

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139

CASE # 38 One Canal Park

PETITION: Special Permit for Planned Unit Development

ZONING DISTRICT: BA/PUD-4

PROJECT: Parcels C and F, Lechmere Canal

APPLICANT: The Marcus Organization

DEVELOPMENT LOCATION: First and Cambridge Streets at Lechmere
Canal

APPLICATION DATE: December 13, 1983

FIRST PUBLIC HEARING: January 3, 1984

DATE OF PLANNING BOARD DETERMINATION: January 17, 1984

The Development Proposal

A two-building, two-phased development is proposed with a total of 243,125 square feet of gross floor area. The buildings, which face Lechmere Canal, will be four stories in height and contain 300 parking spaces in a structured facility under and behind the Parcel F building.

The Application

In support of the petition, the applicant submitted the following documents:

1. Planned Unit Development Application, Development Proposal, submitted and certified complete on December 13, 1983.
2. Plans and elevations, #1-9; One Canal Park; Hopkinson Associates, Inc., Tsoi/Kobos and Associates; variously scaled; dated December 13, 1983.

Other Documents

1. Revised sketch plan, dated December 19, 1983
2. Notes from Dennis Carlone to the Board, re: design issues, dated January 11, 1984.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held in the Ackerman Room, City Hall on January 3, 1984. Planning Board members present were Arthur Parris, Chairman, John Woolsey, Alfred Cohn, David Kennedy, Carolyn Meith, and Paul Dietrich. Representatives of the Marcus Organization and Hopkinson Associates and Tsoi/Kobus Associates were present to describe the proposed development. Two issues were of major concern to the Board: (1) provision of an active use at ground level at the corner of First and Cambridge Streets in the Parcel F building; and (2) the detailing of the wall along Cambridge Street which is intended to provide screening for the parking facility behind it. The Board was of the opinion that the First Street corner is a significant visual and symbolic entrance to the Lechmere Canal development area which needs an active use. The wall along Cambridge Street was felt to be a potentially very negative element for pedestrians and visitors without careful detailing. In response to these two issues, Peter Hopkinson indicated that the provision of retail space at the First Street/Cambridge Street corner is desirable, but its provision would involve the loss of a significant number (ca 12) of parking spaces; further detailing studies will be conducted to reduce the impact of the proposed wall.

A number of East Cambridge citizens were present who expressed general support for this project but who were generally concerned, nevertheless, about the cumulative impact of all area development on the residential community and their homes in particular. Additional meetings with these citizens were scheduled. No one spoke in opposition to the proposal.

Findings

After consideration of all information provided and comments made by the general public and the staff, the Board makes the following findings:

1. All procedural requirements of Section 12.30 have been met with the submission of the completed application on December 13, 1983 and a public hearing on January 3, 1984.
2. The proposal is in conformance with the development controls of Section 13.50. In this regard the provision of only 7.6% useable open space, rather than the required 20%, is reasonable given the development's location on the Lechmere Canal Park.

3. The proposal is in conformance with the standards outlined in Section 12.353 and the development policies detailed in the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan.
4. No variances from the Zoning Ordinance are required.
5. The use of the ground floor corner at First and Cambridge Streets on Parcel F remains an unresolved question. The Board feels that an active, inviting use is important to strengthen this corner as an entrance into the District.
6. The detailing of the parking facility screen along Cambridge Street is most important; additional studies should be made of this elevation of the project to achieve an edge that performs its screening function in a way that does not unnecessarily deaden this portion of the site for pedestrians and vehicular travelers.
7. Use of park for access to the building by service vehicles on Parcel F may be acceptable but alternative solutions, totally contained within the building, should be explored.
8. Parking numbers and parking access locations are anticipated to be modified as final development plans are refined; modifications should seek to minimize the impact on pedestrians and park users of access to the building, increase the amount of lively occupied space at the pedestrian level at the periphery of the site, and if possible, increase the amount of parking contained within the site. In this regard, it is understood that additional parking (ca. 130 spaces) might be provided on the site as a result of participation in a larger UDAG application sponsored by the city. It is understood that building design modifications could result on Parcel F, should additional spaces be accommodated

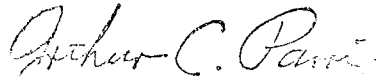
Determination

In accordance with Section 12.352 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board conditionally approves the development proposal with modifications as outlined below:

1. Final development plans shall be, in general massing, detail and design, as shown in plans dated December 13, 1983.
2. Final plans shall provide for active retail space within the building to be located on Parcel F, at the building corner facing First and Cambridge Streets. Floor area of approximately 2400 square feet shall be so located at or about street level which shall have visibility from both First and Cambridge Streets.

