



CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY

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June 13, 2011

Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

RE: Special Permit Application for 5 Western Avenue

Dear Board Members:

The Cambridge Housing Authority and the City of Cambridge (CHA) are pleased to submit in accordance with Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (Article s 8.21 and 19), a Special Permit application for the Rehabilitation of the former Cambridge Police Headquarters at 5 Western Avenue. Both the CHA and the City propose to use this site as office and classroom space for the CHA, the Community Learning Center (CLC), the Multi-Service Center (MSC), and to continue providing at this site a Records Room for the Cambridge Election Commission (CEC). The proposed plans are being designed to meet LEED Gold standards.

The following documents are attached in support of this application:

- Special Permit Application
- Dimensional Form
- Ownership Certificate
- Drawings and Site Development Plans
- Photographs of the Existing Site and Renderings of the Proposed Project
- Evidence of Community Outreach
- Traffic Impact Study
- LEED Checklist and Certification

Background:

The CHA and the City of Cambridge, in conjunction with Finegold Alexander + Associates Architects of Boston, have designed the proposed changes to the former Cambridge Police Headquarters for the creation of office and classroom space for the CHA, the CLC, and the MSC. The building will also house a Records Room on the basement level for the Cambridge Election Commission. This Records Room is an existing use at the site, and will be moved from the 3rd Floor to the basement level, and provided a better outfitted and secure space.

In 2009, the CHA partnered with the City of Cambridge to rehabilitate the vacant building at 5 Western Avenue into the future office and classroom space the CHA, the CLC, and the MSC. The CHA procured Finegold Alexander + Associates Architects through a qualifications-based process,

and began an extensive investigative phase to assess existing conditions and preliminary cost estimates. The plans submitted with this application are part of the 100% Schematic Design drawings.

The building has two existing entrances that will remain in use: the Green Street entrance will be shared by the MSC and the CHA, and the Western Avenue entrance will serve the CLC. City and CHA staff, along with the project architects, met with the staff of the CLC, MSC, and CEC, to discuss their space needs with the new space. Their needs have been incorporated into the Schematic Drawings. Below are the four uses listed with their floor(s) indicated, and their approximate net square footage:

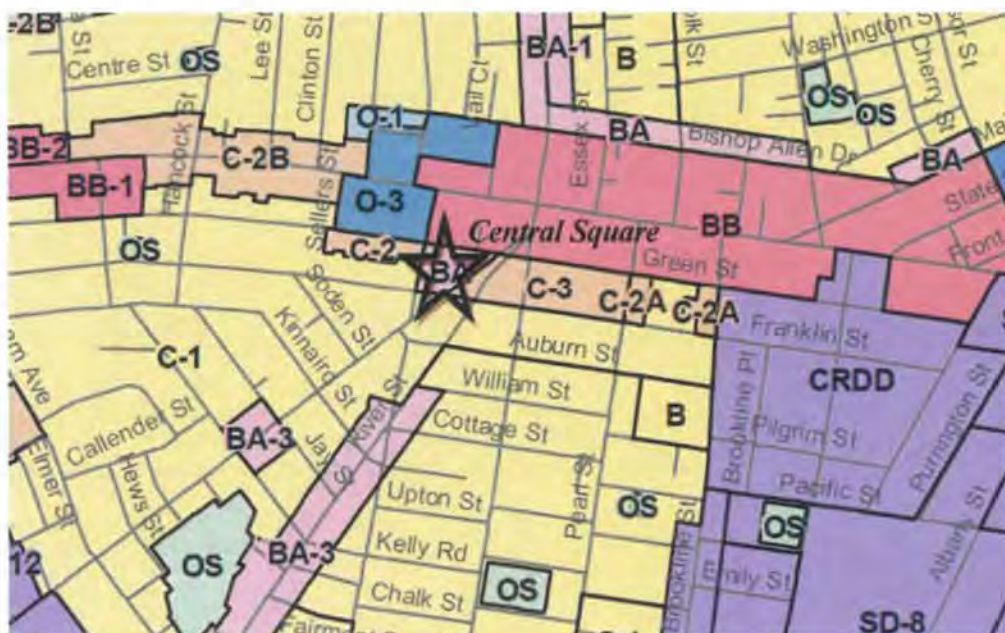
<u>Agency</u>	<u>Floor(s)</u>	<u>Square Footage</u>
CEC	Basement	919
MSC	1	5,264
CLC	1, 2	14,300
CHA	3, 4, 5	21,440

