

City of Cambridge

Central Square Redevelopment LLC

Application for Special Permits

**544-550 Massachusetts Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02139**

July 20, 2021

544-550 Mass Ave - Submittal Index

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Notes & Reports to Application - See Table of Contents Pg 2 of section



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION • COVER SHEET

In accordance with the requirements of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits for the premises indicated below.

Location of Premises:	544 - 550 Massachusetts Avenue		
Zoning District:	Business B Zone/CSQ Overlay		
Applicant Name:	Central Square Redevelopment LLC Attn: Clifford Schorer		
Applicant Address:	44 Bearfoot Road, Northborough, MA 01532		
Contact Information:	508-726-5445	cschorer@gmail.com	none
	Telephone #	Email Address	Fax #

List all requested special permit(s) (with reference to zoning section numbers) below. *Note that the Applicant is responsible for seeking all necessary special permits for the project. A special permit cannot be granted if it is not specifically requested in the Application.*

20.304.6 3. (a) and (b) Parking and Loading Requirements, as applicable
20.304.2 Building Height Limitations
20.304.3 Floor Area Ratio Limitation
Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (presently before BZA continued pending Planning)
20.304.3.6 FAR Exemption for Rooftop Spaces
Section 2 Exemption of basement GFA from calculation of GFA
20.304.4.1 Setback & 20.304.4.2 Open Space (use C-3 Section 5.28.1.c)

List all submitted materials (include document titles and volume numbers where applicable) below.

Cover Pages, Project Plans, Project Narrative, Summary of Community Meetings and suggestions incorporated. Plans set includes: Cover Sheet, Basement Plan, Ground Floor Plan, Second Floor Plan, Elevations, Dimensional Form, Ownership affidavit, Copy of BZA Application and attachments. BZA-017219-2019

Signature of Applicant: Cliff Schorer

For the Planning Board, this application has been received by the Community Development Department (CDD) on the date specified below:

Date

Signature of CDD Staff

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue					April 2021
Owner: Central Square Redevelopment LLC, Attn: Clifford Schorer					
Architect: Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.					
DIMENSIONAL FORM					
	Existing	Allowed or Required		Proposed	
		Bus B	CSQ Overlay		
Lot Area (sf)	4,391 <small>note 1</small>	None	None	No Change	
Lot Width (ft)	49.98 <small>note 1</small>	None	None	No Change	
Gross Floor Area (sf)	7,879 <small>note 1</small>			20,082	
Residential Base	0	13,173	17,564 <small>note 2</small>	16,989 <small>note 4</small>	
Non-Residential Base	7,879	12,075		2,153 <small>note 5</small>	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	N/A		22,833 <small>note 3</small>		
Total Floor Area Ratio	0.56				
Residential Base	0	3.0	4.0	3.87 <small>note 6</small>	
Non-Residential Base	0.56	2.75		0.49 <small>note 6</small>	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus			+ 30%	4.57	
Total Dwelling Units	0		20	29	
Base Units	N/A	15			
Inclusionary Bonus Units	N/A		5		
Base Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A	300sf/unit		151sf/unit	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A				
Building Height (ft)	± 42	80	55	69.5	
Front yard setback (ft)	0	0	0	No Change	
Side yard setback (ft)	0	0	0	No Change	
	5/8	0	0	0	
Rear yard setback (ft)	0	0	0	No Change	
Open Space (% of lot area)	0	None	None	33	
Private Open Space	0	None	None	1,450	
Permeable Open Space	0	None	None	No Change	
Other Open Space	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Change	
Off-Street parking spaces	0	24		No Change	
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	32		30	
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	5		No Change	
Loading Bays	0			No Change	
Notes:					
1	From Cambridge Property Database				
2	Lot area X 4.0				
3	Lot area X 4.0 + 30%				
4	Gross square footage of residential floors being proposed				
5	Gross square footage of restaurant space, other retail space not included as it is less than 1,500sf				
6	20.304.3.4 allows the Planning Board to increase the allowed FAR "provided that the maximum FAR permitted for non-residential uses on a lot shall not exceed the limitation on non-residential FAR applicable in the base zoning district and that the proposed FAR of all non-residential uses on the lot shall not exceed the proposed FAR of all residential uses on the lot."				

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge - FAR Calculation

Lot Area:		4,391	sf		
Exist. Bldg area/City Database		7,879	sf		
<u>Code Ref.</u>	<u>Code Req.</u>	<u>Calculation</u>	<u>Resultant FAR</u>	<u>Existing FAR</u>	
5.33, Table 3	2.75/3.0			0.56	
20.304.3	4.00 by SP	17,564 sf	4		
11.203.5	+ 30%	22,833 sf	5.2		
20.304.6.3(b)(i)	90%	20,550 sf	4.68		

Notes: Lot Area 4,391.00

11.203.5 Relaxation of Dimensional Requirements for Inclusionary Housing Projects.
 (a) The Gross Floor Area permitted by the applicable zoning may be increased by thirty percent (30%), as long as such additional Gross Floor Area is used for residential uses
 4,391sf Lot size x 4 = 17,564gsf
 17,564sf + 30% = 22,833gsf (allowed)

(b) The number of dwelling units permitted by the applicable zoning through rules for minimum lot area per dwelling unit or other applicable rules may be increased by thirty percent (30%).
 4,391sf/300 = 15 units (14.64) 30% increase = 20 units (19.5)

20.300 - CENTRAL SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT

20.304.3	Floor Area Ratio Limitation:				
	4. Additional FAR for Residential Uses: Upon issuance of a special permit, the Planning Board may increase the allowed FAR on any lot or portion of a lot located within the Business B (BB) portion of the Central Square Overlay District to a total FAR of 4.00 for all non-residential and residential uses combined, 4,391 sf Lot size x 4 = 17,564sf				
	5. FAR exemption for Residential Balconies				
	6. FAR Exemption for Rooftop Spaces				
	7. FAR Exemption for Ground Floor Retail: In the Business B district only, retail spaces of 1,500 square feet or less shall be excluded from the calculation of floor area ratio. The existing restaurant 1st flr: 2,321gsf The proposed restaurant 1st flr: 2,168gsf Existing Teddy's 1st flr: 1,412gsf The proposed retail 1st flr: 995gsf				
20.304.6.3	Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements (b),(i) The total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot; 22,833gsf x 0.9 = 20,550 The proposed development on the site: 19,424gsf				

<u>Building Height</u>					
<u>Code Ref.</u>	<u>Code Req.</u>				
5.33, Table 3	80'				
20.304.2.1	55'				
20.304.2.2(a)	80' by SP				
Notes:					
20.304.2.1	As of Right Height Limitations. The maximum height of any building shall be fifty-five (55) feet except as further limited below: <i>(no relevant exceptions below)</i>				
20.304.2.2(a)	The maximum allowable height in the Central Square Overlay District may be increased up to eighty (80) feet upon issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board provided that those portions in excess of sixty (60) feet are set back from the street line at least ten (10) feet and that those portions are also set back from one or more forty-five degree (45°) bulk control planes beginning sixty (60) feet above any streetline in the district and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.				

