



City of Cambridge

Central Square Redevelopment LLC

Application for Special Permits

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

Revised Materials: July 6, 2022

Additional Revisions: July 31, 2022



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

DIMENSIONAL FORM

Project Address: 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue

Application Date: Revised 7/6/22

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	4,394	5,000	4,394	
Lot Width (ft)	49.98 & 50	50	49.98 & 50	
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)	7,879	17,576	18,988	
Residential Base	0		11,534	
Non-Residential Base	7,879	<Residential SF	2,181	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus		22,849	5,273	
Total Floor Area Ratio	1.8	4.0	4.32	
Residential Base	0		3.26	
Non-Residential Base	.56	<Residential SF	.50	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus		5.2	.57	
Total Dwelling Units	0	20	27	
Base Units		15	22	
Inclusionary Bonus Units		5	5	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)		293	200	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)		220	163	
Building Height(s) (ft)	+/- 42	80	66.5	
Front Yard Setback (ft)	0	0	0	
Side Yard Setback (ft)	5	0	0	
Side Yard Setback (ft)	0	0		
Rear Yard Setback (ft)	0	0	0	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	0	0/10	0	
Private Open Space	0	0	795	
Permeable Open Space	0	0	0	
Other Open Space (Specify)	0	0	0	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	0	0	0	
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	28	30 32	
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	4	0	
Loading Bays	0	0	0	

Use space below and/or attached pages for additional notes:

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue		May 2022	
Owner: Central Square Redevelopment LLC,			
Architect: Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.			
DIMENSIONAL FORM			
	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sf)	4,394 <small>note 1</small>	5,000	4,394
Lot Width (ft)	49.98' & 50' <small>note 1</small>	50 ft	49.98' & 50'
Gross Floor Area (sf)	7,879 <small>note 1</small>	17,576 <small>note 2</small> + incl incentive	18,988 <small>note 3</small>
Residential Base	0		11,534
Non-Residential Base	7,879	< Res sf	2,181
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	N/A	22,849 <small>note 4</small>	5,273
Total Floor Area Ratio	1.8	4.0	4.32
Residential Base	0		3.26 <small>note 5</small>
Non-Residential Base	0.56	< Res sf	0.50 <small>note 5</small>
Inclusionary Housing Bonus		5.2	0.57
Total Dwelling Units	0	20	27
Base Units	N/A	15	22
Inclusionary Incentive Units	N/A	5	5
Base Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A	293	200
Total Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A	220	163
Building Height (ft)	± 42	80	66.5
Front yard setback (ft)	0	0	0
Side yard setback (ft)	5	0	0
Rear yard setback (ft)	0	0	0
Open Space (% of lot area)	0%	0%/10%	0%
Private Open Space	0	0	795 <small>note 6</small>
Permeable Open Space	0	0	0
Other Open Space	0	0	0
Off-Street parking spaces	0	0	0
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	28	30 32
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	4	0
Loading Bays	0	0	0
Notes:			
1	Per Property Survey dated: October 30, 2019		
2	Lot area X 4.0		
3	Allowed Bld'g Area w/Inclus Bonus = 22,849 GSF. 90% of Allowed Bld'g Area = 20,564 GSF		
4	30% of FAR allowed = 5,273sf		
5	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."		
6	unit + roof decks 18%		

544-550 Massachusetts Avenue		May 2022	
Owner: Central Square Redevelopment LLC, Architect: Carr, Lynch and Sandell, Inc.			
DIMENSIONAL FORM			
	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sf)	4,394 ^{note 1}	5,000	4,394
Lot Width (ft)	49.98' & 50' ^{note 1}	50 ft	49.98' & 50'
Gross Floor Area (sf)	7,879 ^{note 1}	17,576 ^{note 2} + Incl Incentive	18,988 ^{note 3}
Residential Base	0	< Res sf	11,534
Non-Residential Base	7,879		2,181
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	N/A	22,849 ^{note 4}	5,273
Total Floor Area Ratio	1.8	4.0	4.32
Residential Base	0		3.26 ^{note 5}
Non-Residential Base	0.56	< Res sf	0.50 ^{note 5}
Inclusionary Housing Bonus		5.2	0.57
Total Dwelling Units	0	20	27
Base Units	N/A	15	22
Inclusionary Incentive Units	N/A	5	5
Base Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A	293	200
Total Lot Area / Unit (sf)	N/A	220	163
Building Height (ft)	± 42	80	66.5
Front yard setback (ft)	0	0	0
Side yard setback (ft)	5	0	0
Rear yard setback (ft)	0	0	0
Open Space (% of lot area)	0%	0%/10%	0%
Private Open Space	0	0	795sf (unit/roof decks) 18%
Permeable Open Space	0	N/A	N/A
Other Open Space	0	N/A	0
Off-Street parking spaces	0	0	0
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	28	30 32
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	4	0
Loading Bays	0	0	0
Notes:			
1	Per Property Survey dated: October 30, 2019		
2	Lot area X 4.0		
3	Allowed Bld'g Area w/Inclus Bonus = 22,849 GSF. 90% of Allowed Bld'g Area = 20,564 GSF		
4	30% of FAR allowed = 5,273sf		
5	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."		