The CEC Records Room will be located in the basement, along with additional building storage and 13 parking spaces. The MSC will be on the first floor facing Green Street, and the CLC will be on the first floor facing Western Avenue and on the 2nd floor. The CHA will be on the third, fourth, and a portion of the fifth floor attic. The fifth floor attic will also house the building's mechanical room.

Zoning Analysis:

The site is located in a Business (BA) District, and the proposed uses are allowed under within this zoning district: Local Government offices, Other Government Office; Office Use; Social Service Facilities; and Educational uses.

Abutting this site are Business B; Residence Districts C-1, C-2, and C-3; Office-3. See the zoning map detail below with the site indicated by a star:



As detailed on the Dimensional Form (see attached), the plan proposed by the CHA and the City does not intend expand the building footprint or greatly alter the building's exterior. The proposed design does **not** seek relief for any of the following requirements: Total Gross Square Feet; Maximum Height; Lot Size; Lot Area per Dwelling Unit; Total Dwelling Units; Minimum Lot Width; Minimum Side Yard Setbacks; Total Percentage Open Space; Bicycle Parking.

As the site was built prior to 1941 and is located within the Central Square Overlay District, we are not seeking relief on the required number of parking spaces (Article 20.300). A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) has been completed and certified by the City's Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department, and is included with this application. The study finds this proposed project will not have a detrimental impact on local traffic.

The City and CHA will seek relief from the Zoning Board for the required maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) at the site. We propose to construct an interior mezzanine loft space above the 4th Floor inside a former auditorium (1,822 sq.ft.), which will increase the FAR from 4.22 to 4.36.

Current and Proposed Land Use:

Previously this site was the Cambridge Police Department headquarters, and housed the CEC Records Room. This Special Permit application requests to maintain the Records Room (which will be relocated to the basement level), and rehabilitate the existing building into office and classroom space for the CHA, the CLC, and the MSC.

All proposed and existing uses comply with the above-referenced section for uses located within a Business BA zone:

Cambridge Housing Authority:	Section 4.34 – Office Use
Community Learning Center:	Section 4.34 – Office Use
	Section 4.33b – Vocational or other schools
Multi-Service Center for the Homeless:	Section 4.33e – Social Service facilities
Cambridge Election Commission:	Section 4.33g – Other Government Facility

Funding:

This effort is being funded by a City of Cambridge bond issuance, and CHA Moving-to-Work funds.

Planning Process:

The CHA, working as the project developer, has teamed with the City to rehabilitate 5 Western Ave. The process has included input from the staff at the CLC, MSC, and CEC, along with City officials. The CHA and the project architects have presented this proposed project to the Central Square Business Association, whose comments were favorable.

Upcoming meetings include a community informational meeting on Thursday, June 23 at 7:15 p.m. at Manning Apartments in Central Square, and a presentation to the Central Square Advisory Committee on Monday, June 27 at 5:30 p.m. in at the City Annex, 2nd floor meeting room.

Special Permit Fee:

The CHA and the City of Cambridge request that the Planning Board waive the Special Permit application fee, as both applicants are Cambridge public agencies/owners.

Conclusion:

Both the CHA and the City of Cambridge are excited to rehabilitate this important and prominent historical building into office and classroom space for agencies which each have a long-standing history in Central Square. This project is part preservation of a historical structure, and part preservation of important, vital community service agencies in a convenient, central location within a more stable, city-owned building. The new space will provide exceptionally designed interiors for the residents we serve, and be an example for future sustainable rehabilitation construction projects for the future.

We hope the Cambridge Planning Board will look favorably on our request.

