



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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January 21, 2010

Rev. Holly Antolini, Rector
Saint James's Episcopal Church
1991 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

Re: Case 2445, 1991 Massachusetts Avenue

Dear Rev. Antolini,

On January 7, 2010, the Cambridge Historical Commission approved in principle Saint James's Episcopal Church's application for demolition of the parish house, minister's study, and classroom wing and construction of a new parish house/residential condominium on the Church premises as proposed by Oaktree Development. The Commission's decision grants a conditional approval for the general location and size of the proposed new building, but with certain conditions and further review of the following matters.

1. Financial rationale. The compelling public interest in allowing this project to proceed is the financial support that has been promised to maintain St. James's historic church building. Please provide further information outlining a) the current and proposed changes in ownership of the current Church property, and b) the financial arrangements between St. James's Church and Oaktree, including income and expenses projected over time.
2. Commitment to maintain the historic church building. Please explain the current projected capital needs of the historic church building and submit a commitment by St. James's Church and/or the Episcopal Diocese that the capital needs as well as the needed expenses of regular maintenance of the historic church building will continue to be met, detailing in reasonable detail the sources for funding such commitments.
3. Commitment to public access. Please provide a commitment by St. James's Church and/or the Episcopal Diocese to assure public access to the proposed garden, subject to the reasonable needs of the abutters for decorum and maintenance of order. Please confirm that ownership of the garden will continue to be held by St. James's and/or the Diocese and summarize any special rights proposed for owners or tenants of the other condominium units.
4. Landscape plan. Please provide a landscape master plan for the entire property, including the new garden design, for approval by the Historical Commission at a future public hearing.

5. Exterior appearance. The Commission understands that the exterior of the new building will continue to evolve as the proponents address the concerns of the preservation agencies, the Planning Board, and the public, and that final approval may not be possible in the immediate future. However, a materials palette can be reviewed at the Commission's next meeting on February 4, 2010.

We understand that the issues involved in the project are complex, and that it may take some time to resolve their details. Please be assured that the Commission supports the goal of this project to assure the continued maintenance of the historic St. James's Church building in good repair in an appropriate urban setting. Feel free to call me or Sarah Burks if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Sullivan
Executive Director

cc: Senior Warden, St. James's Episcopal Church
Gwen Noyes, Oaktree Development
Paul Holtz, Massachusetts Historical Commission
Les Barber, Cambridge Planning Board