3. An alternate solution shall be presented to the Board indicating service to the building on Parcel F completely contained within the building and not making use of the park land abutting for such purposes.
4. More detailed solutions shall be presented to the parking structure/building edge along Cambridge Street and O'Brien Highway with the objective of softening the impact of this edge on pedestrians, concealing the view of parked vehicles from ground level and elevated "T", and integrating the edge with other solutions to edge definition on the adjacent park site and nearby development sites.
5. Additional design and functional issues shall be further explored and suggested solutions presented in final plan documents as outlined in the enclosed Appendix.

For the Planning Board,



Arthur Parris,
Chairman

APPENDIX

Overview: The applicant's proposed development plan largely follows, and in some cases improves on, Cambridge's urban design guidelines for Parcels C & F. The City's concerns are largely matters of detail, with possible solutions now being negotiated between the City and the development team. The following comments respond to drawings submitted on December 13, 1983 and a revised plan sketch of December 19, 1983, attached.

Sheet 3: First floor plan/revised configuration of December 19th.

Retail areas: Provide animated retail space at the corner of First and Cambridge Streets. This corner is at the entry point to the project area and must be strengthened and reinforced to make the pedestrian and driver level as inviting as possible.

- o The City is anticipating an active, urban mixture of restaurant/retail uses that strongly reinforce with each other and their location on or near the canal. At the same time, Cambridge discourages less active retail uses to be located on these two parcels.
- o Maximize visibility and transparency into and through the ground floor retail and atrium from First Street to the Canal. The City realizes that future additions of storage rooms, toilets and restaurant kitchens will limit areas of transparency, but it is Cambridge's objective to locate and design these areas so that the maximum visibility and transparency will be achieved.

Parking: Public parking spaces shall be entered and exited off of First Street and shall be open for public use at hours identical to the City public parking garage at Thorndike and First Street.

Service: Provide an alternate service solution, possible combined with the proposed parking entry off of Cambridge Street, that will be enclosed and therefore will not infringe on the park, the Wainwright sculpture, and proposed pedestrian bridge.

- o Service shall be limited to specific times of the day and truck sizes. These standards are as yet not fixed but will be similar to other service areas that penetrate public pedestrian spaces.

Future T bridge: Indicate how your proposal allows for the MBTA to build a future pedestrian bridge as per the ECRP. What aspects of your concept, if any, must be altered now or at the time the bridge is constructed?

Otis Way: The present design of Otis Way's paving pattern creates an overscaled focal point that is not in the spirit of the urban design plan. The plan views Otis Street and Way as a connection between the Bulfinch Square neighborhood of buildings and the Canal Park. Otis Way is not an important focal point unto itself, but a mediator or connective element between the two focal points. This is not to say that Otis Way cannot be subtly enriched through tree spacing, the location of a kiosk, and the point at which the arcade ends and the awnings begin. The buildings, as designed, will greatly assist in giving Otis Way the character and importance that the City and the development team are seeking.

Wainwright Sculpture: More study is needed to properly relate to the City of Cambridge's proposed sculpture by Bill Wainwright and the urban pedestal that it will be positioned on.

First Street: The development team's proposal to provide a 5'-0" setback along First Street is to be applauded. (Corner pavilions may encroach upon this area, as approved by the City.) This proposal has many advantages, including: the creation of a more meaningful sidewalk and realistic tree locations; and, the ability to reduce the arcade while at the same time, increase the depth of the retail space.

- o Sidewalks including arcades along First and Cambridge Streets shall be treated as an extension of the Canal Park through identical materials and similar details.

Sections/Elevations: It is the goal of the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan to create handsome background buildings that enrich the public spaces of the Canal and the Riverfront and, at the same time, are sympathetic to East Cambridge's historic architecture. The ECRP seeks new buildings that are, in a sense, timeless, subtle but elegant structures that will always feel comfortable and inviting. This will be achieved in part through the design of properly scaled windows, masonry articulation, setbacks, animated silhouettes and use of materials that are warm, inviting and supportive of other proposed buildings and urban design plan. The applicant's design proposal has already accomplished many of the City's goals. Therefore, the following comments are mostly detail in nature.

General comments:

Silhouette: Provide a more animated silhouette that embellishes the canal, the historic neighborhood and Lechmere Square. This greater articulation should develop from and emphasize the building concept as now designed. Areas that should be further articulated include, but are not limited to: Thorndike Way and Otis Way (both at First Street and the canal side); points of entry into the building; and the corner of First and Cambridge Street where special attention should be taken. Each of these locations should be treated differently but within a common vocabulary.

Canal balconies: Provide human-scaled balconies at the top floor overlooking the canal on the East Elevation of parcel C and the South Elevation of Parcel F. The balconies will be detailed so that they are inviting, highly useable and relate to their presence on the canal.

