



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION • COVER SHEET

In accordance with the requirements of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits for the premises indicated below.

Location of Premises: 624 Massachusetts Avenue

Zoning District: Business B/Central Square Overlay District

Applicant Name: Amazon Pickup Points LLC

Applicant Address: 624 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge MA 02139

Contact Information: (617) 492-4100 jrafferty@adamsrafferty.com (617) 492-3131  
Telephone # Email Address Fax #

List all requested special permit(s) (with reference to zoning section numbers) below. *Note that the Applicant is responsible for seeking all necessary special permits for the project. A special permit cannot be granted if it is not specifically requested in the Application.*

20.304.5 4 Formula Business  
10.40 Special Permit

List all submitted materials (include document titles and volume numbers where applicable) below.

Sign plans; elevations, floor plans.

Signature of Applicant: James J. Rafferty, Attorney for Applicant

For the Planning Board, this application has been received by the Community Development Department (CDD) on the date specified below:

Date

Signature of CDD Staff

## Project Narrative

This is an application for a Special Permit to authorize the operation of a Formula Business in the Central Square Overlay District. A Formula Business is defined as follows in Section 2.000 of the Zoning Ordinance

***Formula Business.** An individual Retail or Consumer Service establishment that is required by virtue of a contract, franchise agreement, ownership or other similar legal obligation to conform or substantially conform to a set of common design and operating features that served to identify the establishment as one of a group of establishments for business, marketing and public relations purposes. Specifically, an establishment shall be considered a Formula Business if it share at least two (2) of the following three (3) characteristics with ten (10) or more other establishments in Massachusetts or within twenty (20) or more other establishments.*

- 1. Trademark, service mark or logo, defined as a work, phrase, symbol or design or combination thereof that identifies and distinguishes the course of the goods or services from others;*
- 2. Standardized building architecture including but not limited to façade design and signage;*
- 3. Standardized color scheme used throughout the exterior of the establishment, including color associated with signs and logos.*

The Building Commissioner informed the applicant that the use of its standardized signage on the exterior of the building and the use of its trademark logo (smile) and corporate color (orange) in the interior of the space, triggered two of the above-captioned characteristics contained within the definition of a Formula Business. As a result, the applicant is seeking a Special Permit to install its standardized signage on the exterior of the building and to use the color orange in certain areas of the interior of the premises. The proposal also involves the placement of its smile logo in certain locations within the interior of the premises.

Elevations depicting the exterior signage and the requested interior elements are depicted on the images contained in this application.

## **SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT**

**Please describe in complete detail how you meet each of the following criteria referring to the property and proposed changes or uses which are requested in your application. Attach sheets with additional information for special permits which have additional criteria, e.g. fast food permits, comprehensive permits, etc., which must be met.**

**Granting the Special Permit requested for 624 Massachusetts Avenue would not be a detriment to the public interest because:**

**A) Requirements of the Ordinance can or will be met for the following reason:**

Section 20.304.5.4 of the Zoning Ordinance allows for the operation of a Formula Business in the Central Square Overlay District when, the design of the proposal respects the unique tradition and design of Central Square. The proposed signage will not change the storefront design of the building, retaining the existing green facade and sign band found across the ground floor of the entire building.

**B) Traffic generated or pattern of access or egress would not cause congestion hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character for the following reasons:**

There will be no change to traffic generated or patterns of access or egress as a result of the installation of the proposed signage.

**C) The continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would not be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use for the following reasons:**

The use is entirely consistent with the surrounding retail environment and offers an amenity to area residents. The business has been in operation since June and has not had any adverse effect on surrounding businesses. Allowing standardized signage that includes the company's logo will not adversely affect surrounding uses.

**D) Nuisance or hazard would not 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 for the following reasons:**

No nuisance or hazard will be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the building occupants or the citizens of Cambridge as a result of the installation of the proposed signs.

**E) 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 for the following reasons:**

The use of standardized signs and logos are permitted in the Overlay District upon the issuance of a Special Permit.



## 20.300 Central Square Overlay District

### Conformance with Section 20.304.5.4

#### 4. *Formula Business District.*

A Formula Business as defined in this Ordinance may be established in the Central Square Overlay District only after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board. In reviewing an application the Planning Board shall take the following into consideration:

- a. The extent to which the design of the proposal reflects, amplifies, and strengthens the established historical character of existing buildings and store fronts in Central Square.**

*The Holmes Building was issued a Special Permit by the Planning Board in April 1998 (PB #133). Careful attention and scrutiny was given to the storefront design of the entire building. In its decision, the Board found that "this project advances the objective of having storefronts that are oriented to the pedestrian, provide visual interest day and night, and create individual store identity". The proposed signage does not alter any of the features of the existing approved storefront façade. The proposed signage, like the existing signage, will fully comply with the dimensional requirements of Article 7.000 and will be located within the sign band designed for the building.*

- b. The extent to which the particulars of the building or storefront design is varied from the formula or standard design of the chain in order to reflect the unique character and conditions of Central Square generally or the specific location in particular.**

*By not altering the color of the existing storefront façade and by not including the color orange on any of the features of the exterior signage, the petitioner has varied an element of its standard design in order to create greater harmony with the green color of the storefront façade.*

- c. The extent to which the standard elements of the enterprise as they define it as a Formula Business are modified to respect and provide unique expressions of Central Square history and traditions as well as innovation in physical design and marketing that will distinguish the Central Square location from other locations of the Formula Business.**

*The operation of this pick-up location, including its hours and staffing, is geared to accommodate the full array of Central Square residents, workers and visitors.*

## **Conformance with Section 20.305**

### *Standard for Issuance of Special Permits.*

**1. The proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan:**

*All of the findings made by the Planning Board in approving the façade design and layout of the retail storefronts in Planning Board Case No. 133 remain intact. The storefront at this location has been vacant for nearly ten years. Since its opening this June, the active pick-up location has already begun to strengthen the existing retail base in Central Square and improve the physical and visual environment in the adjoining Carl Barron Plaza.*

**2. The building and site designs are consistent with “Urban Design Plan for Central Square” as outlined in the “Central Square Action Plan” and the “Central Square Development Guidelines”:**

*The building was found to be in compliance with the Central Square Action Plan and the Central Square Development Guidelines by the Planning Board in its decision in PB Case No 133.*

**3. The building and site designs adequately screen the parking provided and are sensitive to the contributing buildings in the vicinity:**

*Not applicable.*

**4. No National Register or contribution building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building; and**

*Not applicable.*

**5. No National Register or contributing building has been demolished or altered so as to terminate or preclude its designation within the five (5) years preceding the application.**

*Not applicable.*

## Early Community Engagment Report

The applicant hosted an Open House at its Central Square location on Tuesday evening September 18 at 6 p.m. Invitations were sent to abutters and area neighborhood groups from a list approved by the Community Development Department.

Present at the Open House, was Store Manager Jonathan Bojas and the applicant's attorney. Presentation boards containing images of the proposed exterior signage and interior elements were displayed.

At the meeting both the store manger and the applicant's attorney described the proposal and answered questions. Positive feedback was expressed about the signage and the use of the business in this location. A sign in sheet from the meeting is attached.

A second Open House was held at the premises on Thursday September 20. The presentation followed the same format as the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Carol O'Hare, a resident of Cambridgeport, was the only member of the public to attend the September 20<sup>th</sup> Open House.