

*Restaurant signs*

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
PLANNING BOARD**

**CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139**

REVISED TEXT

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case No.: #66 Major Amendment #1

Zoning District: Business A/PUD-4

Petitioner: CambridgeSide Galleria Associates Trust, formerly  
known as Riverside Galleria Associates Trust

Date of Planning Board Decision: June 16, 1987

Date of Minor Amendment #1: May 3, 1988

Date of Minor Amendment #2: November 15, 1988

Date of Minor Amendment #3: April 4, 1989

Date of Minor Amendment #4: April 18, 1989

Date of Minor Amendment #5: May 16, 1989

Date of Minor Amendment #6: June 5, 1990

Date of Minor Amendment #7: August 14, 1991

Date of Major Amendment #1: September 17, 1991

Decision (summary): 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 the date of 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 office of Community Development and the City  
Clerk.

*Elizabeth M. Malyant*  
Authorized Representative to the Planning Board 9/27/91

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**PLANNING BOARD**

**CITY HALL ANNEX, 57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE 02139**

REVISED TEXT

**MAJOR AMENDMENT #1**

Case No.: PB #66

Premises: First Street, Thorndike Way, Commercial Avenue,  
Lechmere Canal Park

Zoning District: Business A/PUD-4

Petitioner: CambridgeSide Galleria Associates Trust, formerly  
known as Riverside Galleria Associates Trust

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Date of Major Amendment #1: September 17, 1991

**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

1. Floor plans and elevations, entitled "Rayz, Cambridge, Ma."; Morris Nathanson Design; dated June 14, 1991; thirteen sheets. Floor plans and elevations, entitled "Papa-Razzi, Cambridge Side Galleria, Cambridge, Ma."; Morris Nathanson Design; dated July 3, 1991; ten sheets.
2. Revised plans and elevations entitled "Rayz, Cambridgeside Galleria, Cambridge, Mass.", Alco Sign Co., Inc.; drawings 5918-A, 5918-B, 5904 and 5905; dated 8/22/91, 8/01/91 and 8/02/91.

3. Revised plans and elevations entitled "Papa-Razzi, Cambridgeside Galleria, Cambridge, Mass.", Alco Sign Company., Inc.; drawing 5912; dated 8/06/91.

### DISCUSSION

There are proposed a number of signs to be accessory to two ground floor restaurants at the Cambridgeside Galleria facing Charles Park, on Cambridgeside Place. Several of the signs proposed conform to the requirements of the revised Article 7.000; four, however, do not. A large, neon-illuminated sign is proposed to be placed on the glass canopy running the length of the Rayz storefront. As originally presented the sign would have a maximum height of seven feet and a length of twenty four feet. As the sign is located further than twelve inches from the face of the building it is considered a projecting sign under the sign ordinance. The sign violates four limitations imposed in Article 7.000: (1) it exceeds the maximum area allowed for projecting signs: thirteen square feet, (2) it is an internally illuminated projecting sign which is prohibited, (3) it exceeds the maximum height allowed for illuminated signs: thirty inches (applicable to wall signs), and (4) it exceeds the maximum area permitted for any wall sign in the city: sixty square feet. At Papa-Razzi the proposal for three awnings with colorful, food related designs was initially thought to also violate the requirements of Article 7.000. If the designs are sufficiently specific to the restaurant use, they may be considered projecting signs and therefore exceed the limitation on the area of a projecting sign (thirteen square feet), the limitation on the number of such signs permitted (one per ground floor establishment), and, as the whole awning must be considered a sign, the limitation on the total amount of signage permitted on a single store front. The applicable sections in the Zoning Ordinance are: Section 7.16.22 - All Business, Office and Industrial Districts, and Section 7.16.3 - Application of Sign Frontage Formula.

### FINDINGS

1. It has been the objective of the Planning Board throughout its review of this development to encourage retail activity in those portions of the building directly abutting the public streets and parks that surround it. The design of the two restaurants, whose sign proposals are under consideration here by the Board, advance that very objective by fronting directly onto a public street, by maintaining direct public access to their facilities from that street, and by maintaining visual access to the restaurant facilities through the many windows at each facility. The presence of appropriate signage at each site will help to develop that traditional urban pattern of store fronts along public streets that the monolithic nature of the shopping center form tends to work against.