Proposed Building gross sf																		
Floor	Retail	Restaurant (+Kitchen & Toilets)	Restaurant (Storage)	Mech.	Circulat.	Unit GSF						Deck	Community Space			Total Proposed GSF/Floor	GSF Excluded from FAR	Total Permitted GSF/Floor
						1	2	3	4	5	6		Mtg. & WC	Laundry	Bike			
Basement			1719.39	517.38	537.45								192.00	120.22	691.52	3,777.96	3,120.29	657.67
First	995.42	2,168.41			551.54											3,715.37	995.42	2,719.95
Second					635.00	494.00	479.00	529.00	444.00	404.00	456.00					3,441.00	0.00	3,441.00
Third					635.00	494.00	479.00	529.00	444.00	404.00	456.00					3,441.00	0.00	3,441.00
Fourth					672.79	479.00	459.00	509.00	448.00	404.00	456.00					3,427.79	0.00	3,427.79
Fifth					672.79	479.00	459.00	509.00	448.00	404.00	456.00					3,427.79	0.00	3,427.79
Sixth					672.37	473.00	513.00		448.00	404.00	456.00	285.00				3,251.37	285.00	2,966.37
Roof				2,170.79	245.36							503.00				2,919.15	2,919.15	0.00
																27,401.43	7,319.86	20,081.57
																Total allowed FAR		20,550

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA
FAR

15 July 2020 rev. April 2021

Property Information:

Property Class: Retail-Office
 Zoning (unofficial): BB-CSQ
 Map/Lot: 93-74
 Land Area: 4,391sf

Zoning District:

Business B
Central Square Overlay District

20.304.3 Floor Area Ratio Limitation.

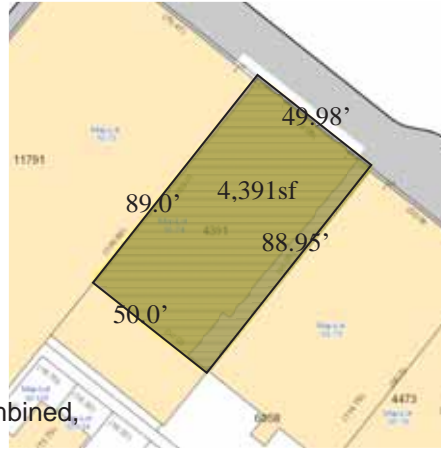
4. Additional FAR for Residential Uses

Upon issuance of a special permit, Planning Board may increase the allowed FAR on any lot or portion of a lot located within the Business B (BB) portion of the Central Square Overlay District to a total FAR of 4.00 for all non-residential and residential uses combined,

4,391sf Lot size x 4 = 17,564sf

KEY to Existing Building	Gross Area	Living Area
FUS – Upper Story, Finished	3,885	3,885
BAS – First Floor	<u>3,994</u>	<u>3,994</u>
Total:	7,879	7,879

GIS map



Massachusetts Ave



7. FAR Exemption for Ground Floor Retail

In the Business B district only, retail spaces of 1,500 square feet or less shall be excluded from the calculation of floor area ratio.

The existing restaurant 1st flr: 2,321gsf

Existing Teddy's 1st flr: 1,412gsf

11.203.5 Relaxation of Dimensional Requirements for Inclusionary Housing Projects.

(a) The Gross Floor Area permitted by the applicable zoning may be increased by thirty percent (30%), as long as such additional Gross Floor Area is used for residential uses

4,391sf Lot size x 4 = 17,564gsf 17,564sf + 30% = 22,833gsf

22,833gsf allowed

Proposed gsf

Basement **658**

1st Flr- Restaurant + Circulat: **2,168**

Flrs 2-3 Floor: 3,441(each) **6,882**

Flrs 4-5-Floor: 3,428(each) **6,856**

Flrs 6th Floor: **2,966**

TOTAL: 20,082

(b) The number of dwelling units permitted by the applicable zoning through rules for minimum lot area per dwelling unit or other applicable rules may be increased by thirty percent (30%).

Table 5-3 Table of Dimensional Requirements – Business Districts: Min. Lot Area for each D.U. in Sq.Ft. - 300
 4,391sf/300 = 15 units (14.64) 30% increase = 20 units (19.5)

20.304.6.3 Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements. (b).(i) & (iii) The total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot; **22,833gsf x 0.9 = 20,550**. “. . . an exemption from parking and loading requirements will result in a building design that is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood and that it is in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in Central Square Development Guidelines.”

20.304.2 Building Height Limitations. Portions of the building in excess of sixty (60) feet high are set back from the street line at least ten feet and are set back from one or more forty-five degree (45°) bulk control planes beginning sixty (60) feet above the street line.

Zoning Code Review – PARKING REQUIREMENT CALCULATIONS
544-550 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140

District: BB and CSQ Overlay District
 Lot Area: 4,391sf

VEHICLES

6.36 *Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements.* Off street parking shall be provided as shown in the following table. Where one entry is given in the table, it is the minimum requirement. All square foot measurements refer to gross floor area unless specified otherwise. The abbreviation “d.u.” means dwelling unit. The abbreviation n/a means not applicable. In cases where a requirement is expressed in number of seats, twenty (20) square feet of public floor area shall equal one seat if there are no fixed seats. One column of the table contains the loading requirement standard applicable under [Section 6.80](#) for each use and two columns refer to the Long-Term Bicycle Parking and Short-Term Bicycle Parking requirements applicable under Section 6.107 for each use.

Land Use	Category	Open Space Res A-1, A-2 Res B	Ind, B-1, Res C-3, C-3A, C- 3B, Off 3-A, 3, Bus B, Ind A- 2, Ind B, Bus B-1, B-2	Loading Facility Category	Long-term Bicycle Parking (6.107.2)	Short-term Bicycle Parking (6.107.3)
6.36.1 Residential Uses						
g.	Multi-family dwelling	n/a	1 per d.u.	n/a	R2	R2
6.36.5 Retail Business and Consumer Service Establishments						
a.	Store for retail sale of merchandise					
	1) Establishment providing convenience goods ¹²			NOT APPLICABLE		
	2) Other retail establishments	n/a	1 per 900sf 1 per 600sf	B	N4	N2
f.	Establishments where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed and where no dancing or entertainment is provided					
	1) Lunchroom, restaurant, cafeteria	n/a	1 per 15 seats ⁹ 1 per 10 seats	C	N3	N1

Parking Table Footnotes

- 9. This requirement shall not apply to accessory employee cafeterias.
- 12. Providing that the establishment is located in a structure also containing nonretail uses, and that no establishment shall exceed two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet of gross floor area.