Mechanical penthouses: All mechanical penthouses and other projections will be architecturally integrated with the buildings' elevations. They will be faced with the same building materials and, wherever possible, will enhance and not detract from the overall appearance and balance.

Awnings: Provide awnings, co-ordinated with other adjacent development, at all retail frontage overlooking the canal and facing Otis Way where the arcades do not exist. The awnings will assist in offering an active and vital marketplace image while at the same time creating a means of protection for shoppers and office workers during inclement weather.

Masonry articulation: As in all of the ECRP projects, the City desires handsome buildings mainly constructed of Kane Gonic (or approved equal) elegantly highlighted and subtly embellished with granite and limestone. To better relate to the park, a granite base treatment (similar to the granite in the park) is recommended for all the first floor columns meeting the canal's pedestrian level including Otis and Thorndike Ways. Limestone or granite string courses, lintels, sills and trim should be used to soften and refine the brick facades. Furthermore, the pattern of the brick itself can give richness to the large brick planes. The City recommends a pattern similar to a Flemish bond or American bond with headers every 6 or 7 courses.

Operable windows: For numerous reasons, including public health, aesthetics and future energy concerns, the City desires operable windows to be used throughout the building. (At a minimum, the City requires operable windows overlooking the canal.)

Sheet 5: Sections.

Floor heights: Floor heights shall be compatible with other private development around the canal. This would include a clear minimum floor height of 12'-0" to 13'-0" at Parcel C. Please indicate the proposed clear retail height within one week's time.

Steps at Parcel F's retail: The City has a major objective to have all retail/restaurant entrances / rental spaces at the same level as the adjoining public open space. Therefore, the City discourages the use of steps as indicated on the drawings.

Parking/planting edge: This area requires much more study to create a handsome urban edge in a convincing manner. Indicate, in more detail, how you would achieve this objective and screen all cars from public view.

- o It is the City's belief that the trees located in the parking edge wall will need an irrigation system in order for them to thrive. Please respond.
- o Indicate where you intend to locate an upper level entry along Cambridge Street. How will security be handled?

Sheet 6 and 7: Elevations.

Focus at First/Cambridge Street Corner: This corner must be architecturally strengthened to better express its prominent location overlooking Lechmere Square, forming an urban gateway to and from First Street and better relate to the height of the adjacent chocolate works. At this time, the City desires the development team to provide a small office penthouse (5th floor) at an appropriate size in planning to help reinforce this important corner.

Parking garage projection: The garage edge treatment is perhaps the least convincing element of the entire project. Both the east and west elevations of the parking projections and strengthening. Investigate the possibility of integrating these two end conditions into a kiosk/display element that would act as a stronger and more humanistic transition between the main building and the north elevation of the garage.

Service areas: It is expected that all service areas will, as much as possible, blend into the building through quality detailing, choice of materials and use of appropriate colors.

West and South elevations: Indicate why some retail areas along First Street and Thorndike Way have solid walls. The City intends to maximize glass frontage where large pedestrian flows are planned and adjacent to planned quality development (i.e. the chocolate works at First Street and the crescent at Thorndike Way).

Carlone & Associates

Architecture, Urban Design
14 Remington Street,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02138
617-491-4914

The Marcus Organization
Parcels C & F

PUD Design Review Comments

Overview: The applicant's proposed development plan largely follows Cambridge's urban design plan for Parcels C & F. The City's concerns are largely matters of detail, with many possible solutions now being negotiated between the City and the development team. The following comments, which build on design review comments dated January 17, 1984, respond to drawings submitted and presented on June 19, 1984. Although not repeated here, many January 17th comments are still relevant and must be addressed as if they were apart of this review.

Site Plan:

- o Service at Thorndike: Your site plan drawing of the park is incorrect. It should show trees on the north side of Thorndike Way. (See Canal Drawings, L-9.) If this affects your service access, how would you propose to remedy this situation?
- o Cambridge Street Edge: It is the City's goal to develop a rich urban landscape edge along the northside of Building II @ F. A serious effort will be necessary for this area's design evolution.
- o Otis Way: Although the present design is an improvement over earlier submissions, Otis Way's paving pattern is not in the spirit of the urban design plan or canal park design. The plan views Otis Street and Way as a connection between the Bulfinch Square neighborhood of buildings and the Canal Park. Otis way is not an important public focal point unto itself, but a mediator between the two focal points. Therefore, Otis Way should be indistinguishable from the Canal Park. The Canal Park concept including the radial paving pattern in brick (see Canal Drawings, L-5) and landscaping details are required to be extended through Otis Way.
- o MBTA Bridge Connection: The applicant is required to undertake detailed studies that integrate the planned MBTA bridge into Building II @ F's East facade in an elegant and convincing manner. The City strongly feels that it

is to both the developer's and public's benefit to achieve this goal. When properly designed, this will not only strengthen the retail viability but also assist in the means of public safety and maximize public open space.

