

# Whitehead

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Wed 3/25/2015 1:36 PM

City Clerk Agenda

To: Maher, David <dmaher@cambridgema.gov>; Benzan, Dennis <dbenzan@cambridgema.gov>; Toomey, Tim <ttoomey@CambridgeMA.GOV>; Simmons, Denise <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov>; Cheung, Leland <lcheung@cambridgema.gov>; Carlone, Dennis <dcarlone@cambridgema.gov>; Mazen, Nadeem <nmazen@cambridgema.gov>; Kelley, Craig <ckelley@cambridgema.gov>; McGovern, Marc <mmcGovern@cambridgema.gov>;

Cc: Lopez, Donna <dlopez@cambridgema.gov>; Crane, Paula <pcrane@cambridgema.gov>;

 1 attachment

Whitehead Petition Letter.pdf;

Dear Mayor Maher and Members of the Council,

First off, thanks for all your time and attention to the Whitehead Petition. All of us appreciate it I assure you. Attached is the Letter Agreement which I promised to submit as part of the Petition itself. It includes the Design Narrative which I sent to the Ordinance Committee some time ago.

We very much look forward to Monday night with the hope that the Council will ordain the Petition. As always, feel free to call on me if you have any questions.

All the best,

Richard McKinnon  
On behalf of  
The Whitehead Institute

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March 25, 2015

Mayor David P. Maher and Cambridge City Council  
City Hall  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Maher and Members of the Council,

On behalf of The Whitehead Institute, I am pleased to submit this Letter which is intended to accompany The Whitehead Petition which is before you on March 30, 2015. The ordinance committee has sent a FAVORABLE recommendation to The Council along with the request that the petition be ordained on that evening.

Adoption of the petition would be a milestone allowing Whitehead to proceed with its internal planning and other work necessary to move forward with a specific development proposal under the special permit process provided in the zoning, and to ask the Council for release of the existing Open Space Covenant on the plaza. Assuming all the necessary approvals are obtained and Whitehead is able to proceed with the project, Whitehead AGREES to the following:

- Bringing the building edge to the street line of Main Street, in line with our neighbors.
- Supporting a vibrant environment for creative interaction among the scientific, academic and other parts of the Kendall Square community.
- Design Review under the Project Review Special Permit process.
- Minimizing parking and relying more on bicycles, transit and walking.
- A \$10 per square foot Community Fund.
- Compliance with Inclusionary Zoning through housing incentive contributions, even though not otherwise required in the MXD District. We further agree that the amount PSF will not be the amount at the time of ordination. Rather we will be subject to the amount PSF at a future date when a Special Permit is issued by the Planning Board.
- The lighting on the ground floor of the building will be intended to give the public space a warm and welcome feeling at night, and to highlight the openness of the retail and lobby spaces and make them inviting day and night. The lighting will be designed to complement, rather than detract from, the architecture of the façade and lobby, reinforcing the visual transparency between the exterior and interior zones. The main

purpose of the lighting around the building perimeter will be to provide a sense of comfort and safety for the pedestrians walking on the sidewalks adjacent to the building. Street light poles as well as lighting filtering through the building glazing will enhance the pedestrian experience and sense of security along the street edge. The Architect will work with a lighting consultant to achieve these goals once the building design effort is initiated.

- Whitehead's Design Narrative/Zoning Guidelines, dated February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, attached, shall be considered a part of this Letter.
- We also recognize the absolutely central issue of open space, which was the subject of considerable discussion at both the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board hearings and is extensively addressed in the Planning Board recommendation. As the Planning Board states, and we agree, the intersection of Main Street and Galileo Galilei Way is an important location for public space as a gateway into the heart of Kendall Square. Furthermore, high quality space that is accessible and useful to the public at ground level is important, even if that space might be covered, or partially or fully enclosed. We will have more definitive ideas at the time we come to the Council for a vote to release the Open Space Covenant now in place for the existing plaza. Between now and then, we will continue the dialogue on open space and specifically:
  - Meet with members of the Council.
  - Meet with the Community Development Department.
  - Meet with the East Cambridge Planning Team
  - Meet with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

As you know, we intend to locate some open space on our lot in the vicinity of the entrance to the Broad and the pedestrian path from the north in order to strengthen these connections. We will also participate in the planning and implementation of the Grand Junction multi use path.

- The Council has expressed a genuine interest in knowing our thinking at this time about the ground floor, including the lobby for Whitehead, retail space and perhaps other community space. We are anxious to tell the Council as much as we are able to at this point. We know the Council is aware that in the future we will be going before the East Cambridge Planning Team and the CRA, each for Design Consultation. Further, we have agreed to comply with the Planning Board's Special Permit provisions, including formal Design Review. That said, here is our thinking today:

We expect that Whitehead's own lobby will be in the vicinity of 2000 SF. As we plan the retail and publicly accessible portions of the ground floor, we recognize the desirability of having multiple distinct spaces providing activity for the neighborhood, whether public space or retail, rather than one large retail space. The family owned

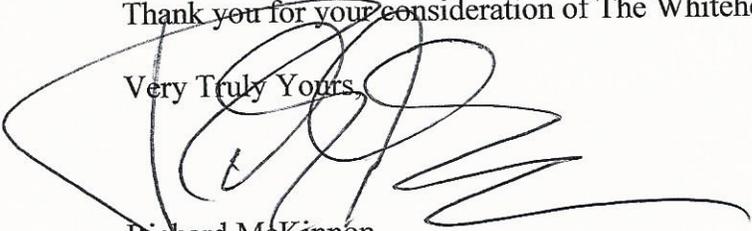
restaurant now servicing the Institute might be given a more visible access, and we are mindful of the Council's call for retail affordability.

