



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
TOWN HALL WELLESLEY, MA 02181

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ZBA 87-16

Petition of Wellplay Associates Limited Partnership  
380-384 Washington Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Permit Granting Authority and the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, February 19, 1987 at 8 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Town Hall (Conference Room E), 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Ma. on the petition of WELLPLAY ASSOCIATES LIMITED PARTNERSHIP requesting a variance and a Special Permit pursuant to Sections XXIIA, XXV, XXIV-D of the Zoning Bylaw to permit retention and restoration of the existing marquee located on the existing building located at 380-384 WASHINGTON STREET, known as the Wellesley Community Playhouse, which marquee will provide signage for the proposed development at the corner of WASHINGTON STREET, FOREST STREET and LAUREL AVENUE to be known as PLAYHOUSE SQUARE. Said property is located in a Business District and a Business A District.

On January 23, 1987 the petitioner requested a hearing before this Board and thereafter due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Presenting the case at the hearing was James Koningisor, Senior Vice President of First Investments Co., who stated that they wish to retain the existing marquee except for minor changes. "Playhouse" letters would be removed from the top of the sign, which would be painted and restored. Signage would match the other building which is proposed to be constructed as part of "Playhouse Square". It was felt that the marquee was an integral part of the heritage of the building. Mr. Koningisor also spoke to the hearing concerning the two related cases, ZBA 87-15 and ZBA 87-17.

Jack Brady, 100 Fairbanks Avenue, presented old photos indicating that the original building constructed in 1922 did not have a marquee. He is opposed to the retention of the marquee.

Statement of Facts

The property in question is located at 380-384 Washington Street on the corner of Laurel Avenue, in a Business and Business A District, containing 12,763 square feet of land. It is owned by Wellplay Associates Limited Partnership. A building known as the Wellesley Community Playhouse exists on the lot known as Parcel A. The building will constitute part of the project known as "Playhouse Square" which will also encompass the adjacent lot. See ZBA 87-15 and ZBA 87-17 for related cases.

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A portion of the existing building at 380-384 Washington Street will be changed from a theater to retail and office space and possibly a restaurant.

The petitioner wishes to retain the existing marquee on the building at 380-384 Washington Street to provide signage for the proposed development. The marquee was used for many years in conjunction with the Wellesley Community Playhouse, a movie theater which was recently closed. A Special Permit and a variance are requested to retain and restore the existing marquee to provide signage for "Playhouse Square".

The marquee is approximately 13 feet high. It is a three-sided structure jutting out towards Washington Street over the main entrance to the building. The two angled side panels are approximately 11'8" by 4'. The center panel is approximately 9' by 3.5'. The center panel letters would not change but the side panels will be changed from time to time to identify tenants of "Playhouse Square". The existing structure and metal frame of the marquee will be retained and painted to match the cream trim color of the building. The signage panel will be formed by inseting a wood panel covered by canvas. The canvas will be emerald green with cream colored letters; thus it will match both the material and color of the individual store signs on both the existing Playhouse and the new building. The existing 18" high "Playhouse" letters will be removed. The existing flower box on the marquee will be restored and used for plantings, consistent with the original design of the marquee. Illumination will be external, designed to match lighting used elsewhere.

The following plans were submitted, drawn by Gauchat Architects, Inc., Cambridge, Ma.: Plan 1, Site Location; Plan 3, Proposed Overall Site Plan; Plan 15, Plan 17, Building Elevations, dated 12/1/86, revised 1/7/87. Plan 20, Marquee Elevations, dated 1/14/87 was revised on 2/5/87 to reflect recommendations of the Design Review Board concerning side elevations. Photos were also submitted.

The Design Review Board reviewed preliminary plans on January 29, 1987 and on February 12 reviewed and approved modifications as presented.

The Planning Board on February 5, 1987 reviewed the petition and voted unanimously... "to strongly oppose the granting of this variance request. It does not appear that the prerequisite conditions for the granting of a variance are present. The Planning Board does not see the need for continuing the use of the marquee and understands that there is proposed to be no public entrance to the building at this location. The Washington Street entrance to the building will be closed off and replaced by a display window. The marquee provides some shelter from the weather and is used as a "waiting" area for the bus; consequently its retention can be expected to aggravate the present traffic problem as cars stop at this location to drop off or pick up passengers."...

Mr. Koningisor, at the Public Hearing on February 19th, stated that although the existing main entrance on Washington Street had originally been planned to be eliminated, they now wish to retain the public entrance under the marquee.

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Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the evidence presented. It is the opinion of this Authority that the existing marquee structure at 380-384 Washington Street is a unique structure that has been an integral part of the building for many years. The entire building is a non-conforming structure and the marquee is a part of the building. Therefore, the marquee structure can be allowed to exist by right. We note that the reason the developer chose to retain the existing building and marquee was in response to citizen pressure.

The lettering proposed on the marquee structure does constitute a sign which does not meet the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw and a variance is therefore needed to allow this lettering.

It is the opinion of this Authority that the letters on the marquee constitute a unique situation affecting this non-conforming structure that was formerly a theater, and that desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent and purpose of the Zoning Bylaw.

Therefore, a Special Permit and variance pursuant to Sections XXIIA, Section XXV and Section XXIV-D of the Zoning Bylaw are granted to allow lettering on the existing marquee at 380-384 Washington Street, subject to the following conditions:

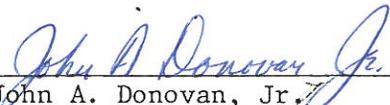
1. The center panel must remain as designed, by Gauchat Architects Inc.
2. The side panels can function as a directory sign and can be changed to reflect the tenants of "Playhouse Square".

The Building Inspector is hereby authorized to issue a permit for the sign upon his receipt and approval of an application.

APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION, IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A, SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

cc: Planning Board  
Inspector of Buildings

mam

  
John A. Donovan, Jr.

  
William E. Polletta

  
Sumner H. Babcock

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