



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION • COVER SHEET

*Amend*

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:	907 Main Street		
Zoning District:	Business B, Central Square Overlay District		
Applicant Name:	Sean Casey LLC c/o Patrick Barrett		
Applicant Address:	234 Broadway, Cambridge MA 02139		
Contact Information:	617-778-3521	jbrealtyllc@gmail.com	
	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.*

Article 2, Definitions: Gross Floor Area Exemption for Basement Space.  
 Article 20.304.6 (2): Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements.  
 Article 20.304.2 (2) (b): Special Permit for Additional Building Height.

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

Architectural Drawings dated 09-05-17  
 Ownership Form: Signed and Notarized  
 Project Narrative  
 Project Dimensional Form  
 Fee Schedule

**Signature of 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



**BOYES-WATSON**  
ARCHITECTS

**907 Main Street: Hotel and Retail Development**  
**Special Permit Application Narrative**

**Prepared by Boyes-Watson Architects**  
**09-01-17**

**1. General Narrative**

The proposed project occupies a comersite in Central Square abutting Main Street and Columbia Street. 907 Main Street is occupied by a four story structure currently used as a mixed use building with a retail first floor and twelve (12) residential units on the upper three floors. The parcel totals approximately 9505-SF. The site is completely covered by the buildings and paved surfaces. The site is more or less flat, with no significant natural features on the parcel.

The site is in a Business B Zoning District.

The site is in the Central Square Overlay District.

The project site is a national register building within a historic district.

**2. Building Uses and Areas**

The proposed renovation and addition will contain 67 sleeping rooms on the upper three floors, a retail first floor consisting of two existing tenants and a hotel lobby, restaurant, and bar, and a fifth floor addition which will consist of a restaurant and bar with open terrace and above the existing Building and a Guest Suite above the Addition.

**3. Requested Special Permits**

- A. Article 2 – Definitions – Gross Floor Area Shall Not Include – Item #16. Exemption of basement area in the calculation of GFA (Gross Floor Area).

The applicant requests that all basement spaces be excluded from the calculation of GFA.  
The criteria for approval of this type of Special Permit are indicated in:

- 1) Article 10.43-General Criteria for Special Permits
- 2) Article 2 – Definitions
- 3) Article 20.305 Standards for Issuance of Special Permits

- B. Article 20.304.6 (3) - Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements

The applicant requests relief from the 5 parking spaces required for the proposed project.  
The criteria for approval of this type of Special Permit are indicated in:

- 1) Article 20.304.6 (3) (a) & (b)
- 2) Article 10.43-General Criteria for Special Permits.
- 3) Article 20.305 Standards for Issuance of Special Permits

- C. Article 20.304.2 Building Height Limitations (2) Special Permit for Additional Height (a)

The applicant requests relief from the Building Height requirement of 55'. The proposed building height is 59'-6".  
The criteria for approval of this type of Special Permit are indicated in:

- 1) Article 10.43-General Criteria for Special Permits.
- 2) Article 20.304.2 (a)
- 3) Article 20.305 Standards of Issuance of Special Permits

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 ('A', 'B' and ").

**I. Response to Special Permit Criteria – Requested Special Permit A.**

*(Note - italicized text = text of Bylaw)*

*Article 10.43 Criteria for Special Permits 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: It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or*

Response: The requirements of this Ordinance will not be met.

*Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or*

Response: The basement is already in use there will be no change or intensifying of the use.

*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*

Response: The proposed use is consistent with the zoning ordinance. Operation of or development of adjacent uses will not be adversely impacted as the use does not change.

*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*

Response: The use is a conforming use and would create no further nuisance or hazard.

*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*

Response: The exemption of gross floor area will allow small local retailers who have been in Central Square for decades to continue their use and allow for better handling of trash and back of the house functions for the proposed use. The commercial use proposed is fully compliant with the existing Zoning By-law.

*Article 2 Criteria*

*(Note - italicized text = text of Bylaw)*

*In granting such a special permit, the permit granting authority may approve 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 supports the character of the neighborhood or district in which the applicable lot is located.*

- a. The existing basement space is already in use, the six inch differential between the existing and proposed height supports the existing character of the neighborhood where many sites already have put these types of spaces in use for back of the house functions as proposed.

*Article 20.305 Standards for Issuance of Special Permits.*

*In addition to the general standards for the issuance of a special permit found in Section 10.40 of the Zoning Ordinance, the special permit granting authority shall in addition make the following findings:*

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

- encourage responsible and orderly development;*
- strengthen the retail base to more completely serve the needs of the neighborhoods;*
- preserve the Square's cultural diversity;*
- create active people oriented spaces;*
- improve the physical, and visual environment;*
- provide retail establishments that serve people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods;*
- encourage the development of new mixed income housing; and*
- promote compatible retail adjacent to residential uses.*

*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";*

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

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

*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.*

The standards set forth in Section 20.305 are met.