6.37 *Design of Bicycle Parking spaces. Refer to Section 6.100.*

20.304.6 Parking and Loading Requirements.

- 1. Maximum Parking. Where any of the following listed uses are established in the Central Square Overlay District as of August 1, 2016, the accessory off-street parking for such uses shall be limited by the maximum rates set forth below.
 - (a) Residential Uses (6.36.1), excluding Hotel and Motel (i-2 and i-3): 0.75 space per dwelling unit
 - (e) Retail and Consumer Service Establishments (6.36.5): 0.50 space per 1,000 square feet

VEHICLES PARKING CALCULATION

<u>Zoning Code Requirement</u>	<u>Proposed Design</u>	<u>Number Prk'g Spaces Req'd</u>
Multi-family dwelling .75 per du (20.304.6.1.a)	29	22
Retail Business, <i>not convenience store</i> Community Room / Marxist Reading Room .5 per 1,000sf (20.304.6.1.e)	1,050gsf 150gsf 1,200gsf	1
Establishments where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed and where no dancing or entertainment is provided Lunchroom, restaurant, cafeteria .5 per 1,000sf (20.304.6.1.e)	1,205gsf	<u>1</u>
Total # Parking Spaces Required		24

BICYCLES

6.36 Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements.

Land Use	Category	Open Space Res A-1, A-2 Res B	Ind, B-1, Res C-3, C-3A, C- 3B, Off 3-A, 3, Bus B, Ind A- 2, Ind B, Bus B-1, B-2	Loading Facility Category	Long-term Bicycle Parking (6.107.2)	Short-term Bicycle Parking (6.107.3)
6.36.1 Residential Uses						
g.	Multi-family dwelling	n/a	1 per d.u.	n/a	R2	R2
6.36.5 Retail Business and Consumer Service Establishments						
a.	Store for retail sale of merchandise					
	1) Establishment providing convenience goods ¹²			NOT APPLICABLE		
	2) Other retail establishments	n/a	1 per 900sf 1 per 600sf	B	N4	N2
f.	Establishments where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed and where no dancing or entertainment is provided					
	1) Lunchroom, restaurant, cafeteria	n/a	1 per 15 seats ⁹ 1 per 10 seats	C	N3	N1

6.107 Required Quantities of Bicycle Parking.

6.107.2 Schedule of Long-Term Bicycle Parking Requirements.

Category	Included Residential Uses	Min. Long-Term Bicycle Parking Rate
R2	Townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, trailer park or mobile home park	1.00 space per dwelling unit for the first twenty (20) units in a building; 1.05 spaces per dwelling unit for all units over twenty (20) in a building
Category	Included Non-Residential Uses	Min. Long-Term Bicycle Parking Rate
N3	Hospitals and clinics; veterinary clinics; public safety facilities; restaurants and eating establishments	0.20 space per 1,000 square feet
N4	Retail stores, consumer service uses, commercial recreation and Entertainment	0.10 space per 1,000 square feet

6.107.3 Schedule of Short-Term Bicycle Parking Requirements.

Category	Included Residential Uses	Min. Short-Term Bicycle Parking Rate
R2	Townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, trailer park or mobile home park	0.10 space per dwelling unit on a lot
Category	Included Non-Residential Uses	Min. Short-Term Bicycle Parking Rate
N1	Offices, including: medical, professional, agencies, general, government; radio/television studios, arts/crafts studios	0.30 space per 1,000 square feet
N2	Technical offices, research facilities	0.22 space per 1,000 square feet

BICYCLES PARKING CALCULATION

Zoning Code Requirement	Proposed Design	# Req'd Long-Term	# Req'd Short-Term
Multi-family dwelling	29		
LT= 1 per du for 1 st 20 units		20	
1.05 per du for over 20 units		9.45	
ST= 0.10 space per dwelling unit on a lot		29.45 = 30	29 x .1 = 3
Retail Business, <i>not convenience store</i>	1,050gsf		
Community Room/ Marxist Reading Room	150gsf		
LT= .1sp/1K sf, ST= .22sp/1K sf	1,200gsf	1	1
Lunchroom, restaurant, cafeteria where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed	2,150gsf		
LT= .2sp/1K sf, ST= .3sp/1K sf		1	1
Total # Bicycle Parking Spaces Required		32	5

LOADING

Zoning Code Requirement	Proposed Design	Loading Requirements	Loading Required
Multi-family dwelling- N/A	29 Units	N/A	0
Retail Business, <i>not convenience store</i>	1,200gsf	B	0
Lunchroom, restaurant, cafeteria where alcoholic beverages are sold and consumed	2,150sf	C	0

6.83 Minimum Number of Off Street Loading Bays

- Area at which First Bay is Required
- Loading Facility Category B 10,000gsf
- Loading Facility Category C 10,000gsf

OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVI **Application Date:**

This form is to be completed by the property owner, signed, and submitted with the Special Permit Application:

I hereby authorize the following Applicant: CLIFFORD SCHORER
at the following address: 44 BEARFOOT ROAD, N.BORO
to apply for a special permit for: HEIGHT, FAR, PARKING
on premises located at: 544-550 MASS AVE
for which the record title stands in the name of: CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT
whose address is: 44 BEARFOOT ROAD, N.BORO

by a deed duly recorded in the:
Registry of Deeds of County: MSEX Book: 71483 Page: 536
OR Registry District of the Land Court,
Certificate No.: Book: Page:

Signature of Land Owner (If authorized Trustee, Officer or Agent, so identify)

To be completed by Notary Public:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of _____

The above named _____ personally appeared before me,
on the month, day and year _____ and made oath that the above statement is true.

Notary: _____

My Commission expires: _____

FEE SCHEDULE

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVI **Application Date:**

The Applicant must provide the full fee (by check or money order) with the Special Permit Application. Depending on the nature of the proposed project and the types of Special Permit being sought, the required fee is the larger of the following amounts:

- If the proposed project includes the creation of new or substantially rehabilitated floor area, or a change of use subject to Section 19.20, the fee is ten cents (\$0.10) per square foot of total proposed Gross Floor Area.
- If a Flood Plain Special Permit is being sought as part of the Application, the fee is one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), unless the amount determined above is greater.
- In any case, the minimum fee is one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).

Fee Calculation

New or Substantially Rehabilitated Gross Floor Area (SF): 15055 × \$0.10 = 1505.50

Flood Plain Special Permit Enter \$1,000.00 if applicable:

Other Special Permit Enter \$150.00 if no other fee is applicable: 150.00

TOTAL SPECIAL PERMIT FEE **Enter Larger of the Above Amounts:** 1505.50



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PLANS BY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TRAFFIC, PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

City Department/Office:

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Applicant Name:

For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of Section 19.20 and/or 6.35.1 and/or 5.28.2 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, this is to certify that this Department is in receipt of the application documents submitted to the Planning Board for approval of a Project Review Special Permit for the above referenced development project: (a) an application narrative, (b) small format application plans at 11" x 17" or the equivalent and (c) Certified Traffic Study. The Department understands that the receipt of these documents does not obligate it to take any action related thereto.

