

# THE MODERNIZATION OF 116 NORFOLK

January 2022

## A Little History about 116 Norfolk

The original convent at 116 Norfolk Street was associated with St. Michael's church to the northeast. Both were designed by Edward P. T. Graham, an architect whose prolific work included not only these two buildings but many other churches throughout the Greater Boston area. Born in 1872, Mr. Graham attended Cambridge High School and Harvard University and was called "the Dean of Boston architects" at his funeral.

The 116 Norfolk Street convent was designed and built in 1907-08. According to the Cambridge Historical Commission, the building design is in the "Colonial Revival" style. The three-story wing facing Suffolk Street, the East Wing, was originally a chapel but was converted to apartment units in 1975.

The surrounding brick wall, loved by many in the neighborhood, was characteristic of a "cloister" of the era, providing a garden that is protected from the outside world and preserving the modesty of the nuns who were the original residents.

## Project Summary

For 45 years, since 1975, the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) has owned the building at 116 Norfolk Street. The building provides 37 single-room-occupancy (SRO) accommodations for seniors and people with disabilities and is managed by the CHA. SROs are congregate-style housing, where residents have private bedrooms, toilets, and lavatories, but share kitchen and shower facilities. The CHA intends to renovate the existing building and construct a new addition to provide up to 62 studio apartments (with private kitchens and showers) for existing residents and individuals transitioning out of homelessness. In partnership with the City, 116 Norfolk will house some of the 1,000+ unhoused individuals currently living in Cambridge after construction. Residents will receive robust support from four full-time, on-site case managers from Eliot Community Human Services who will provide assistance with access to health care, supportive programs, counseling, etc. Construction is anticipated to start in Winter 2022.

## Virtual Community Meeting

The CHA is starting the zoning and permitting process for the Modernization of 116 Norfolk under the City's new Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). Please join the first virtual neighborhood meeting to learn about the project.



### When:

Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 6pm

### Where:

On Zoom (<https://tinyurl.com/2p892byf>), or (646) 558-8656, Meeting ID: 867 4241 4919, Code: 561365



The Modernization of 116 Norfolk will preserve the historic architecture of the main convent building, the four-story wing facing Norfolk, and replace the three-story East Wing with a new addition over the existing parking lot on Suffolk Street. The porch will be partially preserved.

## Existing Conditions

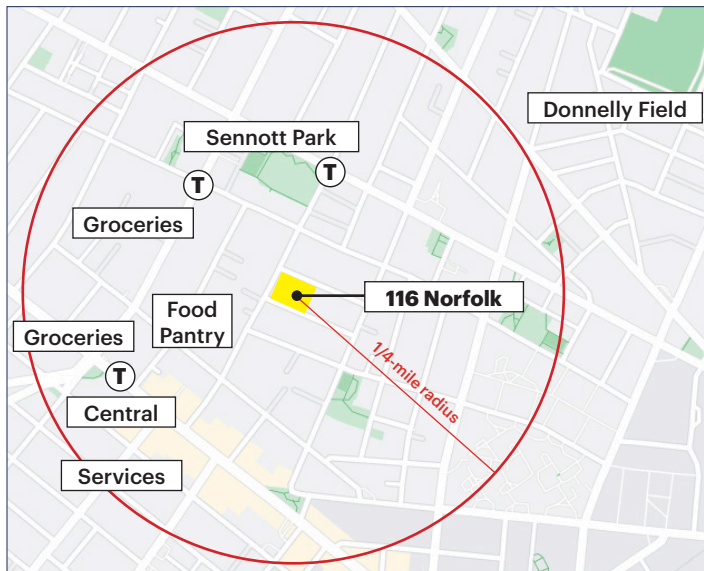
The existing building has not received a comprehensive renovation since 1975, when the CHA purchased and redeveloped the building for its current use. The building has benefited from component upgrades (roof, windows, and elevator) and some accessibility upgrades over the years, however, existing interior finishes and systems are in poor condition and require replacement.

Furthermore, the configuration of the units as single-room occupancy (SRO) apartments has not served residents well, especially during the pandemic. Although each unit has a toilet and lavatory, sharing food preparation and bathing facilities has been extremely difficult for current residents. As a result, converting all existing SRO apartments to studio apartments, each with private bathrooms and kitchens, is a priority for this modernization.



### Inside the Existing 116 Norfolk

Shared kitchens and showers on each floor, such as the one pictured above, will be replaced with private kitchens in every apartment.



## Neighborhood

The 116 Norfolk Street parcel sits squarely within the Port Neighborhood of Cambridge and is fronted by three public streets: Norfolk, Worcester and Suffolk. The Port neighborhood may be described as an eclectic composition of two-to-four story wood-frame and masonry buildings. It is a traditional single- and multi-family residential neighborhood about 1/4-mile from Central Square.

A number of mature trees are located on the property and tree preservation was identified early on as a priority for this modernization, in addition to improving and expanding the housing and services offered on-site.

The Cambridge Housing Authority provides long-term rental housing and rental assistance to more than 5,500+ low-income families, elders and disabled individuals, or almost 10% of the city population.

By focusing on policy innovation and family economic opportunities, CHA meets its mission: to develop and manage safe, good quality, affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in a manner that promotes citizenship, community, and self-reliance in one of the most expensive markets in the country.

[www.cambridge-housing.org](http://www.cambridge-housing.org)

 @CambHousing

Questions or comments?  
Please contact:

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**Join us for the first virtual neighborhood meeting!**  
**Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 6pm**  
Zoom link and login information on front side