

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2018 MAR -9 AM 10:23  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	333
Address:	114 Inman Street
Zoning:	Residence C-1
Applicant:	11 Development, LLC 5 Wells Avenue, Newton, MA
Owner:	Portuguese Baptist Mission Trust 114 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA
Application Date:	December 20, 2017
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	January 16, 2018
Date of Planning Board Decision:	January 16, 2018
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	March 9, 2018
Application:	Special Permit to convert non-residential structure to residential use (Section 5.28.2) in order to convert an existing church building into four dwelling units, resulting in a total of five dwelling units on the lot and five surface parking spaces.
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: Swaathi Joseph

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

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on 12/20/2017, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Community Outreach Summary, Project Narrative, and plan set entitled: Inman Street Residences, prepared by Khalsa Design, dated 11/3/2017.

### Other Documents

2. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 1/9/2017.
3. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Department of Public Works (DPW) staff, dated 1/9/2017.

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

The applicant proposes to convert the church building into a multi-family residential building with four dwelling units. The lot also contains a semi-detached single-family dwelling, originally built for residential use, that formerly served as the rectory and will be altered. The project will provide off-street parking for five (5) cars in a surface lot, lockers for five (5) long-term bicycle parking spaces, and two (2) short-term bicycle parking spaces. The site is located entirely in the Residence C-1 District. The requested special permits are discussed in detail in the Findings below. The project will also require variances from the Board of Zoning Appeal for the additional gross floor area resulting from the addition of dormers and decks outside the envelope of the existing structure and for the alteration of the non-conforming semi-detached single-family dwelling. The site is within the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District, and the alterations were reviewed by the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, which issued a Certificate of Appropriateness on September 18, 2017.

## FINDINGS

After review of the Application Documents and other documents submitted to the Planning Board, testimony given at the public hearing, and review and consideration of the applicable requirements and criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance with regard to the relief being sought, the Planning Board makes the following Findings:

1. Conversion of Non Residential Structures to Residential Use (Section 5.28.2)

*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.*

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*5.28.28 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.*

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*(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.*

The project will not add dwelling units above the limits established in the base zoning requirements and will meet the off-street parking requirements.

- (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.*

The project will have a privacy fence around the perimeter to screen the uses at and below the ground level. The access doors to the rooftop decks are located so they do not face the abutting residences directly and the decks are set back from the building façade with lattice screening. All openings on the left side of the building overlook the backyard of the adjacent property on that side. A few windows on the rear and right side will be removed or relocated so as to maintain reasonable levels of privacy for the abutters.

- (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*

The current structure provides very little yard space on the lot. The proposed project does not increase open space outside of the footprint of the existing structure but will create roof decks for the dwelling units. The rooftop decks are set inward from the building edge to reduce their impact and to provide visual and sound privacy.

- (2) *The quality and viability of the proposed open spaces as they are designed*

The addition of rooftop decks and landscaped planters have increased the amount of open space, offering future building residents modest opportunities for outdoor use while protecting privacy.

- (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*

The parking area is designed to meet, but not exceed, the minimum zoning requirement for off-street parking. All parking is located within an existing paved area and the proposed fence and plantings will screen the parked vehicles from the sidewalk.

- (4) *The availability of common recreational spaces within the building to compensate for the loss of usable outdoor open space*

The four dwelling units are located on either side of a shared corridor accessing the centrally located main door of the building. There is limited opportunity to accommodate additional common spaces within the building. There is no loss of existing 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*

The applicant conducted a community meeting for this project and submitted a report to the Planning Board. The applicant responded to the concerns regarding unit density and windows by reducing the scope of the project to four units from the initial six units considered and by reducing the size and number of windows. In addition, the applicant reduced the number of vehicles using the parking lot from seven to five.

In addition to the criteria set forth in Section 5.28.28 and the General Special Permit Criteria set forth in 10.43 and discussed further below, the Board finds that the project conforms to the criteria for approval of townhouses and multifamily dwellings set forth in Section 10.47.4. However, as the project contains units, no additional multifamily or townhouse special permit is required per Section 4.26 of the Zoning Ordinance.

*10.47.4 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.*

At present, the site has a large building footprint and paved areas with limited natural landscape features and no trees. The proposed development will retain the building

footprint, but will increase the landscaped areas on the site and improve site drainage conditions.

- (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.*

No new buildings are proposed, but the proposed façade improvement is responsive to the surrounding neighborhood character. The proposed rooftop addition utilizes a variety of architectural scaling elements to help reduce visual bulk and to sensitively respond to the existing pattern of development in the area.

- (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.*

The proposed development will create landscaped planter beds along Inman Street and additional trees, which will provide visual benefits to the residents of the buildings and to the general public. The rooftop decks will be private outdoor amenities for the residents.

- (4) *Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.*

All parking spaces are accommodated at grade. The proposed driveway access will be reviewed further by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) Department to ensure safety and convenience. The existing curb cut may be modified for that purpose.

- (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.*

Landscaping is proposed around the surface parking area that will screen the parking area from the sidewalk as well as the entrance of the development and will be an improvement over the existing paved area covering the entire front yard.

- (6) *Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.*

The proposal includes an outdoor trash collection area that will be screened from the residents of the building and its neighbors with a fence. No electrical transformer is expected to be required for this project.

2. General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit (Section 10.43)

The Planning Board finds that the project meets the General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit, as set forth below.

