



34-40 Hampshire Project Narrative and Zoning Analysis

General Narrative:

The proponent is seeking relief for the construction of a 68 room independent hotel in the Industry B zone near Kendall Square. This Industry B zone was the subject of a zoning change that was approved by the planning board and Cambridge City Council ordained April 29th, 2019; Ordinance # 1407 where this project was specifically cited as the basis for this change.

Location and Area:

The project is located at the intersection of Hampshire and Portland, is six stories and twenty-three thousand thirty two square feet (23,032).

Zoning:

The project is conforming to the existing gross floor area, setbacks, and open space requirements for the district. Special Permit relief is necessary for the following elements:

- I. Hotel Use in an IB district (4.000; 4.31 (h))
- II. Off Street Parking (6.000; 6.36 (i)(2) Hotel (Reduction in overall Parking Requirement)
- III. Off Street Parking (6.000;6.43.5(a) Modifying Provisions for Access to Off Street Parking.
- IV. Location of Short-Term Bicycle Parking (6.104.2)
- V. Definition of Gross Floor Area in a basement of a Building (Article 2.000 Gross Floor Area(16)

Requested Special Permit(s):

- I. Article 4.000 **USE REGULATIONS**
 - a. Section 4.31(h) Hotel Use in an IB District.
 - i. Applicant Requests Special Permit relief to build a Hotel in the IB District. The criteria for approval are indicated in:
 1. Article 10.43 General Requirements for Special Permits
- II. Article 6.000 **OFF STREET PARKING AND LOADING REQUIREMENTS:**
 - a. Section 6.35.1 Relief from Parking Requirements.
 - i. Applicant requests Special Permit relief to reduce the required amount of parking from thirty four (34) parking spaces to sixteen (16) parking spaces. The criteria for approval are found in:
 1. Article 10 section 10.43 General Requirements for Special Permits
 2. Article 6.000 section 6.35.1 Reduction of Required Parking.
 - b. Section 6.43.5(a) Relief from the Requirements of 6.43 Access for Off-Street Parking Facilities
 - i. Applicant requests Special Permit relief to modify the provisions for the layout of parking spaces in 6.43.2 by incorporating a valet parking arrangement to access the off street parking facility. The criteria for approval are found in:
 1. Article 10 section 10.43 General Requirements for Special Permits
 2. Article 6.000 section 6.43.5(a).

- III. Article 6.104; section 6.104.2 Location of Short-Term Bicycle Parking
 - a. Applicant Requests Special Permit relief to modify the requirements of 6.100 to accommodate the design of the building based on the unique topographical conditions of the lot. The code requirement is for the short-term bikes to be parked within 50' of the primary building entrance. The proposal requests planning board consent in locating the bicycles 86' from the entrance. The criteria for approval are found in:
 - i. Article 10 section 10.43 General Requirements for Special Permits
 - ii. Article 6.108 Modification of Requirements by Special Permit
- IV. Article 2.000 **Definitions** – Gross Floor Area Shall Not Include – (16) Exemption of Basement area in the Calculation of Gross Floor Area (“GFA”)
 - a. Applicant Requests Special Permit relief to exempt basement space gross floor area not allocated for parking and bicycle uses for “back of the house” hotel functions which includes but is not limited to office space, meeting space, storage, gym facilities, etc. The criteria for approval are found in:
 - i. Article 10 section 10.43 General Requirements for Special Permits
 - ii. Article 2.000 Definitions

The Applicant Requests these Special Permits in the belief that the requirements for the granting of the Special Permit have been met as outlined below:

I. Hotel Use in an Industry B District

Article 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

Applicant Response: The criteria will not be met; Hotel use requires a special permit in this district

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

Applicant Response: The traffic generated by the use will not further congest, create hazards, or create a substantial change in the established neighborhood. A parking study has been attached to this application. The Industry B district is small and abuts the large commercial section of Kendall Square. This use is congruous with those and surrounding uses creating no substantial change in the neighborhood character.

(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

Applicant Response: The proposed use will introduce the first residential use in the neighborhood which was the intent of a 2001 rezoning of this and many other areas of the city that previously did not allow for residential uses. The increase FAR granted to the area, approved by the Planning Board, Ordinance Committee, and ordained by Cambridge City Council speaks to the need and desire of the City to introduce this type of use to the area.