Signature of City Department/Office Representative

Date



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PLANS BY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

City Department/Office:

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Applicant Name: CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT LLC

For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of Section 19.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, this is to certify that this Department is in receipt of the application documents submitted to the Planning Board for approval of a Project Review Special Permit for the above referenced development project: (a) an application narrative and (b) small format application plans at 11" x 17" or the equivalent. The Department understands that the receipt of these documents does not obligate it to take any action related thereto.

Signature of City Department/Office Representative

Date



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PLANS BY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TREE ARBORIST

City Department/Office:

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Applicant Name: CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT LLC

For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of Section 4.26, 19.20 or 11.10 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, this is to certify that this Department is in receipt of the application documents submitted to the Planning Board for approval of a MultiFamily, Project Review or Townhouse Special Permit for the above referenced development project: a Tree Study which shall include (a) Tree Survey, (b) Tree Protection Plan and if applicable, (c) Mitigation Plan, twenty one days before the Special Permit application to Community Development.

Signature of City Department/Office Representative

Date



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PLANS BY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE WATER DEPARTMENT

City Department/Office:

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Applicant Name: CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT LLC

For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of Section 19.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, this is to certify that this Department is in receipt of the application documents submitted to the Planning Board for approval of a Project Review Special Permit for the above referenced development project: (a) an application narrative and (b) small format application plans at 11" x 17" or the equivalent. The Department understands that the receipt of these documents does not obligate it to take any action related thereto.

Signature of City Department/Office Representative

Date



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

CERTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF PLANS BY CITY OF CAMBRIDGE LEED SPECIALIST

City Department/Office:

Project Address: 544-550 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Applicant Name: CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT LLC

For the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of Section 22.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, this is to certify that this Department is in receipt of the application documents submitted to the Planning Board for approval of a Special Permit for the above referenced development project: (a) an application narrative, (b) small format application plans at 11" x 17" or the equivalent and (c) completed LEED Project Checklist for the appropriate LEED building standard, accompanying narrative and affidavit. The Department understands that the receipt of these documents does not obligate it to take any action related thereto.

Signature of City Department/Office Representative

Date

Central Square Redevelopment LLC
544-550 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge
Special Permit Application
City of Cambridge Planning Board
July 28, 2020
PROJECT NARRATIVE

Overview

Central Square Redevelopment LLC, the owner, and developer of 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, are pleased to submit this proposal for a Special Permit to the City of Cambridge Planning Board for its consideration.

The project involves the complete building renovation and an extension around an existing building's facade and retailers. The present building, of little character, replaced a historic building on the site in the early 20th Century when the original building collapsed. The property owned by the Adelson family for close to a century has long passed dilapidated, without a complete reconstruction. This plan is designed to make the necessary compromises for an infill lot in Central Square to be improved to the 21st Century while still honoring the legacy of the building, and some of the historic uses. There is nothing of merit to preserve, but the presence of the building's original lower facade, and more importantly the street level retail, will be a comforting reminder of the original building.

This property at the center of Central Square achieves the stated goals of the Central Square Overlay, and is viable. The product of over a year of planning, after a year of environmental remediation to remove leaking an underground petrochemical tank, to remediate the soils, to close the DEP files, and to plan a project which will not load-bear in this area due to the disturbed deep soils.

Owner and Developer – Central Square Redevelopment LLC

Cliff Schorer is the founder and manager of the 501(c)3 Nantucket Homes for People Inc, which built the first affordable home-ownership opportunities for qualified buyers on Nantucket Island, among the most expensive housing markets in America. The project is a successful model of how to harness good intentions, and the overheated market forces to create ownership opportunities protected forever as affordable housing. Mr. Schorer also turned around The Chester, an affordable housing project on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston. He brought it back from bankruptcy, through prudent management, and ensured over 77 units of excellent quality affordable housing for the next 30 years and continuing. Mr. Schorer has also been involved in a number of

historic renovations of buildings by Walter Gropius and McKim, Mead and White. Jim Gaklis is a builder and developer of fine homes and developments, and has projects as diverse as historic mill buildings converted to contemporary use, and new build high-craftsmanship homes in communities including the South End, Charlestown, Nantucket, and the suburbs.

Design Overview

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue's is best positioned to continue the use as retail shops and has an opportunity to make a more significant contribution to the number of smaller studio residential units in the Square. The stock of SRO and studio apartments in the Square area has fallen well below demand, and from an affordability standpoint, these small units are the best solution to those displaced by the loss of lodging house units and the student demand that has put increased pressure on larger, family units in the square. As there are few incentives to create studio units, and even a penalty in terms of the rents that may be charged on smaller units, very few are being created. There was a 12% drop in permit applications for small units with the introduction of the reduced 25% income threshold for Affordable Studios. The projects' plan retains the existing street level mix of spaces, and adds building height, and setback to create 29 new studio apartments. The new upper facade will approximately align with the height of Dance Building next door and with the front step-back and the setback from the rear of the lot will have minimal shadow impact on the surrounding area. The retention of the brick facade, restoring it to the original window lines, and the extension in muted monochromatic finishes will allow the building to unobtrusively set into its infill location without a disruption of the existing streetscapes. The design is a compromise, to preserve the parts of the building that support the present retail and restaurant uses, and to stay well back from the rear lot line with the height increase to prevent the creation of a cavern in the rear yard of the houses on Green St. the compromise is to increase the height and reduce the upper floor massing. The height variance is one of these compromises to create less impact on the abutters.

The street level facade would be dramatically improved. There is presently a rusted steel beam visible that supports the front facade of the building, and the brick is in disrepair. This will be full repointed and encapsulated and there will be an opportunity for less "after-thought" signage on the facade. The plan will also create a fully ADA compliant building which is not presently the case, and will create a secure entrance for the residential units. With the adjacent T Station and the new underground bicycle parking, the project will knit well into the transportation network and is located in a "Walker's Paradise" with all of the local food, shopping, educational and medical services.

The Apartments

The proposed 29-unit apartment building will consist of smaller studios of 280 to 450 square feet, with built in millwork furniture and optimized for small scale living. The units will be located on the 2-6th floor. There will be a common roof deck and equipment located on roof. Although the units will use passive energy plans efficient HVAC, lighting, and cooking to ensure a very low monthly cost and consumption for the future residents.