*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 ...*

Upon granting of the requested special permits, it appears that the requirements of the Ordinance will be met with the exception of variances for additional gross floor area and for the alteration of the non-conforming semi-detached single-family dwelling that will be sought from the Board of Zoning Appeal.

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

The proposed four (4) new multi-family dwelling units and single-family unit with five (5) off-street parking spaces is not anticipated to cause particular congestion or hazard. In consultation with TP&T, the existing curb cut may be modified to improve safe access to the on-grade parking area without increasing the impact on pedestrian and vehicular movement and parking along Inman Street.

*(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 ...*

The proposed residential use will not adversely affect adjacent uses that exist, which are also residential, or uses that are anticipated in the future.

*(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 ...*

The proposed residential use will not create nuisance or hazard, and all development activity will adhere to applicable health and safety regulations. The access to the surface parking lot will be reviewed further by TP&T to ensure safe and functional access and egress.

*(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 ...*

The proposed residential use is generally consistent with the residential zoning for the area, and the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures is encouraged by City plans for the area and by the Zoning Ordinance.

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

The Board finds no inconsistency with the citywide urban design objectives. The urban design objectives are generally supported in the proposal by the expansion of the inventory of housing, improved streetscape appearance, consistency with the pattern of development in the area, minimal environmental impacts on abutters and minimal impact on City infrastructure.



## DECISION

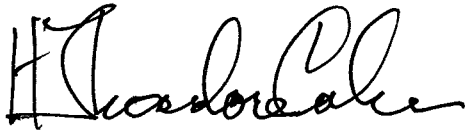
Based on a review of the Application Documents, testimony given at the public hearing, and the above Findings, the Planning Board hereby GRANTS the requested Special Permits subject to the following conditions and limitations. Hereinafter, for purposes of this Decision, the Permittee shall mean the Applicant for the requested Special Permits and any successor or successors in interest.

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the Application Documents and other supporting materials submitted to the Planning Board, and the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board is the plan set entitled: Inman Street Residences, prepared by Khalsa Design, dated 11/3/2017. Minor alterations to the location of the driveway, curb cut, and configuration of parking spaces as shown in the approved plans are permitted, subject to approval by the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T), to improve the safe access and egress of automobiles. 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, 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 Decision. As part of CDD's administrative review of the project, and prior to any certification to the Superintendent of Buildings, CDD may present any design changes made subsequent to this Decision to the Planning Board for its review and comment.
3. The Permittee shall address the following design comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be subject to CDD review and approval of the final design details prior to issuance of a Building Permit:
  - a. Selection of all fences, exterior materials, colors, and details, which are also to be reviewed by the Cambridge Historical Commission staff in consultation with CDD.
  - b. Screening treatment of rooftop decks and trash area.
  - c. Site grading; location of utility meters and electrical transformer equipment, if required; and visual and acoustical screening measures for exterior HVAC units.
  - d. Landscape details:
    - i. The design of planter beds in the front yard, paving, retaining walls, railings, and fences.
    - ii. The addition of a new curbside street tree if possible.
  - e. Improvements to the geometry of the arched window on the front façade.
  - f. The design of all external lighting, including conformance with technical guidelines recommended in the proposed Cambridge Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.
  - g. Vehicular parking, bicycle parking, sight lines, clearances, access, and egress, to be reviewed and approved by TP&T staff.
  - h. Final drainage and stormwater management plan, to be reviewed and approved by Department of Public Works (DPW) staff.

4. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).

Voting in the affirmative to approve the requested special permits were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., Steven Cohen, H Theodore Cohen, Catherine Preston Connolly, Tom Sieniewicz and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, appointed by the Chair to act on this case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board, necessary to grant a special permit.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H" and "C".

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this decision PB #333 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 has been filed on March 9, 2018 with the Office of the City Clerk, by Swaathi Joseph, duly authorized representative of the Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty days have elapsed since the above decision was filed in the office of the City Clerk and:  
\_\_\_\_\_ no appeal has been filed; or

\_\_\_\_\_ an appeal has been filed within such twenty days.

The person exercising rights under a duly appealed special permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone. This certification shall in no event terminate or shorten the tolling, during the pendency of any appeals, of the periods provided under the second paragraph of G.L. c. 40A, §6.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, City Clerk

Appeal has been dismissed or denied.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, City Clerk

**Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart**

	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	7,644	5,000	No Change	No Change
Lot Width (ft)	50	50	No Change	No Change
<b>Total GFA (sq ft)</b>	<b>8,247</b>	<b>5,733</b>	<b>9,478</b>	<b>9,478</b>
Residential Base	1,893	5,733	9,478	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total FAR</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>1.24</b>	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	.24	0.75	1.24	
Non-Residential Base	.83	N/A	0	
Inclusionary Bonus	N/A	N/A	0	
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Base Units	1	5	5	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Inclusionary Bonus Units	N/A	N/A	0	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	7,644	1,500	1,528	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	7,644	1,500	1,528	
Height (ft)	<35	35	33	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Front Setbacks (ft)	15.91	10 (min)	No change	
Side Setback (ft)	4.25	7.5 (min)	No change	
Rear Setback (ft)	2.67	30	No change	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	0	30	No change	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space	0	15	No change	
Permeable Open Space	0	15	No change	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	0	5	5	5
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	5	5	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	1	2	
Loading Bays	0	N/A	0	