(d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or

Applicant Response: Applicant has hosted a community meeting in relation to this project but has hosted several meetings relating to the zoning change that made the project possible. In all instances there has been resounding support for the project from residences and businesses who unanimously feel that this is perfect addition to their neighborhood but that the businesses will also thrive from added foot traffic.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The development is pedestrian friendly and responsive to the existing pattern of development. The area is largely developed already consisting several large (over allowed FAR) commercial buildings with no real residential foothold. This project respects the scale of the area, staying under the allowed 120', and includes a robust bicycle scheme and restores a dead and extremely visible section of the street.

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

Applicant Response: Similar to section (e) this project comports the design guideline in 19.30 by respecting scale, orientation to streetscape, concealment of mechanical equipment.

II. Relief from Parking Requirements.

Article 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*

Applicant Response: The criteria will not be met.

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

Applicant Response: The traffic generated by the use will not further congest, create hazards, or create a substantial change in the established neighborhood. A parking study has been attached to this application.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The proposed parking scheme will not adversely affect existing uses.

- (d) *nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or*

Applicant Response: Applicant has attached a parking study which illustrates that the proposed number of parking spaces accommodate the projected demand. Further in our community outreach process it has been requested that the site limit the parking required to at least half or eliminate it completely.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The development is pedestrian friendly and close to transit. There is a "blue bike" station across the street and the area has become increasingly bicycle friendly. Reduction of parking has been indicated by the traffic and parking department as desirable and voiced by the community at large.

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

Applicant Response: The project conforms to and follows the Urban Design Objectives set forth in 19.30. The locus has been designed with pedestrians in mind with ground floor amenities and accessible bicycle storage.

Article 6.35.1 Reduction of Required Parking

Reduction of Required Parking. Any minimum required amount of parking may be reduced only upon issuance of a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. A special permit shall be granted only if the Board determines and cites evidence in its decision that the lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood, or that such lesser amount of parking will provide positive environmental or other benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood, including specifically, among other benefits, assisting in the provision of affordable housing units. In making such a determination the Board shall also consider whether or not less off-street parking is reasonable in light of the following:

- (1) *The availability of surplus off street parking in the vicinity of the use being served and/or the proximity of an MBTA transit station.*

Applicant Response: The locus is approximately a one (1) minute walk to the MBTA #64 and #68 bus lines as well as ten (10) minute walk to the Kendall/MIT Redline Train. There are also several large parking garages ranging in distance from one (1) to four (4) minutes driving time from the locus.

- (2) *The availability of public or commercial parking facilities in the vicinity of the use being served provided the requirements of Section 6.23 are satisfied.*

Applicant Response: The locus is within .1 - .4 miles of three parking garages that are privately owned and have vacancy. Applicant does not yet have an agreement for these facilities but will make best efforts to make such an agreement should one be required. To date applicant has received a directive from the Traffic and Parking department to limit daily trips by car to the locus.

- (3) *Shared use of off-street parking spaces serving other uses having peak user demands at different times, provided that no more than seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum parking requirements for each use shall be satisfied with such shared spaces and that the requirements of Subsection 6.23 are satisfied.*

Applicant Response: N/A

- (4) *Age or other occupancy restrictions which are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage;*

Applicant Response: The project will have roughly half of the parking spaces normally required. The use type is such that full compliance is neither desired by the traffic and parking department or warranted given the low usage of parking for this use type when within less than a 10 minute walk to multiple modes of transportation.

- (5) *Impact of the parking requirement on the physical environment of the affected lot or the adjacent lots including reduction in green space, destruction of significant existing trees and other vegetation, destruction of existing dwelling units, significant negative impact on the historic resources on the lot, impairment of the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, or loss of pedestrian amenities along public ways.*

Applicant Response: If the subject project were to comply fully with the requirements for parking at the locus it would require a two story garage which is neither desired by the DPW as the water table is already very high or by traffic and parking due to the low demand and would only exacerbate congestion in this area.

- (6) *The provision of required parking for developments containing affordable housing units, and especially for developments employing the increased FAR and Dwelling unit density provisions of Section 11.200, will increase the cost of the development, will require variance relief from other zoning requirements applicable to the development*

because of limitations of space on the lot, or will significantly diminish the environmental quality for all residents of the development.

Applicant Response: N/A

III. Off Street Parking (6.000; 6.43.5(a) Modifying Provisions for Access to Off Street Parking

Article 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*

Applicant Response: The criteria cannot be met due to the size and shape of the lot.

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

Applicant Response: The traffic generated by the use will not further congest, create hazards, or create a substantial change in the established neighborhood. The volume of traffic entering and exiting the garage is low and will not be impacted by the use of a Valet.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The proposed parking scheme will not adversely affect existing uses.

