



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Community Development

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To: Ordinance Committee
From: CDD Staff
Date: October 13, 2011
Re: **Runkel, et al. Zoning Petition (Bellis Circle)**

Update

Following the previous discussion at the Ordinance Committee, the data on the following page have been assembled. These figures relate to:

- Characteristics of prior residential projects in the area
- Buildout potential of the petition area under various zoning alternatives

Analysis

The example projects include two projects that have been regarded as fitting relatively well into the neighborhood context – the townhouses at 39 Bellis Circle and the “Portland Stone Ware” site project on Pemberton Street. The other example, at 61-69 Bolton Street (which has been permitted and is currently under construction), is the project that petitioners have cited as part of their motivation for the proposed rezoning.

The analysis looks at floor area density (represented as Floor Area Ratio or FAR) as well as dwelling unit density (represented as Lot Area per Dwelling Unit). In terms of floor area, the previous Bellis Circle and Pemberton Street townhouse projects were built to an FAR of about 1.0, which is comparable to the FAR allowed under Residence C-1 regulations after the inclusionary housing bonus is calculated. In terms of dwelling unit density, both projects have a unit density that would be allowed in a Residence C district but not allowed in a Residence B district.

There are many other factors to consider in evaluating how well a project fits with the neighborhood context. The petitioners have noted that building heights are a significant issue, and the height limit would be reduced to 35’ with a Residence C-1, C, or B designation. There are also yard setbacks, required open space and other design standards, which are progressively more restrictive in C-1, C, and B districts. In addition, for any significant development projects in Residence B, C, C-1 or C-1A districts, design review by the Planning Board would most likely be required under the townhouse or multifamily special permit regulations.

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Councillor Seidel
Mayor Maher
Vice Mayor Davis

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Assistant City Manager for Community Development, the Commissioner of Public Works, the City Engineer, the Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation and the City Solicitor to provide the following information and material to the Ordinance Committee no later than November 21, 2011:

1. Answers from the City Solicitor as to 1) Whether the Zoning Ordinance can provide for a Special Permit for development of basement units that requires review and approval by the City Engineer of the appropriateness of the site with regard to the level of risk of overland flooding such that without said approval no special permit will be issued; and 2) Whether the special permit can also provide that the landlord must provide flood insurance that covers flood damage to the tenants' possessions.
2. Information from the City Solicitor, Assistant City Manager for Community Development and the Director of the Traffic Parking and Transportation Department as to the legality and feasibility of some mechanism that would prevent additional on-street parking demand from the new basement unit by prohibiting anyone in the newly created units from receiving resident parking permits (e.g., deed restriction, lease requirement, whatever method Boston is using, etc.).
3. Language for amendments to the current proposed amendments to accomplish the following:
 - a. Authority of City Engineer to reject petition based on his estimation of the danger of overland flooding;
 - b. No resident parking permits for these new units
 - c. Providing that this special permit program is a pilot program requiring a review and report to the City Council with recommendations regarding continuation six months prior to the expiration date.