

15 December 2014 (Revised for Approval by the PB) [**Bold**]

To **Chairman Michael Battista and Members of the Planning Board**
Town of Belmont
Via Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Director

From **Peter Quinn AIA**

RE **Response to Planning Board and CSNA Comments**
Cushing Village - Belmont

On behalf of Smith Legacy Partners LLC, we are responding to comments and questions posed by Planning Board members at the Board Meeting on 6 November and by the CSNA in their 6 Nov Memo regarding proposed changes to Cushing Village.

General Comments

It has always been understood that requests for changes will be made to the Cushing Village Project Plans as they advance into a constructible set of plans. The primary purpose of the Project Plans (as defined in the Special Permit decision) was to provide adequate information to the Planning Board and the public as to the scale and mass of the structures and to provide a meaningful baseline for the Planning Board's grant of the discretionary special permit. The evolutionary development of building plans from such conceptual design to actual building drawings inevitably leads to minor modifications that remain consistent with the scale and mass of the Project Plans. Indeed such a mechanism is indicated in Paragraph XII.1.B: "No modification of the approved Project Plans may be made without the approval of the Board...". Such a mechanism serves the interest of all parties and we come forward with these request only wishing to improve, make more buildable, and otherwise positively progress the project.

We therefore have submitted these change requests, having made every attempt we could to keep the original design intent intact, to improve and/or to modify the development designs for design, aesthetics and constructability reasons.

We follow with responses to specific comments of the Cushing Square Neighborhood Association Memo, dated 6 November 2014, which was presented at the Planning Board meeting on November 6, 2014.

HYLAND RESPONSES

1. Changes to Roof Lines/Parapet: The concerns of CSNA have resulted in restoration of the mansard parapet and elimination of the previously proposed railings. We have designed an adjustment to the way the mansard meets the windows of the mansard level and how it is integrated into the roof structure. We maintain the quality of the roof line but with a significantly more appropriate construction methodology.
2. Mansard Windows. The windows in the mansard are still proposed as projected features, as intended. The approved scheme wherein the windows on the mansard level were projected approximately 1-ft beyond the building wall line created an overly-heavy treatment that wasn't entirely obvious in the renderings. The projected bays in the approved scheme created an elaborate cornice which together with the window projection was contributing to a top heavy façade. This design, upon further study, was out of proportion with the balance of the building. Therefore we propose to lighten the overall effect of the mansard in relation to its base. As a positive neighborhood consequence, the reduction in the projection of the mansard bays reduces the building massing.
3. Projected Bay Materials. The corner multistory bays were originally drawn as stucco without detail. The proposed bay panel treatment is more typical of this residential style and as noted it allows us to introduce detail trim at these points, giving a better sense of scale. As a general comment, the use of fiber cement has always been proposed for this building was clearly indicated in the approved Project Plans. It is a durable, non-decaying product with a high level of industry acceptability. Where we have proposed to substitute fiber cement for the stucco, we believe provides an enhancement as noted above.
4. Full Scale Mock-up. As mentioned, we will provide a full scaled mock-up of the exterior materials for Planning Board review and approval. The specific materials, and ultimately Planning Board review of same, is a detail that follows in the development of the definitive building plans per Section 12(c)(i) of the Special Permit decision.
5. Building Area. We have not intended to increase the building area except perhaps nominally for the increase in the area of the Roof Rooms (Hyland and Winslow) indicated in the presentation. All other changes in the Hyland are intended to be a net-zero floor area change. We believe a change in building area resulting from the Roof Deck support area increases is insignificant change in overall building area and would only serve to enhance the viability of the project. It is certainly not a net gain in rentable area. The forthcoming Definitive Plans will indicate compliance with the

original Project Plans as to Building Area with the exception of the increase for the roof deck support. We are providing a comparative outline that compares the silhouette of the approved Hyland with the proposed changes (see attached). As one can see, the changes are minimal and include some decreases. These changes are generally necessary for headroom clearance, fire and safety protections, mechanical access, and handicap access. They are clearly consistent with the Project Plans in evolution to full building plans.

MUNICIPAL ACCESS COMMENTS

1. As noted in our presentation, we are providing a larger scale plan of the proposed relocation of the pedestrian access to the public areas. Please note that no changes are proposed to the vehicular entrances or vehicular travel paths. There is no loss of grade-level parking or change to the driveway footprint. The proposed change was precipitated to provide easier handicapped access and more direct access to the garage from Trapelo Road for shoppers in the Square who are not necessarily shopping at Cushing Village.

VENTING

1. **SLP has rescinded its requested for exterior wall venting**

ELEVATION CHANGES/WINSLOW

1. As with the Hyland, we are showing a comparative outline for the Winslow silhouette. As noted the elevator tower should have been higher in the approved Project Plans.
2. Most of the CSNA statements concerning this part are a matter of design opinion. We ask all to keep in mind that typically interior layouts are not included within the Special Permitting applications because these layouts are often generated later. This was the case with our permitting process, seeing the Town has no specific requirement for their inclusion. As the unit layout plans are developed, shifts and changes to window openings are necessary and inevitable.
3. **Applicant has revised the Horne Road façade of the Pomona Building per discussions with the PB (adding two windows consistent with the building's window pattern)**