Lower Level Parking:

o Projection Under Park: The City is investigating the feasibility of Marcus locating parking below public land dedicated for open space. There is a strong possibility that this will not be allowed by the Commonwealth.

Ground Floor Plan:

- o Awnings: Provide awnings along the entire length of Building I's (c) eastern facade except at the two story arcade. The lateral-arm awning^s shall project 6'-11".
- o Mystery Room: What purpose does the room just to the west of the Thorndike Way entrance have? Since the City is planning on a very active retail complex at the Crescent, can this area be retail and not dormant?
- o Atrium Walls: The City assumes that the walls represented by a double line between the atrium and the adjacent retail is largely glass. If not, immediatley notify the City.
- o Core/Retail Dilemma: The location of the core at the westerly Otis Way entry to Building II @ F is disappointing. It cuts into the retail frontage in a very unfortunate manner. What is planned for this 3'-0" deep space and at what elevation is it located? What benefits were gained by relocating the cores on the retail side of the atrium from the parking side as previously submitted?
- o Canal Park Elevation vs. Retail/Entry Elevation: Building II's easterly entry and adjoining retail areas are set at elevation 12.00. The Canal Park edge immediately adjacent is set at elevation 9.70. (See Canal Drawings, L-9.) As stated in earlier PUD review comments, the City has a major objective to have all retail/restaurant entrances at the same level as the adjoining public space. How do you intend to achieve this objective?
- o Cambridge Street Parking Entry: The two parking entries as presently designed appear to have a strangling-hold on the corner retail and greatly diminishes the retails chances for quality and success. Therefore, the City requires the

development team to move the Cambridge Street parking entry/exit at least 100 feet further to the east or, if this is not feasible, use the First Street entry/exit for all the parking spaces.

o Service Bay Understanding: The City has assisted the development team in introducing a common service area bordering Building II (f) as shown on the applicant's drawings. One of the major reasons why the City agreed to this approach was because the Marcus Organization agreed to provide sufficient interior areas for park refuse storage and/or equipment storage. How will this be handled? What maximum capacity will the City be offered as part of this agreement?

o Cambridge Street/First Street Retail: What efforts have the development team undertaken to better animate and magnify the corner retail space's presence. It was the City's understanding that the retail would have colorful awnings. Why are they not on the drawings?

Sections A Through D:

o The atriums in the sections have the potential of being very elegant. What are the atriums' walls constructed of?

Elevations:

In general, the elevations form the basis for successfully meeting the urban design guidelines. Most comments can be easily solved without dramatically altering the applicant's design intent.

o Entry Areas to Buildings I & II: The actual entry arches are appropriately scaled and have great architectural potential. To either side of the entry arches, the second floor office window pattern should be more articulated and not just an identical extension of the retail level glass pattern. Both of these areas, the formal entries and the second floor glass areas, need additional design development to better become more humanistic and inviting elements enriching both the buildings and Otis Way.

o Mechanical Penthouses: The elevations show much lower penthouses than are normally expected. Is this accurate? If not, what do you propose?

o East Elevation, Building II: Why is the southern corner not architecturally

treated (with Palladian-like windows) as every other pavilion corner? Also put large retail/restaurant windows in all 3 bays which will overlook an extensive planting area and play sculpture.

o Focus at First Street Corner at Cambridge Street: Although improved, this corner must be architecturally strengthened to better express its prominent location overlooking Lechmere Square, forming an urban gateway to and from First Street and better relate to the height of the adjacent chocolate works. Unless a more successful solution can be found, the City desires the development team to provide a small office penthouse (5th floor) at an appropriate size to help reinforce this important corner.

o Thorndike Pavilion: The Thorndike Way pavilions should project forward similar to the Otis Way pavilion corners. What is the setback as planned?

Typical Partial Elevation: The cornice of the building is insubstantial in relationship to the rest of the facade. An increased amount of limestone with a strong shadow-line(s) created through a relief in the limestone profile and a double brick soldier course would become a much more fitting cornice expression. Pre-cast concrete is not acceptable in lieu of limestone. Further smaller embellishments may be necessary to properly articulate the top.

Easement Setbacks:

o Thorndike Way: The City is indicating a 10'-0" easment on the Canal Drawings. Your PUD submission is proposing a 25'-0" construction easement. Contact the City immediately if you cannot accept the 10'-0" limitation.

Parking Edge Sections:

o Section G: The sections appear to be reasonable considering space limitations. However, Section G does need softening. This can be achieved in wall articulation (granite, limestone and brick) , street tree planting and related urban amenities, such as handsome tree grates, tree guards, etc.