**Richdale Avenue Zoning Amendment Petition**

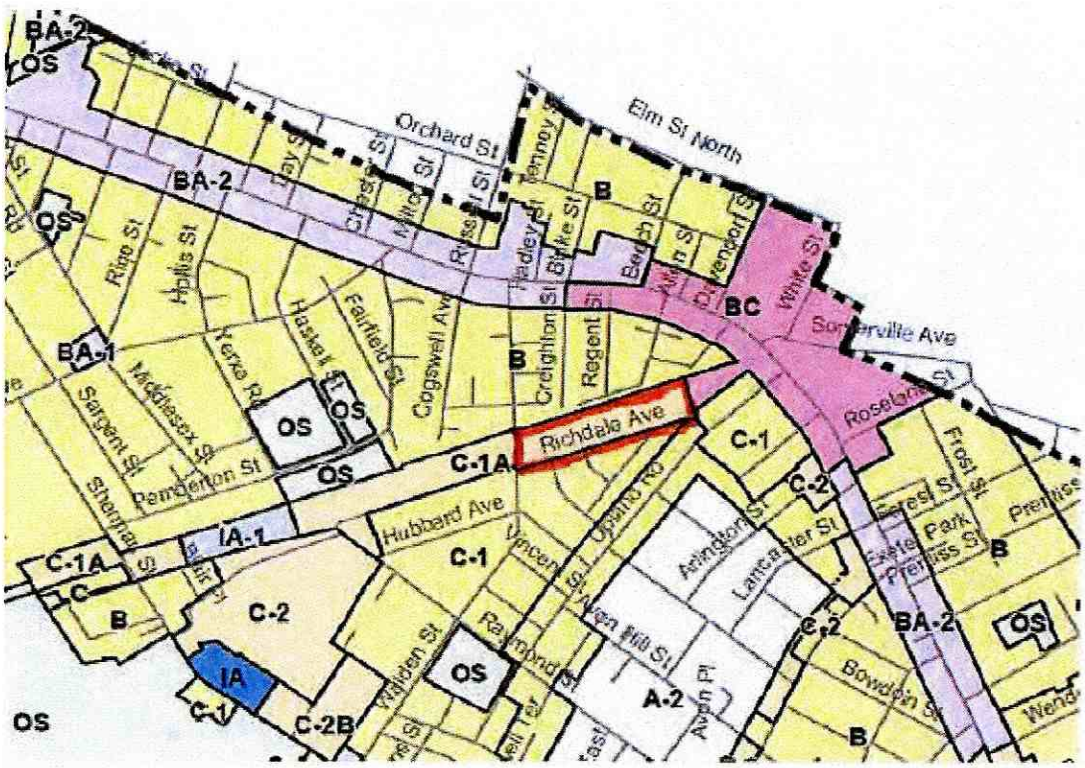
**Zoning Ordinance Amendment Petition to Rezone the C1-A lot to C-1 (Richdale Avenue)**

2013 OCT 9 PM 1:39
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

To the Honorable, the City Council, October 9, 2013

The undersigned hereby petition the City Council of the City of Cambridge to amend the Map of Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge by rezoning an area on the northern border of Richdale Avenue from Upland Road to Walden Street from its C1-A designation to residential C-1.

The area to be rezoned, Richdale Avenue between Walden and Upland Streets, is colored light orange and indicated (red box) on a detail of the April 2013 zoning map (below). The subject area occupies a portion of the northern side of Richdale Avenue and is bordered on the north by the commuter rail tracks, and on the south by Richdale Avenue;




The abutting Richdale Avenue neighborhood currently is zoned residential C-1 and immediately on the other side of the train tracks, the zoning is residential B. Abutting areas are mostly comprised of triple deckers, single and 2-family buildings which are 3 stories or lower in height. There are many families with small children living here and along adjacent streets. The narrow streets, and the heavy traffic on Richdale Avenue, would not safely support high density development of the type that is proposed to be built on the 15-33 Richdale Avenue lot (which is within the subject area), under the C1-A designation (4 stories, = 54 units, including affordable housing allotment).

Analysis of the densities of the abutting Richdale Avenue neighborhood illustrates the degree to which the proposed 15-33 Richdale project is out of scale with the existing neighborhood housing density. The average housing density (floor area ratio) here appears to be uniformly between than .5 and 1.0 which conforms most closely to the C-1 district (.75) density. Moreover, the lot areas per dwelling unit for all recent projects in the rezoning area are far greater than that proposed for 15-33 Richdale Avenue.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Richdale | 1,686 sf/unit | 16 units on 26,971 sf. lot |
| 75 Richdale | 1,769 sf/unit | 18 units on 31,846 sf. lot |
| 83 Richdale | 1,013 sf/unit | 9 units on 9,117 sf. lot |

In contrast, the 15-33 Richdale Avenue proposal is 779 sf/unit = 54 units on 42,043 sf. lot. Note that the 75 Richdale Avenue conversion of historic commercial buildings to residential (immediately abutting the proposed project and the closest comparable) has 1,769 sf/unit (2.27 times the area/unit than this proposed project). The proposed project at 15-33 Richdale is grossly out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

**Current and proposed development potential for 15-33 Richdale Avenue (42,043 sq. ft.):** Rough calculation for potential development size under current C-1A = 42 units, plus inclusionary bonus for affordable housing = 54 units.