Central Square Redevelopment LLC

Planning Board Special Permit Submission

Supplemental Narrative - PB-381



Revised July 6, 2022

OVERVIEW

Over the past 18 months Central Square Redevelopment has worked with the City Staff and has made modifications to the proposal for 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue for a mixed use development including housing, retail, a community room, outdoor space, and interior bicycle storage. The Planning Board members have voted to continue the hearing of the applicant's submission, and, along with City Staff, has provided feedback on the proposed project, which has been summarized below. We are especially grateful for the assistance with the esthetic concerns and I believe the project has been improved dramatically based on the input of several architects and engineers.

1. **Unit Count Reduced from 29 to 27; creating 4 larger 1-BR units:** It was deemed more desirable to have Inclusionary Units that were larger than studios. We were asked to increase the size of the affordable units. It was understood that the increase in size of the Affordable Units would result in the reduction of the total number of units in the development due to the limitations of the floor-plates of the building. We have increased the size of four of the affordable units to two large one bedrooms, which has resulted in the reduction of the overall unit count from 29 to 27 units. This change will also reduce the BZA variance from 29 units to 27 units in the parallel application before the BZA.
2. **A complete redesign of the lower façade and upper floors to meet the esthetic goals of Historic and all of the input received in all the meetings.** Concerns were expressed about the additional façade elevations as proposed. The most constructive of these objections suggested that the esthetics could be improved by adding a Mansard detail to the top floor, thus reducing the perceived elevation, creating a more pleasing streetscape, and echoing other buildings in the Square. We have created a Mansard Detail and set back the top floor windows into these niches and we agree that it does add lovely visual interruption to the upper floor scale and improves the appearance. The upper floor fenestration has been completely changed to look less generic, to be more symmetrical, and we have added railing details simulating balconies. In addition we have reduced the number of exterior finishes and have simplified the pallet to distract from the upper massing areas. We have retained the large mural area, now indicated, in the setback along Massachusetts Avenue to allow for a future art installation. As the mural will start at the roof-line above the target, the

transition of materials around the corner will not be an abrupt transition from red brick to other materials.

3. **Bicycle Storage:** We have confirmed that the radius and layout of the bicycle storage will allow for storage of the number of bicycles specified. We have included the direction of travel arrows, as requested and fully dimensioned the bicycle room in an 11x17" scaled drawing, to demonstrate it meets the requirements We have agreed to provide payment-in-lieu for two off-site racks in a location designated by the City.
4. **Clarification of all calculations:** We have revised all of the spreadsheets based on these changes and have harmonized the calculations to correctly account for the basement and open space areas in the plan. We have added a detailed sheet which shows the Zoning of the building interior based on these calculations in a readable scale.
5. **Retail storefronts:** We have retained the rhythm of the original façade at the streetscape, while still widening the residential entrance to comply with the ADA requirements. We have also offered to relocate Teddy's Shoes during construction to reduce the disruption to their business. The original broken transom tiles in burgundy glass will be replaced with a single plane of glass and three vertical columns as suggested by Charlie Sullivan, to create a simplified look above the recessed doors.
6. **Community Meeting Space:** The community meeting space and ADA compliant rest room remains a part of the lower level design to accommodate the future use by the CME or other local community organizations.

The following key changes have been made to the façades, rear elevation and western elevation above Target:

- **Mansard:** Add a sloped Mansard roof in a raised standing seam metal in RHEINZINK-GRANUM, dark gray/charcoal finish.
- **Façade 4th and 5th Floor:** Mosaic pattern stone panels in light grey gradient will be the finish for the 4th and 5th floor, with the 6th being a mansard in darker grey. The simplified pallet along with the balcony rails in black will reduce the apparent massing, and the receding mansard will be a lovely addition in the Square.
- **Additional Finishes:** There is reserved space for a large mural of approximately 50x60 feet on the Mass Avenue side façade. We will work closely with the Central Square stakeholders to ensure it compliments the Square and makes an important artistic contribution. All other exposed vertical panels shall be Rheinzinc-Natural pre-patina natural, and cement panel board in natural gray finish, mosaic pattern cement board in gray gradations and clear glass.
- **Storefronts:** The storefronts have been redesigned to give a singular band of signage, consistent matching glazing profiles and as much symmetry as possible. The general appearance will be similar to an old rendering from the 1930's which we have used as a model. See new detail elevations. Based on the excellent suggestions of Erik and Charlie, we have replaced the tiled glass with a simulated three columns to the street and infill panels above, trying to retain the original 1930's design.
- **Continuing consultation with Historic and Engineering:** Given the condition of the steel beam over the storefronts, we will need to replace and repaint all of the areas around this beam. The goal will be to completely repaint and replace as necessary all broken masonry above the first floor, but to retain the historic façade below the third floor.
- **Realignment and harmonizing window sizes and locations:** The windows have been more carefully aligned and made more symmetrical for all upper floors and set into new

mansard on the top floor to increase streetscape harmony of the window lines, and to emphasize the step back next to the Odd Fellows' Hall.

- **Interior hallway realignment:** Interior hallways and entries have been harmonized to improve street appearance and make a more consistent whole with all three entries.
- **Parapets:** The two parapets have been modified to allow the most symmetric fenestration when viewed from the street. Custom made iron rail has been added to break up the verticality. The windows will now have a better relationship as the eye travels up the building.
- **The building will be fully ADA accessible:** The building retains all ADA compliance including the public space on the roof, and the community room in the basement.

All text from the original Special Permit Filing Volume 1 remains applicable, with the exception of these supplemental pages and additional detail requested.