- (d) *nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or*

Applicant Response: The proposed parking layout/access is contained entirely on site and will not impact the surrounding area and so will not create a nuisance or hazard.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The proposed relief is in keeping with the intent of the ordinance.

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

Applicant Response: The relief requested allows the use to maximize the limited space available on the site to provide adequate parking for the user. The project conforms to and follows the Urban Design Objectives set forth in 19.30. The locus has been designed with pedestrians in mind with ground floor amenities and accessible bicycle storage.

6.43.5 The Board of Zoning Appeal may grant a special permit modifying the provisions of this subsections 6.43 in accordance with the following conditions:

- (a) *The provisions for layout of parking spaces in paragraph 6.43.2 may be modified where there is a valet parking arrangement for an off-street parking facility.*

Applicant Response: A full time Valet will be employed to oversee operations in the parking garage. Guest will not have to operate their vehicles past the Garage Door on Portland Street.

IV. Location of Short-Term Bicycle Parking

Article 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*

Applicant Response: The criteria will not be met.

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

Applicant Response: By increasing the amount of short-term bicycle parking the goal is to reduce car traffic significantly which will reduce congestion without having an adverse effect on the character of the established neighborhood.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The adjacent uses will be enhanced by revitalizing the area and drawing in more pedestrian friendly uses and services.

- (d) *nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or*

Applicant Response: By increasing the amount of short-term bicycle use the overall health and safety of the area is enhanced.

- (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*

Applicant Response: The development is pedestrian friendly and close to transit. The urban planning goals as well as the goals of traffic and parking to reduce on site car parking and enhance alternative modes of transportation are achieved.

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

Applicant Response: The project conforms to and follows the Urban Design Objectives set forth in 19.30. The locus has been designed with pedestrians in mind with ground floor amenities and accessible bicycle storage.

Article 6.108 Modification of Requirements by Special Permit

6.108.3 Findings and Approval. Upon granting a special permit to modify any requirements of this Section 6.100, the Planning Board shall make a general determination that the proposal is consistent with the purpose of this Section 6.100 and that the Bicycle Parking Plan proposes a quantity, design and arrangement of bicycle parking that will serve bicycle users in a way that is sufficiently comparable, given the circumstances of the specific project, to the bicycle parking that would be required under the regulations of this Section 6.100. The Planning Board shall also make specific determinations applicable to the modifications being sought as set forth below:

- (a) *Where an alternative design or layout of Bicycle Parking Spaces is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that such design or layout shall be durable and convenient for the users whom it is intended to serve. Where new*

technologies are proposed, the Board may require that the Applicant demonstrate such technologies for review by City staff.

Applicant Response: Short term bike parking: The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance requirement is for 4 short term bike spaces. The project proposes to heavily promote the use of bikes as a means of transportation, so has increased the availability of short-term bike parking to 10 bikes. This will enhance the pedestrian activity in a relatively dead area of the city and assist in increasing activity for businesses that struggle when office uses shut down for the evening and on weekends.

- (b) *Where modifications to the location or quantity of bicycle parking is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that the Bicycle Parking Plan will satisfactorily serve the needs of all expected users, based on quantitative and/or qualitative evidence provided by the Applicant. Such a modification may be appropriate for a campus master plan or other large development site within which bicycle parking is planned comprehensively across an area instead of on a specific site-by-site basis.*

Applicant Response: The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance requirement is for the short-term bikes to be parked within 50' of the primary building entrance. The proposal requests Planning Board consent in locating the bicycles 86' from the entrance. The proposal combines a covered area that accommodates both short term bike and electric scooter parking in a well-lit, supervised, covered area on Portland Street adjacent to the building lobby. The advantages of this location include:

- The preservation of a clean area of sidewalk at the building entrance on Hampshire Street where the drop off for the lobby will occur.
- Supervision from reception and manager
- Large well-lit covered area

V. Article 2.000 Definitions – Gross Floor Area Shall Not Include – (16) Exemption of Basement area in the Calculation of Gross Floor Area (“GFA”)

Article 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*

Applicant Response: The criteria will not be met.

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

Applicant Response: The basement space that is the subject of relief is relatively small in comparison to the entire project and will allow for uses that are congruous with the area and will allow guests to remain at the locus reducing street congestion.

- (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*

Applicant Response: Adjacent uses are not adversely affected as the use is entirely within the locus.

- (d) *nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or*

Applicant Response: Allowing the use of basement space will facilitate operation of the hotel and not have an adverse effect on safety or health.

- (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*

Applicant Response: Many uses within 100' of the locus use and maintain basement spaces for a host of purposes ranging from restaurants and bars to gyms and health facilities. This use comports with this urban design and enhances it.

