



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Board of Zoning Appeal

From: Harvard Square Advisory Committee

Date: May 15, 2024

Re: **9, 11A, and 11B Mount Auburn Street – Positive Recommendation**

IRAM FAROOQ
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Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Overview

The Harvard Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on Wednesday, May 15, 2024 to discuss an expected special permit and variance request to be made to the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) for a project at 9, 11A, and 11B Mount Auburn Street. The meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.50 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in advance of the applicant’s request for the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA). Committee members present were Allison Crosbie, John DiGiovanni, Frank Kramer, Alexandra Offiong, and Matt Simitis (Chair). Absent were Lauren Curry, Jemel Derbali, Kari Kuelzer, Steven Ng, and Nicola Williams. After discussion, Frank Kramer moved and John DiGiovanni seconded the motion to forward a report to the BZA with a positive recommendation. Six (6) members present voted in favor and none (0) against.

Proposal Description

The Applicant proposes to renovate the existing buildings, constructing a third-floor rear addition to 9- 11A Mt. Auburn Street and constructing two third-floor dormers to 11B Mt. Auburn Street, and removing a connecting structure and mechanical lift between the structures, as well as other exterior renovations to the structures. Renovations will preserve the Mt. Auburn Street facing facades. Use of the property (currently offices) will be reestablished as residential. The Applicant is expected to submit to the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) for both variances and special permits. BZA variances and special permits within the Harvard Square Overlay District require review by HSAC. HSAC has prepared this recommendation to be submitted to the BZA.

Presenting for the project were Sarah Rhatigan, Adam Glassman, and Michael Driscoll. The applicant noted that dimensional relief sought include dormers and additions that add square footage of approximately 850 square feet and variances for conversion back to residential, minimum open space requirements, and proximity of buildings.

Public Comments

No public comment.

Committee Questions and Comments

The Committee voted to recommend that the applications be approved by the BZA and to transmit the below summary of questions and comments:

- Matt Simitis –
 - Wanted clarification on the property addresses. The applicant noted that the legal definition of the property addresses are complicated. The property to the left is 15 Mt. Auburn Street. This is not part of the project and is owned by Harvard.
 - Asked about chimney details and the applicant verified that it is a brick veneer.

- Alexandra Offiong –
 - Asked about the Cambridge Historical Commission process. Noted that these buildings had some façade easements and wanted to know if the facades were being maintained and what would be the treatment of the front and sides. The applicant noted that the façade preservation agreements predated the CHC's issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness. The applicant plans to keep the material requiring any repairs and if it is beyond repair it will be replaced to match.
 - Asked about two AC units shown close to the property line with the building at 15 Mt. Auburn Street. Is there expected noise or vibration? The applicant noted that one plan submitted to HSAC mistakenly showed the wrong location for the condenser unit. The applicant notes that the AC condensers that are to be located at 11B are in the back of the house with barely any windows and the other building is concrete/brick wall. They also must comply with the City sound ordinance to maintain the proper sound transmission levels across the property line.
- John DiGiovanni –
 - Is glad CHC has reviewed and overall thinks it is a terrific project.
- Alexandra Offiong –
 - It looks like a beautiful project and a very desirable place to live. It is great that they are preserving the building.
- Frank Kramer –
 - It is a lovely project with a great reuse and is glad they are able to do it.
- Matt –
 - It is a fine project and is happy with it. He thought it was notable how few residential projects HSAC reviews and it is interesting to see a conversion back to its original constructed use.

Recommendations

Members of the Committee were supportive of the applicant's proposal and had no additional comments on the design or layout.



Respectfully submitted for the Committee,

Mason Wells

Community Development Department