Response: The project and requested relief will comply with the standards set forth in 20.305 as allowing for the expansion of retail on the ground floor around Columbia Street activating a dormant corner and preserving a local retailer that has been in Central Square for over 30 years. Further, the project will preserve a national register building and update the aging façade.

**II. Response to Special Permit Criteria – Requested Special Permit B.**

*(Note-italicized text = text of Bylaw)*

*Article 10.43 Criteria for Special Permits 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: It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or*

Response: The requirements of this Ordinance will not be met.

*Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character; or*

Response: The neighborhood character would remain intact and would further limit congestion currently caused by an excess of delivery vehicles loading and unloading at the corner of the intersection of Main St. and Columbia St.

*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*

Response: The proposed use is consistent with the zoning ordinance. Operation of, or development of adjacent uses will not be adversely impacted.

*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*

Response: By removing the parking requirement the amount of traffic going into the intersection would be eliminated and more off street parking as well as an early morning loading area that could service the adjacent business could be created.

*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*

Response: The exemption of parking from this site would reduce congestion and create several new off street parking spots for the city, as well as a loading area for trucks servicing businesses in the area and a drop off location that is out of the way of bike lines for future hotel guests. The loading requirements are met.

*Article 20.304.6 (3) Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements: Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements. Uses in the Central Square Overlay District which meet the following requirements shall be exempt from the parking and loading requirements as specified in Section 6.36 - Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements and the minimum requirements set forth in Paragraph 2 above(b) The use is contained in a new structure or new addition to a structure identified in (1.) above, after the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board provided:*

*(i) "The total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot...":*

Response: The project is exempt from Article 6.36 because it is an addition to an existing structure built prior to 1940 and the addition is less than 90% of the allowable build permitted.

The standards set forth in Section 20.305 are met.

Response: The project and requested relief will comply with the standards set forth in 20.305 as allowing for the expansion of retail on the ground floor around Columbia Street activating a dormant corner and preserving a local retailer that has been in Central Square for over 30 years. Further, the project will preserve a national register building and update the aging façade.

### **III. Response to Special Permit Criteria – Requested Special Permit III.**

*(Note - italicized text = text of Bylaw)*

*Article 10.43 Criteria for Special Permits 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: It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or*

Response: The requirements of this Ordinance will not be met.

*Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or*

Response: Increase in building height will have no impact on traffic generated.

*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*

Response: The increase in height requested is set back from the required building setback in all areas above the maximum height thus minimizing the impact on surrounding properties.

*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*

Response: The use is a use and would create no further nuisance or hazard. The additional height requested will not increase the intensity of use in any way.

*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*

Response: The requested increase in height is modest (only 5' of the potential 25' special permit increase) and does not include the addition of additional stories or GFA. We have adhered to the bulk plane and setback requirements of 20.304.02 (2) though they are not required for buildings less than 60'.

The standards set forth in Section 20.305 are met.

Response: The project and requested relief will comply with the standards set forth in 20.305 as allowing for the expansion of retail on the ground floor around Columbia Street activating a dormant corner and preserving a local retailer that has been in Central Square for over 30 years. Further, the project will preserve a national register building and update the aging façade. The additional height comports with the overall aesthetic of the area, improves the visual and physical environment creating an active people orientated space.



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Zoning Narrative:

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**Project Description:**

907 Main Street is single 9,505 SF parcel located in Central Square. Currently there is a single multi-family residential structure above street level retail / business space. The property is located on a corner lot with street frontage on Main Street and Columbia Street. The property is zoned Business B (see table 5-3 attached) and lies in the Central Square (CSQ) Overlay District.

The site is not listed as a designated property by the City of Cambridge Historic Commission but is designated on the National Register District 3/2/1990, the National Register District 7/11/2012 and the National Register MRA 3/2/1990. Any change to the exterior of the building will need review and approval by the Cambridge Historic Commission.

The Proposed Scope of Work will include:

- 1) Renovations to the existing Commercial Use at the First Floor and Basement Level to accommodate a Hotel Lobby, accessible entrance accommodations for the Existing Commercial Use.
- 2) Reconfigure and renovate existing Multifamily Use on Floors 2, 3 and 4 for use as a Hotel.
- 3) Addition on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Existing Building to accommodate additional Hotel uses including Bar and Terrace.
- 4) Construction of a 5 Story addition on Columbia Street which will contain a ground floor Commercial / Restaurant Use, 4 Stories of Hotel Use to be connected to the existing building, Basement Level Commercial and Mechanical uses and a grade level patio area that will serve the Hotel Use.
- 5) 20 Guest Rooms are contained within the Addition and the remainder of the Guest Rooms are contained within the Existing Building.