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

Applicant Response: The use is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives as it serves as an accessory to the proposed hotel use adding to the desirability of the locus and further creating a sense of place.

Article 2.000 Definitions

Gross Floor Area shall not include:

- (16) *Any basement or cellar living space in any other type of structure with the issuance of a special permit. In granting such a special permit, the permit granting authority may approved the exemption of any portion of Gross Floor Area (GFA) located in a basement or cellar from the calculation of GFA, provided the permit granting authority finds that the uses occupying such exempted GFA support the character of the neighborhood or district in which the applicable lot is located.*

Applicant Response: There are many uses abutting the locus and across the street located at Kendall One that use their basements for a variety of commercial uses ranging from Restaurants and Bars, Cycling, and other health related services. The desire to exempt the gross floor area in the limited area beyond the parking facility will provide the opportunity to create similar experiences for the clientele of the proposed hotel without expanding beyond the boundaries of the locus.

Additional Project Information and Design Considerations:

Parking and Transportation:

A. Reduction of Automobile Parking:

The project seeks to reduce the amount of vehicular parking from the requirement of 34 spaces to 16 spaces. The reduction in vehicular parking will be supported by additional TDM trip reduction measures.

B. Parking and Transportation Demand Plan:

As a Small Project, our PTDM Plan will consist of at least 3 trip reduction measures:

1. Monthly subsidy covering at least 50% of the cost of an MBTA pass will be available to all employees.
2. Bicycle amenities will be provided above what is required by Zoning Ordinance.
 - a. Bicycle Repair Tools / Fix-it Stand
 - b. Shower Facility available for Employees
3. Guests and Employees will be charged for the cost of automobile parking on site.

C. Additional Bike Parking and Alternate Mode Parking Provision:

1. Long Term Bike Parking

The CZO code requirement is for 2 long term bike spaces. The project proposes to heavily recruit staff from the local neighborhood and within cyclable distance. Therefor there are 6 long term bike parking spaces provided. Further, 4 of these spaces will be provided with battery charging ability.

2. Short Term Bike Parking:

The CZO code requirement is for 4 short term bike spaces. The project proposes to heavily promote the use of bikes as a means of transportation, so has increased the availability of short-term bike parking to 10 bikes. The CZO code requirement is for the short-term bikes to be parked within 50' of the primary building entrance. The proposal requests planning board consent in locating the bicycles 86' from the entrance. The proposal combines a covered area that accommodates both short term bike and electric scooter parking in a well lit, supervised, covered area adjacent to the building lobby on Portland Street. The advantages of this location include:

- a) The preservation of a clean area of sidewalk at the building entrance on Hampshire Street where the drop off for the lobby will occur,
- b) Supervision from reception/manager,
- c) Large well lit covered area,
- d) Sufficient for the provision of the increased quantity of bikes and scooters.

3. Alternate non-vehicular space provision:

By expanding the availability of alternate sustainable modes of transport we can cater to a larger segment of the population. The proposed plan also includes an electric scooter parking area. This area can accommodate up to 12 scooters and will include a plug-in facility for charging scooters overnight.

Climate Change and Stormwater Management:

1. Stormwater Control

Stormwater Control has been an integral part of our initial design process. We have created parallel design approaches to determine the most effective and practical method of retaining stormwater on site. We plan to collect stormwater in a garage level holding tank to be released to the after the storm event has subsided. We are also investigating the use of shallow ponding at the Roof Level.

2. Climate Change Resiliency

The project is designed to address the predicted impacts of Climate Change discussed in the 2015 CCVA Report published by the City of Cambridge, specifically increased flooding due to the increasing intensity of Storm Events and increases in extreme heat events and average temperature

- a. Shade Structures at Street Level Entry points have been added to provide protection during overheated periods.
- b. Deciduous Street tree planting is proposed along the street to provide shade during overheated periods.

c. Building Design will minimize flooding during the 2070-10 year event:

The 2070-10 year event only affects a small area at the Southwest side of the Site. First Floor and Garage / Loading areas will be set above the 10 year storm elevation.

d. Building Design will enable quick recovery from the 2070-100 year event

First Floor, Garage Elevator and Basement Stair Access points are all set above the 2070 100-year Storm elevation. Garage driveway access and Sidewalk Entry Foyer will be impacted but will drain naturally as the storm flow subsides.

Trash Collection:

Trash and Recycling will be removed by a privately contracted company. Trash and Recycling will be stored temporarily in small, rolling containers in the Loading Area on the First Floor. Trash and Recycling will not be visible from the Public Way.

END OF NARRATIVE