2. The varied, assertive character of the architectural design of the entire complex can easily accommodate a wide range of styles and sizes of signs provided there is careful design and placement of each one and an awareness of the cumulative impact on the whole facility. The large signs, intended to identify the complex itself and its major tenants from afar, are now sufficiently represented; additional signage should be provided that only relates to the closer in, pedestrian environment at the edges of the mall.
3. While the "Rayz" sign clearly falls within the definition of a projecting sign, its placement on the canopy more closely approximates the impact of a wall sign and could be so treated except for the presence of the architectural canopy which precludes the placement of the sign at the building wall. As initially proposed the maximum seven foot vertical dimension was excessive; the revised proposal to limit the maximum vertical dimension to four feet six inches results in a significant reduction in the area and scale of the sign and, further, results in a visual impact limited to the immediate vicinity of the restaurant. The revised plans also ensure that the sign's area will be less than the sixty square foot limit permitted for wall signs. The voluntary reduction in the size of the as of right window signs (to sixteen inches) greatly assists in moderating the overall impact of all signage accessory to the restaurant. The four foot six inch vertical height, while exceeding the two foot six inch limit in the Ordinance imposed for illuminated wall signs, is appropriate given (1) the relatively light character of the neon tubing design, (2) for the very large scale of the building facade upon which the sign is mounted, and (3) the fact that only the first letter is a full four feet six inches, with the remaining letters being considerably smaller.
4. The awning designs for the Papa-Razzi restaurant bridge that dimension between eye catching and colorful design which is not considered a sign and design which is specific to a particular use and operation and therefore considered a sign. The existing awnings at the Galleria have extensive graphic elements over their surface; traditionally stripped awnings in lurid colors can certainly be eye-catching but still not be defined as a sign. The designs represented to the Board for the Papa-Razzi awnings do subtly imply the restaurant use occurring on the premises. However, sufficiently abstracted, with no brand name identification and no specific indication that the awnings are accessory to a restaurant. The awnings are acceptable to the Board as positive additions to the facade of the restaurant and within the range of graphic display to be found on awnings that would not be considered signs under the Ordinance. The

Board, therefore, finds the awnings not to be signs within the meaning of the definitions of Article 7.000.

5. The impact of several of the proposed signs will be diminished somewhat with the construction of Charles Park directly across Cambridgeside Place; as the trees and other vegetation mature, views of the Galleria facade, particularly at street level, will be considerably softened.
6. The scale of the Galleria development and the streets that surround it are distinctly different from the typical storefront-along-a-city-street for which the revised sign regulations were developed. Reasonable variations from those regulations are appropriate where the specific circumstances differ significantly from the norm. The nature of the Galleria suggests that reasonable variations from the requirements are appropriate.

#### DECISION

After review of the application documents, comments made at the public hearing held on Tuesday, September 17, 1991, and based on the findings above, the Planning Board **GRANTS** the Major Amendment relief requested to vary the application of the requirements of Article 7.000 subject to the following conditions.

1. The "Rayz" projecting sign shall be constructed as indicated in the revised documents cited above, sheets 5918 A and B, dated 8/22/91. The neon window signs shall be limited to a vertical height of sixteen inches.
2. All "Rayz" and "Papa-Razzi" illuminated signs shall be regulated by a rheostat mechanism such that the intensity of illumination can be adjusted. At the direction of the Planning Board the permittee shall reduce the intensity of light of any one or all signs to a level approved by the Planning Board if, within the first year of operation, a complaint is received by the Board from any neighbor for whom the signs are visible, including persons or owners at One Rogers Street, 55 Cambridge Parkway, 75-83 Cambridge Parkway, and 10 Rogers Street (Lotus Office Building, Cabot, Cabot and Forbes Building, Esplanade, River Court), and if upon investigation it is the determination of the Board that the intensity of light is unreasonable and excessive given the substantial residential and office character of the uses within viewing distance of the approved signs.
3. The awnings accessory to the "Papa-Razzi" restaurant shall be permitted and are determined not to be signs provided no word shall appear within the graphics indicating "restaurant", "food", brand names of food products or

similar words or phrases specifically denoting or implying the restaurant use within. The Community Development Department shall review the final design of the awnings before issuance of the necessary ~~outdoor~~ permit to determine that no prohibited wording appears on them and that the intensity of color and the nature of the final design is such that the awnings' visual impact is appropriately subdued in keeping with the stated intent of the applicant as presented to the Board at the public hearing and in keeping with the significant quantity of residential use within sight of the awnings. The Community Development Department shall specifically certify to the Inspectional Services Department that this condition has been met.

Voting to grant the Major Amendment were Board members P. Dietrich, D. Kennedy, H. Russell, A. Cohn and A. Callaghan, being at least two thirds of the membership of the Board. Voting to deny the permit was C. Mieth.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

Paul Dietrich, Chairman

A copy of this decision 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 of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the decision filed with the Office of the City Clerk on September 27, 1991, by Elizabeth J. Malenfant, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referenced in the decision have likewise been filed with the City Clerk on such date.

Twenty (20) days have elapsed since the filing of this decision. No Appeal has been filed.

City Clerk, City of Cambridge

Date