAR of the lot, requiring variances. The proposed development does not exceed the allowed dwelling unit density of the base zoning district.

Required automobile parking and required long-term bicycle parking are located on grade in front of the existing church building, where there is an existing impervious lot. Two of the parking spaces are proposed to be located within the required front yard setback, and two are proposed to be located within five feet of the side property line, which do not conform to the parking layout requirements of Section 6.44.1.

The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T) has expressed concern that Parking Space #2 (shown on Sheet-A-020 of the application plans) will not be functional because it may be very difficult to maneuver a car in and out of that space. A reconfigured solution, such as locating the driveway between parking spaces #1 and #2, should be considered to allow better maneuverability for vehicles in the lot.

The project does not meet the minimum requirement for private open space, which may be reduced by the Planning Board in granting a special permit if the Board finds that full compliance is limited by the existing development of the lot per Section 5.28.25. The existing building footprint and proposed on-grade parking make it challenging to create private open space and permeable open space. The project, however, provides some open space in the form of private decks.

All units will have finished areas in the basement, and hence susceptibility to flooding risk is a potential concern. The Department of Public Works (DPW) has reviewed the proposal and the comments regarding potential flood risk are included in the memo from the City Engineer.

Urban Design

The proposed adaptive reuse of the building, which will add to Cambridge's residential mix, is very much supported by the city's urban design objectives. The existing building is an anomaly in the neighborhood in terms of its site plan, architectural massing, and façade design. Its existing surface parking lot covers most of the lot's front yard, which would not be allowed in a new project.

While the proposed design improves the building and site, additional refinements to the site plan and the building's design are suggested to enhance the project's contribution to the neighborhood.

- More could be done to reduce the impact of the surface parking lot on Inman Street, including more substantial screening along the sidewalk (e.g., denser and taller planting than is shown on the drawings, and raised beds or barriers to protect the planting from cars and salt. Other improvements could include an additional curbside street tree on the south side of the driveway curb cut, and reducing the width of the curb cut to match the width of the proposed driveway.
- The bicycle storage units and trash area seem more prominent than depicted in the perspective on sheet AV-3, and could be better screened by extending the fence at the rear of the parking lot.
- The details of the new window openings and decks facing neighboring residences should be better resolved (for instance, the application materials alternately cite lattice and picket railings) and compared with drawings showing neighboring windows, doors and outdoor space to ensure that they provide adequate privacy to neighbors.

- The height of fences around the basement level areaways (where a significant grade change is proposed) should be clarified to determine how it will affect the sense of open space at the edge of the site.
- The geometry of the arched window components in the front façade appears irregular, and could be improved.
- The dormer windows on the left and right elevations could be matched with those on the basement and first floor.

Continuing Review

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends should be further studied by the Applicant, either in preparing revised materials if the Planning Board continues the hearing to a future date, or as conditions for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit. CDD staff review of design details will be coordinated with Cambridge Historical Commission staff.

- Resolution of any internal inconsistencies in the application materials.
- Further development of site plans, including:
 - Existing and proposed grading.
 - Location of any electrical transformer equipment that may be required.
 - Location of utility meters.
 - Location, as well as visual and acoustical screening measures, for all exterior HVAC units.
- Placement and selection of any site lighting, including parking lot lighting. Full cutoff fixtures should be used, and the Draft Outdoor Lighting Ordinance prepared by the Cambridge Outdoor Lighting Task Force should be followed as a guideline.
- Landscape details including planters, plant species, bicycle storage lockers, areaways, retaining walls, railings, and fences.
- Details, materials, and colors of architectural elements, including architectural trim, doors, windows, balcony railings, skylights, and roof.
- Vehicular parking, bicycle parking, sight lines, clearances, access, and egress (to be reviewed by TP&T).
- Stormwater management measures (to be reviewed by DPW).