The Retail

Presently located in the building is Teddy's Shoes that has been in this location for nearly 67 years, and Five Spices, a new Asian Restaurant, which occupies the former Shalimar space and the rear out-massing which contains their kitchen. Also in the building is The Center for Marxist Education which has been located on the second floor for over 40 years. There are also two additional tenants at will on the upper floors. The future plan will include spaces for the two ground floor retailers and a new community room/library space accessible by elevator to accommodate the CME, or other programming, and the apartments.

The Architect - Carr, Lynch & Sandell

The firm was founded in 1977 as a partnership between the late Kevin Lynch, noted MIT professor of Urban Studies and Planning, and the architect/planner/public space designer Stephen Carr. In 1980 it was incorporated Carr, Lynch Associates. James Sandell joined as a principle in 1987 after nearly 20 years of collaborative efforts. In 1999 Jean Hermann became a principle after 13 years as an architect providing technical coordination and guidance for the firm's built projects. Steven Carr retired from the firm in 2001. Peter Martin re-joined the firm in 1999 and became a principle in 2002, providing leadership as an architect/planner/urban designer and exhibit designer. John Hecker rejoined CLS in 2006 as an associate to build on his specific experience in the restoration, preservation, and reuse of historic buildings.

Zoning - Compliance

This project is presently seeking a single Zoning Variance for Dwelling Unit per Lot Area from the by-right 20 units to 29 units to allow for smaller units. This Variance must be approved by the BZA based on hardship. The subsurface conditions due to underground soil conditions, the lot size, and small footprint of the building limit the individual unit sizes to very small sizes. The application for this relief is presently before the BZA, but the applicant has been advised by the BZA to continue that meeting until the Planning Board has the opportunity to fully review the application and then we may return to the BZA with the PB decision and they will consider the application.

Zoning - Compliance - Continued

We have made a presentation to the BZA and the hearing is presently continued. If there are any modifications made during the Planning review and process, it would require a new Variance, so in order to properly sequence the process, the application will proceed first with the Planning Board and then return to the BZA in the future. It is the applicant's hope that necessary consultation between the Boards could be facilitated as the application progresses.

In all other regards, this project conforms to the applicable Cambridge Zoning Ordinance requirements for this Business B District within the Central Square Overlay District, with certain Planning Board special permit relief and other reviews as follows:

1 Planning Board Special Permit relief is requested pursuant to Central Square Overlay District provisions set forth in CZO Section 20.304 as follows:

A Project requires special permit relief pursuant to Sec. 20.304.3.4 to allow for a total FAR of 4.0 for non-residential and residential uses combined, and meets all of the requirements of this provision, as further described below.

Note: In order to grant the Special Permit, this Project requires the Planning Board in accordance with the following sections and to exclude them from floor area calculations:

- (i) ground-floor retail spaces equal to or less than 1,500 square feet – under Sec. 20.304.3.7. Existing Teddy's Shoes, Ground Floor, 1059 square feet.
- (ii) balconies -- exempt under Sec. 20.304.3.5.
- (ii) rooftop spaces – exempt under Sec. 20.304.3.6.

B The project requires special permit relief pursuant to Sec. 20.304.2.2.a to increase the height of the building to 69'6".

C Project requires special permit waiver of parking and loading requirements pursuant to Sec. 20.304.6.3. With no on-site parking, the project will seek special permit waivers based on:

- (i) exemption for parking and loading for uses proposed within the existing building (constructed prior to 1940), and the total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot.

COMPLIANCE - GENERAL SPECIAL PERMIT CRITERIA (SEC. 10.43):

Granting of the Planning Board special permit for the project at 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue will not be to the detriment of the public interest for the reasons described here:

(a) The requirements of the Ordinance can and will be met. This project conforms with the Ordinance requirements in all respects except as to those elements that are eligible for special permit relief or are subject to a requirement for a BZA variance as Dwelling Unit per Lot Area, described above.

(b) Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress will not cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character. This project, located one block from the MBTA Central Square train station and bus stops, will generate very minimal increases in traffic or changes to patterns of access or egress to the site. Further, the renovation of the existing building will result the replacement of a dilapidated building in a prominent location in Central Square and bring it up to the standards of the surrounding buildings while retaining the local character of the building and the neighborhood.

(c) The project will not adversely effect the neighbors or neighborhood and will bring a small number of residents to this block to help sustain the retailers and foodservice in the immediate neighborhood without creating additional vehicular traffic.

(d) There will be no nuisance nor hazard created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City. For reasons already described, the project will not be cause for nuisance or hazard detrimental to the neighborhood or the community.

(e) The proposed use will not impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance. The project will create improved ground-floor retail opportunities within the existing building, improved, extremely desirable and rare small apartments, including 5 new inclusionary units within the district. Such uses will be a benefit to the Central Square business district and the residents and visitors to the City of Cambridge. The project achieves a number of the stated goals of the Central Square Overlay District, and given the complexity and cost of renovating a building around existing retailers and in a tight urban infill location with previous sub-surface petrochemical contamination, the compromises here are thoughtful, creative and are otherwise impossible without this relief.

(f) The new and building construction is also consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30, as well as consistent with the Central Square Development Guidelines published by the Development Department in 2013.

COMPLIANCE - CENTRAL SQUARE OVERLAY (SEC. 20.305(1) – (5))

The Project meets the following standards for issuance of special permits being sought pursuant to the Central Square Overlay District set forth in Sec. 20.305(1) through (5):

1. The proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan:

- “Encourage responsible and orderly development”: This Project will constitute a responsible development consistent with long-term goals of the Central Square community.
- “Strengthen the retail base to more completely serve the needs of the neighborhoods”: The entire building will be ADA compliant and attractive and inviting. This will help the retailers to attract larger and more diverse clientele.
- “Preserve the Square's cultural diversity” Our building has always been culturally diverse and with the addition of a residential component that continues.
- “Create active people-oriented spaces”: In addition to the residential unit, this project creates a new community space with library for the CME and other community groups to host meetings and discussions. The building will continue, as it has been for 40 years, a place for dynamic ideas.
- “Improve the physical, and visual environment”: The project will renovate a dilapidated and obsolete building to provide useful ADA compliant spaces. The addition of an elevator will remove the present barriers and 544-550 Mass Ave will be ready and beautified for its next century.
- “Provide retail establishments that serve people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods”: The building has always served small retailers and restaurateurs who serve the diverse local communities, and with this improvement it will also be ADA compliant to enhance the tradition.
- “Encourage the development of new mixed income housing”: This project will create 29 new residential units, 5 inclusionary units, which rent at 25% of the applicant's income, the least expensive option. This project will make a significant contribution of smaller units, so rare, yet desperately needed in the Square.

- “Promote compatible retail adjacent to residential uses”: The Project will renovate the ground floor retail near residential uses in Central Square.

COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA SPECIFIC TO SPECIAL PERMIT BEING SOUGHT

The Project complies in all respects with the specific criteria to the special permits being sought from the Planning Board, including as follows:

1. Special Permit for Additional FAR for Residential Uses Pursuant to Sec. 20.304.3.4: “Upon issuance of a special permit, the Planning Board may increase the allowed FAR on any lot or portion of a lot located within the Business B (BB) portion of the Central Square Overlay District to a total FAR of 4.00 for all non-residential and residential uses combined, notwithstanding the Rules for Calculation of Permitted Gross Floor Area on a Lot as set forth in Section 5.30.12, provided that the maximum FAR permitted for nonresidential uses on a lot shall not exceed the limitation on non-residential FAR applicable in the base zoning district and that the proposed FAR of all non-residential uses on the lot shall not exceed the proposed FAR of all residential uses on the lot.”

The project FAR calculations meet the above requirements. Please see attached worksheet from Carr, Lynch & Sandell and Dimensional Sheet.

2. Special Permit for Additional Height of 80 feet Pursuant to Sec. 20.304.2.2.a: “The maximum allowable height in the Central Square Overlay District may be increased up to eighty (80) feet upon issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board provided that those portions in excess of sixty (60) feet are set back from the street line at least ten (10) feet and that those portions are also set back from one or more forty-five degree (45°) bulk control planes beginning sixty (60) feet above any streetline in the district and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.”

The project plans show that the building meets the requirements and conditions, including 69’6” feet height, 10 feet setback (above 60 feet), and the bulk control planes described above.

3. Special Permit for Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements Pursuant to Sec. 20.304.6.3: “Uses contained within the existing structure in existence before 1940 shall be exempt from parking and loading requirements of Section 6.36 of the Ordinance.” With respect to uses in the new addition to be constructed, special permit requirements and criteria, as follows, are or will be met by this project:

(a) “The subject lot is sufficiently small in size as to contribute to a development pattern of diverse, small scale, new structures and the retention of existing structures”. The lot size of 4,391 is below half of the 10,000 threshold, and the existing, historic structure covers all of the buildable lot. The only land available is

an easement 5' wide whose soils may not be structural due to prior environmental remediation.

(b) "The Planning Board shall specifically find that an exemption from parking and loading requirements will result in a building design that is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood and that it is in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in Central Square Development Guidelines"; This project meets the requirement for an exemption as a requirement for onsite parking or loading facilities is inappropriate to this location and the fabric of this block of Mass Ave which has no curb cuts, nor onsite visible parking. It would also render this project unfeasible, due to the existing building and limited land on which to construct the foundation to the new addition.

(c) "No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building"; The existing building is not on the National Registry, is not eligible for membership, nor does it represent an important historical asset for the Square. The esthetic improvements contemplated by this Permit will improve the contribution of the building to the streetscapes and the utility of the building for the local area.

(d) "No National Register or contributing building has been demolished or altered so as to terminate or preclude its designation within the five (5) years preceding the application." No building has been demolished on this site since 1906.

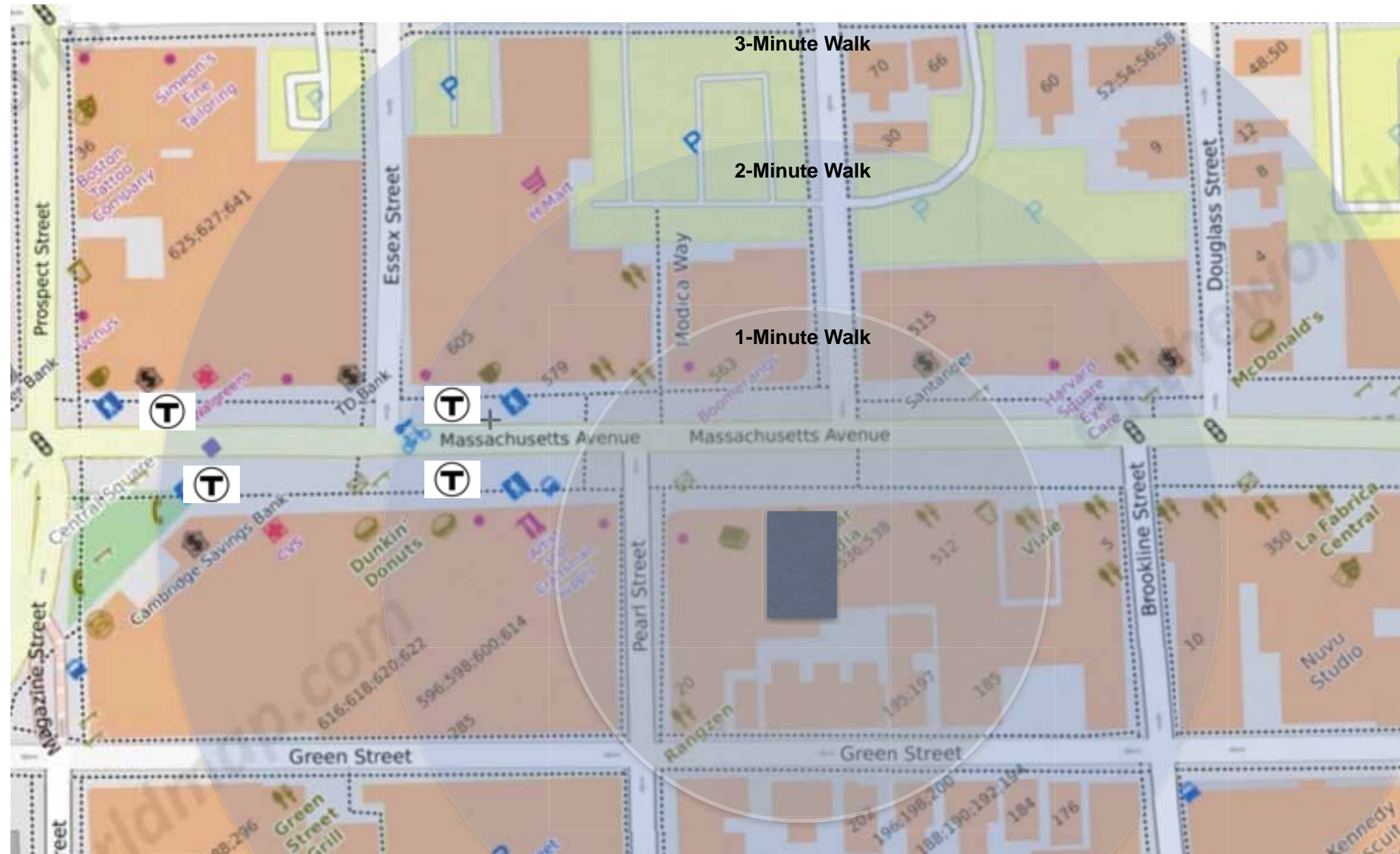
In conclusion, the project fully meets the specific special permit criteria set forth in Sec. 20.305.