Sincerely,



Gregory P. Russ
Executive Director



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

a. SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION – COVER SHEET

To the Planning Board of the City of Cambridge:

The undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits in accordance with the requirements of the following Sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. Section 20.304.6.2 Waiver of parking in CSOD
2. Section 19.20 Project Review in the Business A district
3. Fee Waiver

Applicant: City of Cambridge & Cambridge Housing Authority

Address: 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4300 (city) 617 547 9821 (CHA)

Location of Premises: 5 Western Avenue

Zoning District: Business A/Central Square Overlay District

Submitted Materials: Cover letter; drawings and site plans; dimensional form; photographs, proposed renderings; Ownership Certificate; LEED Compliance Statement; Traffic Impact Study

Signature of Applicants: _____
Robert W. Healy, City Manager, City of Cambridge

Gregory P. Russ, Executive Director, Cambridge Housing Authority

For the Planning Board, this application has been reviewed and is hereby certified complete by the Community Development Department:

Date

Signature of CDD Staff

b. SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION – SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

Project Name:	CHA Rehabilitation of 5 Western Avenue
Address of Site:	5 Western Avenue
Applicant:	City of Cambridge and Cambridge Housing Authority
Planning Board Project Number:	(CDD) 260

Hearing Timeline (CDD)

Application Date:	June 14, 2011
Planning Board Hearing Date:	June 28, 2011
Final Planning Board Action Date:	September 26, 2011
Deadline for Filing Decision:	September 26, 2011

**Subject to extension by mutual agreement of the Applicant and the Planning Board*

Requested Relief: (include other boards and commissions) It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to accurately determine and list all the relief that will be sought for the project.

- Waiver of parking requirement, Section 20.304.6.2
- Project Review in Business A over 20,000, Section 19.20
- Fee Waiver
- Variance for floor area ratio and gross floor area from the BZA

Project Description

Brief Narrative: The project involves the complete renovation and restoration of 5 Western Avenue, the former Cambridge Police Department HQ, into offices for the Cambridge Housing Authority and two City DHS programs, the Community Learning Center and the Multi-Service Center. The exterior of the building will be restored, but there are no exterior additions planned to the building.

Project Size:

- Total GFA: 61,498 SF
- Non-residential uses GFA: 61,498 SF
- Site Area (acres and SF): .298 Acres/12,980 SF
- # of Parking Spaces: 13 (Within existing underground garage)

Proposed Uses:

- # of Dwelling Units: none
- Other Uses: Offices for Cambridge Housing Authority, Community Learning Center (Offices and Adult Education) and the Multi-Service Center (Offices)
- Open Space (% of the site and SF): 522 SF – Terraces at Fourth Floor

Proposed Dimensions:

- Height: 64'-5"
- FAR: 55,553 SF

Appendix I -- Dimensional Form

Special Permit #

Address: 5 Western Ave

	Allowed/Required	Existing	Proposed	Granted
Total FAR	1.0	4.22	4.36	
Residential	1.75	-	-	
Non-Residential	1.0	4.22	4.36	
Inclusionary Bonus				
Total GFA in Sq. Ft.	12,980	59,676	61,498	
Residential	22,715	-	-	
Non-Residential	12,980	59,676	61,498	
Inclusionary Bonus	-	-	-	
Max. Height	65	64'-5"	64'-5"	
Range of heights	35/45-65	-	-	
Lot Size	None	12,980 SF	12,980 SF	
Lot area/du	600	-	-	
Total Dwelling Units	-	-	-	
Base units				
Inclusionary units				
Min. Lot Width	None	100'	100'	
Min. Yard Setbacks				
Front	None	0	0	
Side, Left	None	0	0	
Side, Right	None	0	0	
Rear	20'	0	0	
Total % Open Space	None	0	0	
Usable	None	0	0	
Other	None	0	0	
Off Street Parking	/0(20.304.6)			
Min #				
Max #				
Handicapped			1	
Bicycle Spaces	7	2	8	
Loading Bays	0(20.304.6)	-	-	