Special Permit for Conversion of Non-Residential Structures to Residential Use

5.28.2 *Conversion of Non Residential Structures to Residential Use*

Where it is proposed to convert an existing principal use structure, designed and built for non residential use, to residential use (excluding Transient Accommodations and Trailer Park or Mobile Home Park listed in Section 4.31 (i-j)), the dimensional standards generally applicable in the district as set forth in the Tables of Dimensional Requirements in Section 5.30 and other applicable regulations in this Ordinance, including permitted uses, Section 4.30 – Table of Use Regulations, shall apply. However, where some or all of those requirements cannot be met, including any use, dimensional or procedural requirement that may apply in the base district, the following provisions shall apply to such conversion after issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board. The provisions in this Section 5.28.2 shall apply in all zoning districts with the exception of districts with an Open Space designation.

Intent of this Section:

- (a) To allow the economic reuse of buildings that may be substantially out of compliance with the dimensional requirements of the zoning district within which they are located, especially as they are converted to residential use.
- (b) To encourage the preservation of buildings of historic or cultural significance by providing opportunities for reuse of the structures.
- (c) To establish a framework of development standards and criteria within which existing non-residential buildings that are out of scale and character with surrounding residential uses can be converted to housing of an appropriate style and density while limiting potential negative impacts on neighbors.

5.28.22 *Criteria for Approval of a Special Permit*

In acting upon this special permit, the Planning Board shall consider the standards and criteria set forth in Sections 10.43, 10.47 and 10.47.1 of this Ordinance in addition to the following review standards.

5.28.28.1 *Criteria Applicable to All Projects*

- (a) Provision of Parking. Where it is proposed to add dwelling units above the limits established in the base zoning regulations, the Board shall evaluate the impact of increased numbers of dwelling units above that normally permitted in the district on the demand for on-street parking by residents and visitors to the proposed building, particularly in neighborhoods where off street parking is limited.

In reaching a determination, the Board may require that the Applicant provide elements of a Parking Analysis as set forth in Section 6.35.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Where a project is

subject to additional criteria as specified in Section 5.28.28.2 below, a Parking Analysis shall be required to be included with the Special Permit Application.

- (b) Privacy Considerations. Where significant variations from the normally required dimensional standards for the district are proposed, the Board shall evaluate the impact on residential neighbors of the new housing use and any other proposed use as it may affect privacy. The location and size of windows, screening elements, decks, entries, security and other lighting, and other aspects of the design, including the distribution of functions within the building, shall be reviewed in order to assure the maintenance of reasonable levels of privacy for abutters. In reviewing a proposed development plan, the Board shall consider, among other factors, the potential negative impacts of the new activity on abutters as a result of the location, orientation, and use of the structure(s) and its yards as proposed.
- (c) Reduction in Private Open Space. Where it is proposed to reduce the amount of on-site Private Open Space below that required in the applicable district, the Board shall evaluate the proposal in light of the following:
 - (1) The extent to which screening and buffering from neighbors will be accomplished
 - (2) The quality and viability of the proposed open spaces as they are designed
 - (3) The tradeoff in benefits and negative impacts of the loss of green space in order to provide the required amount of parking, including consideration of the feasibility of alternate parking arrangements that might produce additional green area, such as placing some or all parking within the structure
 - (4) The availability of common recreational spaces within the building to compensate for the loss of usable outdoor open space
- (d) Community Outreach. The Planning Board shall consider what reasonable efforts have been made to address concerns raised by abutters and neighbors to the project site. An applicant seeking a special permit under this Section 5.28.2 shall solicit input from affected neighbors before submitting a special permit application. The application shall include a report on all outreach conducted and meetings held, shall describe the issues raised by community members, and shall describe how the proposal responds to those issues.

5.28.28.2 *Additional Criteria Applicable to Larger Projects*

[NOT APPLICABLE BECAUSE THE PROPOSED PROJECT INCLUDES LESS THAN 10,000 GROSS SQUARE FEET AND LESS THAN TEN (10) DWELLING UNITS]

10.47.3 Criteria for approval of Townhouses and Multifamily Dwellings. In reviewing applications for townhouse developments and multifamily dwelling, the special permit granting authority shall consider and address the following site plan criteria as applicable:

- (1) Key features of the natural landscape should be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal should be minimized and other natural features of the site, such as slopes, should be maintained.