As stated in our Design Narrative/Zoning Guidelines, attached, the ground-level expression should promote a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, and be highly visible through the use of ground level transparency. Proper proportioning and relation to human scale at the ground level are important strategies in providing a sense of comfort. Opportunities may also be available to provide moments of engagement between the pedestrians and the building itself. For example, seating and interaction spaces could potentially be integrated into building's façade, creating another level of engagement as a community destination.

- The Whitehead Institute has a long tradition of hiring Cambridge residents. We are pleased to report that 251 of our employees are residents. We wish to continue and expand that trend and will work with the City of Cambridge and our neighbors to highlight job openings as they materialize.
- The Whitehead Institute also provides scholarships to Cambridge students who come to our science programs. These are intended for applicants with financial need so that they may participate fully.

Thank you for your consideration of The Whitehead Petition.

Very Truly Yours,



Richard McKinnon  
On behalf of The Whitehead Institute

## MEMORANDUM

*Date* 02/05/2015  
*To* Cambridge City Council  
*From* Andy Pecora, LEED BD+C  
*Re* Whitehead Institute Zoning Petition  
Design Narrative/Zoning Guidelines

In addressing the zoning implications for the Whitehead Institute proposed addition, our process began with the review of the K2 Final Report and K2 Design Guidelines. These important documents provide a clear framework for the future, based on detailed analysis and comprehensive planning efforts. The issues discussed within both of these documents are critical in creating a successful urban experience and provide a strong basis for design. The guidelines specifically establish a comprehensive strategy to address the desired character and spirit of the neighborhood. The specific items influencing our initial design are as follows:

- Environmental Quality
- Street Activity
- Universal Access
- Architectural Identity/Visual Interest
- Integrated Rooftops
- Retail/Mixed-use Ground Floors
- Open, public space

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Additionally, through the zoning petition process and initial talks with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, we have received concerns regarding certain elements of the proposed conceptual design. Replacement of existing open space, response to the existing Broad Institute entrance, providing a varied retail experience, aesthetic character, and the creation of a truly public space are among a few of the considerations we will be investigating. The following narrative is directed at addressing and responding to these initial concerns.

### **Replacement of Existing Open Space**

The Whitehead Institute addition is proposed for construction in front of their existing building, located at 9 Cambridge Center, on what is currently a raised outdoor plaza. The proposed building edge along Main Street will be pulled forward, in line and in context with its neighbors, to reinforce a cohesive street wall

condition and positive pedestrian experience. The first two levels of the proposed addition will be primarily dedicated to public functions, following guidelines related to "street activity" set forth in the K2 Design Guidelines. This newly designed "urban living room" will be more than just a lobby. It will instead provide the neighborhood with service/restaurant/retail opportunities aimed at supporting the Kendall Square users at different times of the day throughout the year. The objective of this space will be to foster an engaging street edge and create a vibrant public space, as well as to provide the Whitehead Institute with a new civic face and front entrance.

Visual transparency, universal access, and a diverse selection of retail/service uses are all paramount in creating a successful ground-level urban experience. New retail spaces located along the sidewalk edge will aim to engage pedestrians, while the existing food service operation will be extended and highlighted to help further animate the interior space. The strategic use of glazing will enable visual connections between exterior and interior zones, while taking advantage of a south-facing orientation that affords us the opportunity to create appealing spaces which can be activated throughout the year.

Additionally, this proposal is obligated to carefully respond to direct contextual cues. The location of the existing Broad Institute entrance and the adjacent existing green seating area is such a cue. In this instance, the building envelope may afford some amount of relief along the street edge to acknowledge these existing spaces. This response provides a very exciting opportunity to create an interesting, site-specific moment within a rather consistent street wall; a civic notch, a seating area within a great space.

The design of this space will reflect the objectives of being a welcoming and accessible destination within the Kendall Square neighborhood. The retail and interior spaces must be well lit, highly visible, inviting and comfortable. Necessary elevation changes to access the existing building (level 1 is roughly +4'-0" above grade) will occur further into the building, allowing the new ground floor to be directly accessible from the streetscape. The secured entry for the Institute's lobby functions will be located toward the rear of the space, such that a majority of the "urban living room" is accessible to the public. Overall, the objective is to generate a successful public moment within the neighborhood fabric, while simultaneously functioning as the Whitehead's Institutional "front porch."

### **Expression of Architecture**

The location for the proposed Whitehead Institute addition is also very prominent along the Kendall Square periphery. The site occupies the corner of Main Street and Galileo Galilei Way, acting as a significant node and gateway into the Kendall Square district. This highly visible site demands an architectural aesthetic that is interesting and expressive of the innovative activities occurring within, yet respectful of neighborhood context.

As previously stated, the ground-level expression should promote a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, and be highly visible through the use of ground-level transparency. Proper proportioning and relation to human scale at the ground level are important strategies in providing a sense of comfort. Opportunities may be available to provide moments of engagement between the pedestrians and the building itself. For example, seating and interaction spaces could potentially be integrated into the building's facade, creating another level of engagement as a community destination.

As a gateway building, the proposed addition will need to be distinct and embracing. Appropriate selection of materials and formal expression will be key to achieving these intentions. By integrating the penthouse volume into the top of the building, additional height will be incorporated into the building facade along Main Street. Formally, this will help signify entrance and will forge a stronger connection to the adjacent street wall.

While striving to develop a sense of architectural diversity and interest within the district, the addition must also establish some relation with the original building and its neighbors. Contextual datum lines, both from the original building and adjacent structures, should be continued to produce a unified street wall experience. Furthermore, materials similar and/or complementary to those in the original building will help to integrate the addition with the existing structure in order to create a cohesive identity. They will also provide a warm offset to the principal material, which is expected to be glass.