**Use and Dimensional Requirements:**

**Central Square Overlay District:**

This parcel is located within the Central Square Overlay District (CSQ). This highlights the area as one of 'special planning concern' will require a review and consultation with the Central Square Advisory Committee. The proposed project will be subject to their design guidelines as outlined in 20.304.1 The language of the Central Square Overlay District was amended by Ordinance #1389. The changes pertinent to the proposal are as follows:

- a. 20.304.3 – Lower base FAR limitation is no longer applicable
- b. 20.304.3(1) - FAR for Residential Uses has changed from 3.0 to 4.0 for All Residential Uses. Applies to all Hotel GFA.
- c. 20.304.3(5) – The GFA of Residential Balconies and Terraces is now exempt. Applies to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Bar / Hotel Terrace.

- d. 20.304.6(1) – The required On-Site Parking has changed from .5 Spaces Per Sleeping Room to .25 Spaces per Sleeping Room. The number of spaces required by the Proposed Project remains at 5 parking spaces.
- e. 20.304.6(3) – Parking and loading requirements are exempt from Section 6.36 provided use contained within structure built prior to 1940 and/or the addition thereto provided total development on site is less than 90% of permitted.

**Use:**

The existing use classification for the Proposed Project is Multiuse-Res, which is an allowed use in Business B per Table 4.31.g Business B allows Hotel or Motel as a conforming use as of right per table 4.31.i.2.

**Setbacks:**

For Hotel and Commercial Uses, Business B does not have any setback requirements for front, rear or side yard setbacks.

**Building Height:**

Business B allows for an 80' maximum building height as calculated from existing average grade. However the Central Square Overlay District Requirements reduce the allowable Building Height to 55' per 20.304.2.

*Building Height Limitations. The maximum height of buildings in the Central Square Overlay District shall be governed by the requirements of this Section 20.304.2; however, at locations where the base zoning district establishes a more restrictive height limitation, the more restrictive shall apply.*

1. *As of Right Height Limitations. The maximum height of any building shall be fifty-five (55) feet except as further limited below:*

The proposed building is 59'-6" and will require Special Permit relief from the Planning Board.

**Parking:**

The existing building is exempt from parking requirements per 20.304.6

*Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements. Uses in the Central Square Overlay District which meet the following requirements shall be exempted from the parking and loading requirements as specified in Section 6.36 – Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements.*

1. *The use is contained within a structure of portion of a structure in existence on or before June 1, 1094 or if constructed later is identified as a National Register or contributing building.*

Currently the site has no registered parking spaces associated with it. The city of Cambridge requires 1 parking space per 4 sleeping rooms per 20.304.6 (Amended per Ordinance #1389). Any addition or new construction portion of the project creating new sleeping rooms is subject to compliance with these requirements. Any sleeping rooms or business use located in the existing structure are not required to provide parking and are exempt from Chapter 6.

The proposed project is exempt from all bicycle parking requirements of Article 6 per the following:



6.103.2 Notwithstanding the requirements in 6.103.1 above, bicycle parking shall not be required for the following:

- b. *The enlargement, expansion or conversion of an existing building, where the difference between the bicycle parking required for the proposed building and the bicycle parking that would be required for the existing building (under this Section 6.100) equals fewer than two (2) bicycle parking spaces.*

The existing building and uses required a total of 14 Long Term and 6 Short Term bike parking spaces. The new proposed use including all additions will only require 2 Long Term and 4 Short Term bike parking spaces, therefore bike parking is not required.

**Summary of Zoning Requirements:**

Summary of proponents understanding of the regulatory requirements/permits required:

It is our understanding that the Project will require:

1. A Large Project Review undertaken by the Central Square Advisory Committee (Section 20.300).
2. Planning Board Special Permit:
  - a. Relief from Parking Requirements (Section 6 and Section 20.300)
  - b. Relief from Height Limit of 55' (Section 5 and Section 20.300)

In addition we are requesting relief to exclude the Basement Level Areas from the calculation of Gross Floor Area.

END

**DIMENSIONAL FORM**

**Project Address:** 907 Main Street

**Application Date:** 09.05.17

	Existing	Allowed (Required)	PB SP #324 Approved	Proposed
Lot Area (sq ft)	9,505	No Change	No Change	No Change
Lot Width (ft)	115.25'	No Change	No Change	No Change
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)	20,874	38,020	26,138	29,860
Residential Base	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Residential Base	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Floor Area Ratio	2.21	4.00	2.75	3.14
Residential Base	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Residential Base	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Dwelling Units	12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Base Units	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Inclusionary Bonus Units	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Building Height(s) (ft)	45'	55.0'	55.0'	59.5'
Front Yard - Main St.	0'	0'	0'	0'
Side Yard Setback (ft)	29.5'	0'	0'	0'
Side Yard Setback (ft)	0'	0'	0'	0'
Front Yard - Columbia St.	0'	0'	0'	0'
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	0%	0%	20%	20%
Private Open Space	0%	0%	20%	15%
Permeable Open Space	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Open Space (Specify)	0%	0%	0%	5%
Off-Street Parking Spaces	0	5	0	0
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	0	6	2
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	0	6	4
Loading Bays	0	0	0	0

*Use space below and/or attached pages for additional notes:*