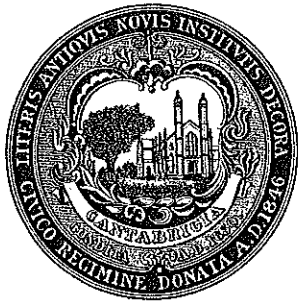
- (2) New buildings should be related sensitively to the existing built environment. The location, orientation and massing of structures in the development should avoid overwhelming the existing buildings in the vicinity of the development. Visual and functional disruptions should be avoided.
- (3) The location, arrangement, and landscaping of open space should provide some visual benefits to abutters and passersby as well as functional benefits to occupants of the development.
- (4) Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.
- (5) Parking area landscaping should minimize the intrusion of onsite parking so that it does not substantially detract from the use and enjoyment of either the proposed development or neighboring properties.
- (6) Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.

General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit

- 10.43** *Criteria.* 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, or
 - (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or
 - (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or
 - (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, or
 - (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, and
 - (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to lower-scale neighborhoods • Consistency with established streetscape • Compatibility with adjacent uses • Consideration of nearby historic buildings
Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhabited ground floor spaces • Discouraged ground-floor parking • Windows on ground floor • Orienting entries to pedestrian pathways • Safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access
The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/impact of mechanical equipment • Location/impact of loading and trash handling • Stormwater management • Shadow impacts • Retaining walls, if provided • Building scale and wall treatment • Outdoor lighting • Tree protection (requires plan approved by City Arborist)
Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management • Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service • Efficient design (LEED standards)
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional use focused on existing campuses • Mixed-use development (including retail) encouraged where allowed • Preservation of historic structures and environment • Provision of space for start-up companies, manufacturing activities
Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing as a component of large, multi-building development • Affordable units exceeding zoning requirements, targeting units for middle-income families
Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly beneficial open space provided in large-parcel commercial development • Enhance/expand existing open space, complement existing pedestrian/bicycle networks • Provide wider range of activities



Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

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Nancy Goodwin, *Chair* Tony Hsiao, *Vice-Chair*
Lestra Litchfield, Sue-Ellen Myers, Monika Pauli, *Members*
Margaret McMahon, Charles Redmon, *Alternates*

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PROPERTY: **114 and 114R Inman Street**

OWNER: **11 Development, LLC**
o/b/o Manuel Pavao, Manuel Antinio, Jose Jorge, and
Beatrice Hunt
116 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission hereby certifies, pursuant to Title 2, Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.140-270 of the Code of the City of Cambridge and the City Council order establishing the Commission, that the construction described below is not incongruous to the historic aspects or architectural character of the building or district:

The scope includes the following alterations as part of a larger renovation project:

114 Inman Street

- 1. Demolish small rear addition**
- 2. Construct a new dormer on the right elevation**
- 3. Install new skylights on the front and right elevations**
- 4. Alter window opening in gable end on right elevation**
- 5. Reorient rear stair**

114R Inman Street

- 1. Demolish exterior stair at rear**
- 2. Construct four dormers**
- 3. Install four skylights**
- 4. Construct four roof decks**
- 5. Alter fenestration on all elevations**
- 6. Construct pedestrian access to basement**

Site Plan

- 1. Reduce curb cut**
- 2. Install new paving**
- 3. Create seven (7) parking spaces and bike lockers**
- 4. Construct new fencing around the perimeter of the property**
- 5. Construct new masonry and picket fencing at 114 Inman Street**

The work has been approved as described in the plans titled, "Inman Street Residences," by Design Khalsa, dated July 28, 2017 subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The roof deck at 114R Inman Street shall be pulled back one (1) foot.**
- 2. The applicant shall reduce the amount of transparent glazing in the windows on the dormers at 114R Inman Street.**
- 3. The fence shall be lowered in the front with a taller section at the back of the property.**
- 4. The clapboards shall be wood on both buildings.**

The plans and specifications that were submitted with the application are incorporated into this certificate, which is binding on the applicant.

This certificate is granted with the recommendation that the panels are setback from the ridge a few inches. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issuance, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions not exceeding ninety days each may be allowed in writing by the Chair.

Case Number: MC-5248

Date of Certificate: September 18, 2017

Attest: A true and correct copy of decision filed with the office of the City Clerk and the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission on September 18, 2017

By Tony Hsiao, Chair

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.

No appeal has been filed _____ . Appeal has been filed _____ .

Date _____ , City Clerk