Rough calculation for potential development size under proposed C-1 = 28 units, plus inclusionary bonus for affordable housing = 36 units

The smaller development potential, though still large, would be more appropriate to the scale of the Richdale Avenue neighborhood, and is consistent with several high density developments nearby.

**Additional neighborhood considerations**

By comparison, the neighboring project at 75 Richdale Avenue (a 31,846 sq. ft. lot situated adjacent to 15-33 Richdale Avenue) is noteworthy. This project is also C-1A zoned and was renovated in 1993-4. In contrast to the proposed project at 15-33 Richdale Avenue, concerns about development scale for this block led to the approval of a significantly more moderate project, i.e. full restoration of the existing historic buildings. The resulting density for the project is 1,769 sf/unit. This example of appropriate respectful development in this neighborhood of small homes and narrow streets, on a connector street, should be extended by amending zoning at this time for the entire block surrounding 15-33 Richdale Avenue.

The applicable section of Richdale Avenue is a 2-lane, thoroughfare that starts on Upland Street and ends at Sherman Street. The Walden Street to Upland Street segment at issue here is currently often used as a shortcut between Walden Street to Upland Street. Traffic on Upland at the Porter Square light, one block from the Richdale Avenue intersection, and on Walden Street from the Mass Ave light, is seriously backed up

during rush hour and other busy periods, often requiring multiple light changes to get beyond the traffic light. Further, the storm water and sewer systems are already overloaded, resulting in flooding and sewer overloads during significant storms. Adding 54 units to the current systems will seriously overwhelm the area.

Further, the C-1A district allowances permit a development seriously out of neighborhood scale and density. Whereas nearly all of the buildings in the neighborhood have an FAR of .5-1.0, the proposed development of 15-33 Richdale would have an FAR of 1.62 (when including the inclusionary housing bonus). This proposed density is grossly out of keeping with the neighborhood. Similarly the lot area per dwelling unit is 779 sf/unit for the proposed development when other recent developments have ranged from 1,013 sf/unit to 1,769 sf/unit (2.3 times the proposed development).

In addition, the developer proposes to raze nearly all of the landmark Hathaway Bakery Buildings, cynically retaining only about 5% yet calling it a "restoration". The use of the word "restoration" is laughable in this context as the plan calls for nearly total demolition of the historic facility.

Adding this massive development into a low density residential neighborhood would be an unjustified jolt to the area and would overwhelm its existing roads, sewers, and storm drainage. With these concerns in mind, we the undersigned request that the zoning of 15-33 Richdale Avenue be amended from C-1A to C-1.

Respectfully yours,

| Name | Address |
| --- | --- |
| Christopher H. Lutz<br>Christopher H. Lutz | 75 Richdale Avenue, Apt. 15<br>Cambridge, MA 02140 |

Richdale Avenue Zoning Amendment Petition

| Name | Address |
| --- | --- |
| Caroline R. Cohen | 40 Porter Road |
| MARION C. FOSTER | 75 RICHDALE AVE. (#18) |
| Ellen C. Wolfe | 75 Richdale Avenue #14 |
| Maxwell B. Palmer | 23 Cambridge Terrace #2 |
| Rebecca W. Listfield | 4 Cambridge Terrace #2 |
| OLIVER RADFORD | 24 CAMBRIDGE TERRACE #1 |
| STEPHEN C. PERRY | 24 CAMBRIDGE TERRACE #1 |
| Elizabeth Stern | 20 Cambridge Terr #1 |
| MARJORIE YATES | 36 UPLAND RD #3 |
| Charlotte Moore | 9 RUTLAND STREET |
| Sally Lutz | 75 Richdale Ave. #15 |
| Elizabeth (nee Kissinger) Vandermark | 33 Cambridge Terrace |
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| Name | Address |
| --- | --- |
| PROF ER OWEN | 19 Cambridge Terrace |

Prof. ER Owen 19 Cambridge Ter Unit 2

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| Name | Address |
|---|---|
| Menachem Stern<br>Menachem Stern | 20 Cambridge Ter.<br>Apt. #1, Cambridge<br>02140 |

Richdale Avenue Zoning Amendment Petition

| Name | Address |
| --- | --- |
| Arlene A Miller | 75 Richdale Ave, Unit 10 Cambridge, MA 02140 |
| TABITHA VEVERS | 75 RICHDALE AVE #4 CAMBRIDGE MA 02140 |
| KAREN P. HULL | 75 Richdale Ave. #5 Cambridge, MA 02140 |
| LISE MOTHERWELL | 195 UPLAND RD CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140 |
| ROBERTA S STEINBERG | 195 UPLAND RD CAMBRIDGE MA 02140 |
| Lucy Arrington | 189 Upland Cambridge MA 02140 |
| Marjorie SAGAN | 75 Richdale # 7 cambridge MA 02140 |
| ELIZABETH MOORE MORIARTY | 75 Richdale Ave # 17 Cambridge MA 02140 |
| Henry R Vandermark | 33 Cambridge Terrace Cambridge MA 02140 |
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Richdale Avenue Zoning Amendment Petition

| Name | Address |
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| Jeff Listfield | 4 Cambridge Terrace #2 |
| Lindsey Dollard | 4 Cambridge Terrace #3 |
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