Community Outreach

A preliminary community meeting was held at the Cambridgeport Community Association meeting at the LBJ Apartments on January 28, 2020 at 6:00PM, and a second meeting will be held via Zoom on July 28th at 4:00PM. In light of the feedback received during the first meeting and the presentation to the Central Square Advisory Committee, we have added a community room, and have offered assistance to the dance studio, presently a tenant-at-will, which will be displaced by the project.

[ADDITIONAL DETAILS ADDED AFTER SECOND MEETING]

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION & WALK-ABILITY PLAN



542 - 550 MASS AVE

- The frontage on Mass Ave is 45' - 49'
- The Project site is ideally located with easy access to the Redline and multiple bus lines located within one block.
- There are generous sidewalks along Mass Ave. Sidewalks are present on both sides of all surrounding streets.
- Parking is available in the municipal garage directly across Green St.

MARCH 2021

544-550 Mass Ave

Central Square Redevelopment



Project Elements

- ❖ **Renovation of existing retail spaces - Teddy's Shoes and Five Spices (Shalimar)**
- ❖ **Conversion of office/commercial space to residential**
- ❖ **29 studio apartments (5 inclusionary units for 20% of the residential floor area)**
- ❖ **Elevator Building with all areas ADA complaint**
- ❖ **Community room with library shelving for CME**

Project Compromises

- ❖ Narrow small floor plans
- ❖ Environmental remediation - poor soil conditions
- ❖ Existing retailers workaround
- ❖ Extremely high construction costs per square foot
- ❖ Increased unit count achieve sustainable rental income
- ❖ Low existing revenue - unsustainable long term leases
- ❖ Original building obsolescence

New Apartments

- ❖ The project converts 8,000 square feet of obsolete office space; when completed, there will be approximately 15,000 square feet of newly built apartments.
- ❖ The design creates (29) 280-450 square foot studio apartments with built in features to allow for small scale living
- ❖ The project will create 5 units that are Inclusionary and Affordable, and will cost only 25% of the applicant's income in rent
- ❖ The remaining units will rent for the lowest rents among all the new developments in Central Square
 - ❖ Average Rents in Cambridge are \$3,147 per month and have been over \$3,000 since 2016.
 - ❖ Average rents per foot are \$44 per foot in Cambridge (for all old and new housing stock - based on 840 square feet)
 - ❖ Quoted Rents at 544-550 Mass Ave will be \$1,000 - 1,400 per month, depending on size, among the most affordable options for a small household in the City

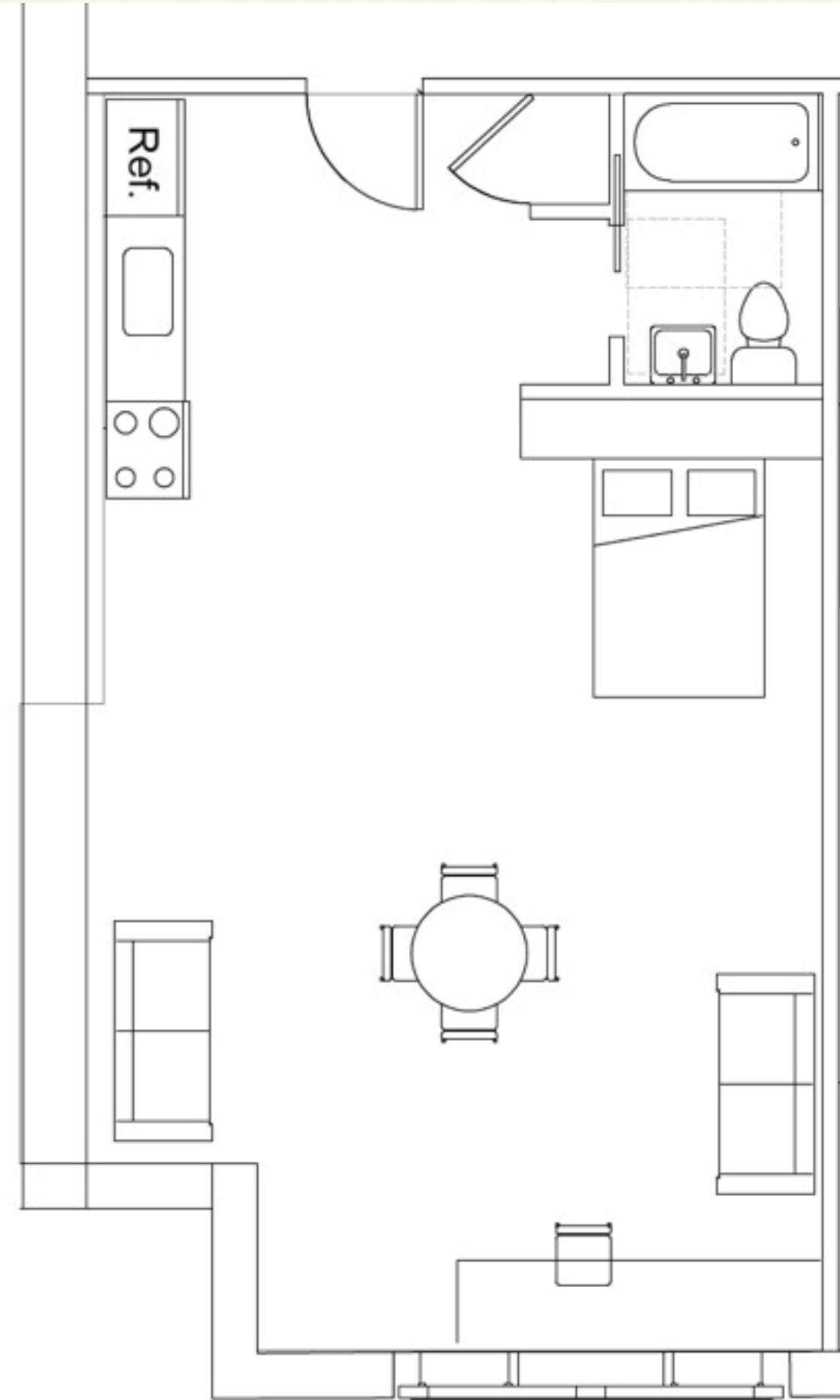


Exterior Features

Retain original façade lower three floors
 Brick and keystone design
 Retain original window lines
 Retain original retail entry lines
 Repair and replace residential entrance
 Emergency Egress to left to remain
 Upper addition in natural finishes
 10' balcony setback at 60'
 Roof deck and equipment housing
 Emergency stairwell setback on left
 Mosaic stone finish on upper terrace
 Brushed Aluminum trim on upper floors
 Terracotta finish on recessed stairwell
 All windows repaired and replaced
 Modern safety, sprinkler and enunciator

Interior Features

- ❖ Extensive millwork built-ins
- ❖ Comfortable small scale
- ❖ Basement bicycle storage
- ❖ Unobstructed Studio
- ❖ Galley kitchen
- ❖ Elevator and ADA access
- ❖ LEED Standards



Project Benefits

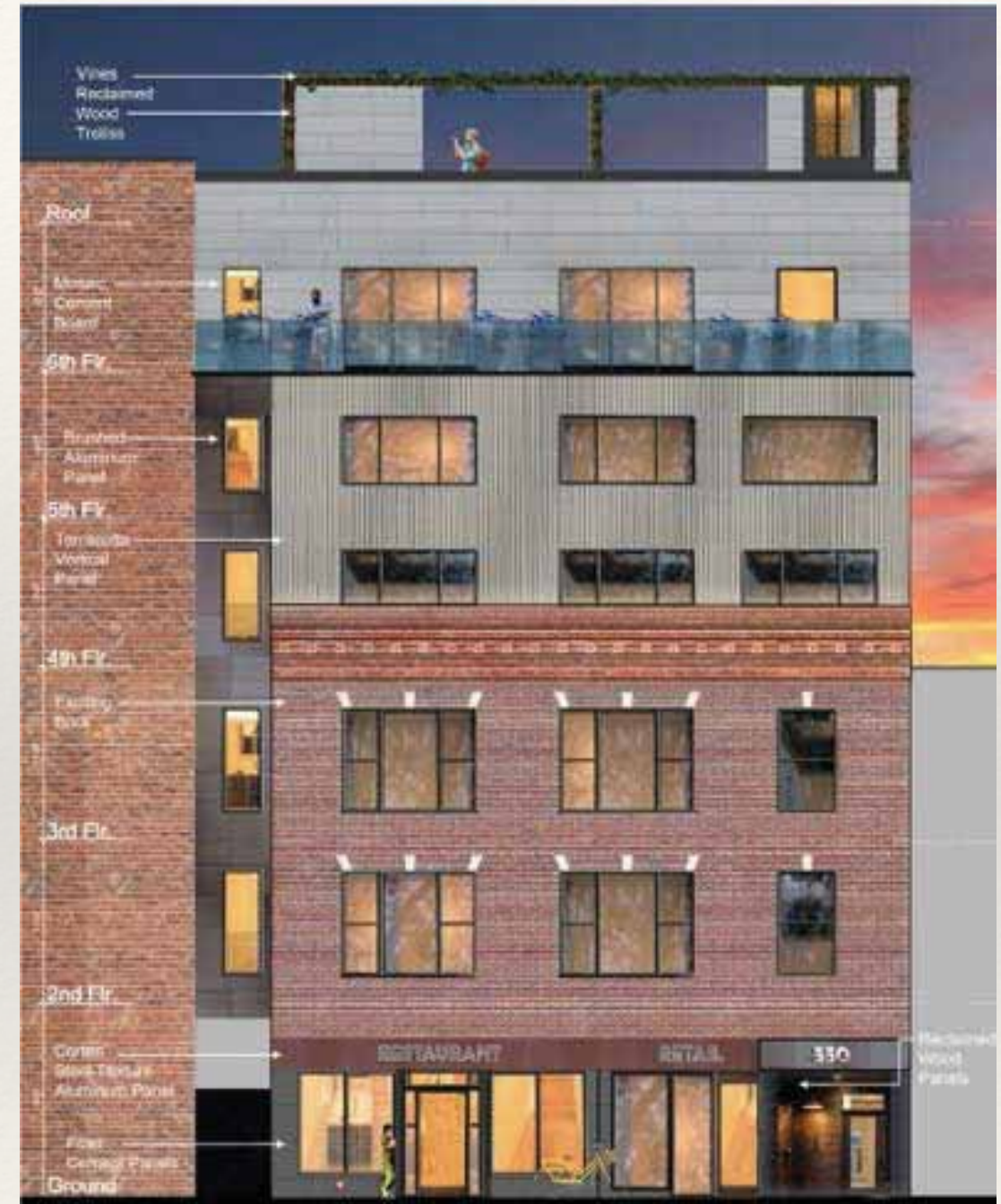
- ❖ Renovation of existing building
- ❖ Creation of much needed housing and inclusionary housing
- ❖ ADA accessibility and elevator
- ❖ Repair of dilapidated building
- ❖ preservation of small local retail spaces
- ❖ Attractive urban infill project which is sustainable and build-able
- ❖ Meets the goals of all of the Central Square Plans from the recent decades
- ❖ New Community meeting room with library for CME



Special Permits Required

- ❖ Increasing the VAR to 4.0 as permitted within the Central Square Overlay with residential
- ❖ Increase of building height to 69'6" - 80' is permitted with Special Permit in Central Square Overlay
- ❖ No onsite parking - Permitted with less than 90% of allowable build out, no existing parking or curb cut, building originally pre-1940
- ❖ Increase in number of units from 20 to 29 to allow for small studios. Under 30,000 feet no requirement for 3-bedrooms

Thank You! Q&A



Central Square Redevelopment

550 Mass Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139
(508)726-5445



Dear Neighbor,

We are holding a “virtual” Community Meeting to share the proposed development at 550 Mass Ave (544-550) for a mixed use development on Tuesday July 28th at 4:00 - 4:30PM EST. As part of the development plan the project is seeking two Special Permits, both of which require the approval of the Planning Board to move forward. We are seeking a Special Permit to increase the height of the building by 24 feet to 69’6”; 80’ is permitted with a Special Permit, and a waiver of the parking requirements.

Due to Covid-19 safety concerns, the City of Cambridge has instructed applicants to hold all Community Meetings virtually. We will host a 30 minute Zoom virtual meeting and login instructions are included below. Please call or email us if you have any trouble with joining the meeting.

This Virtual Meeting will provide an opportunity for us to share our plan and hear feedback from the neighborhood. We will make modifications to the plan and submit the final application to the Planning Board in the next few weeks. This is a second meeting to follow up on our presentation at the Cambridgeport Community Association meeting at the LBJ Apartments on January 28, 2020 at 6:00PM. There have been a few modifications to the plans based on feedback from that meeting. First we have created a community meeting room to accommodate the needs of the Marxist Bookstore, and have assisted, and will continue to assist the Dance Studio to find a solution to its long-term space needs.

If you would prefer to share your thoughts directly, please feel free to call me on my mobile 508-726-5445 and I will be happy to discuss. We are very enthusiastic about the reconstruction of this building and look forward to making this presentation.

550 Mass Ave is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting:

Time: Jul 28, 2020 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89597161129>
Meeting ID: 895 9716 1129
One tap mobile +16465588656,,89597161129# US (New York)
 +13017158592,,89597161129# US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 895 9716 1129

Sincerely,



Cliff Schorer

Central Square Redevelopment

550 Mass Ave
Cambridge, MA
(508)726-5445