

May 28, 2021

Ms. Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair &  
Members of the Board  
City of Cambridge Planning Board  
344 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Supplemental Materials Submission for Special Permit Application PB#631, 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Dear Chair Connolly and Members of the Planning Board:

On behalf of Gas Light Building LLC (the Owner) and Chevron Partners (the Developer), we are pleased to submit to you for your consideration in support of the Special Permit Application PB#631 for 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue the following materials:

- 1) Supplemental Narrative in Support of Special Permit PB#361, May 28, 2021
- 2) Revised Dimensional Form, with footnotes and calculations
- 3) Supplemental Graphic Materials, May 28, 2021

We look forward to the opportunity to present these materials at a continued public hearing before the Planning Board in the next few weeks.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sarah Like Rhatigan, Esq.

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Swaathi Joseph  
Zoning Associate Planner  
Cambridge Community Development Department

Mr. Marcel D. Safar, Esq.  
Managing Partner  
Chevron Partners LLC

Mr. Tony Hsiao, AIA, LEED AP  
Principal, Director of Design  
Finegold Alexander Architects

**Cambridge Gas and Light Building  
711-727 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge**

**Special Permit Application  
PB#361**

**City of Cambridge Planning Board**

**May 28, 2021**

**SUPPLEMENT TO  
PROJECT NARRATIVE**

**Overview**

Gas Light Building LLC, the owner, and Chevron Partners LLC, the managing agent and developer of the property (collectively, “Chevron Partners”), are pleased to submit this further supplement to their Special Permit Application (#PB361) to renovate the historic Cambridge Gas and Light Building and construct an addition for a hotel at 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue.

This Special Permit Application was filed on January 27th, 2020, first heard by the Planning Board on July 21, 2020, and heard at continued hearings held on December 15, 2020 and April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at which the applicant presented revised plans and additional information responsive to feedback received on this project.

Materials submitted today include revised Supplemental Graphic Materials and a revised Dimensional Form (Exhibit A), which reflect a further modification to this project. Specifically, these Materials reflect changes to the addition that address concerns expressed by the Planning Board and respond to the recommendations made at the last hearing on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

This Supplement to the Project Narrative will:

- summarize revisions to the Dimensional Form
- address non-applicability of the newly adopted Green Roof requirements set forth in Section 22.35 of the Ordinance
- summarize feedback from the April 27th PB Hearing and the applicant’s responses to feedback

## **Revisions to Dimensional Form:**

- (1) **Revised Dimensional Form.** The revised design results in changes to the Dimensional calculations reflected in the Revised Dimensional Form.
  - a) As a result of the setback at the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) floor of the addition, the revised plans reflect a loss of an additional (290 square feet) hotel space at the fifth floor.  
  
The cumulative effect of the revised design changes have resulted in a total net reduction of 1,463 square feet (sf.) of overall Gross Floor Area, a loss of 1,015 s.f. of usable hotel space, and loss of one hotel room for the project;
  - b) The total FAR for the project has been reduced from 3.97 FAR to 3.83 FAR, of which Residential uses are be reduced from 2.47 to 2.35 FAR, and non-Residential uses are be reduced from 1.50 to 1.48 FAR. The ratio of Residential to non-Residential GFA remain in compliance with the requirements of Section 20.304.2.4.
- (2) **No Change to Parking Requirements:** The reduction at the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) floor results in loss of hotel space, but no change to the number of “sleeping rooms”. Hotel rooms have been reconfigured to reduce two one-bedrooms to studios.

Summary of Hotel Use:

Total Hotel Rooms = 36,  
17 studios, 15 1-bedrooms and 4 2-bedrooms

## **New Addition GFA Less Than 25,000--Project Scope Below Trigger for New Green Roof Requirements of Sec. 22.35.1**

- (1) **Green Roof Requirements, Recent Amendment – Section 22.35.** An amendment to the Ordinance affecting certain Green Roof requirements adopted by the City Council on May 3, 2021, is applicable to “any new building or structure of twenty-five thousand (25,000) gross square feet or more” (Sec. 22.35.1).

The Inspectional Services Department has confirmed that only the area within the new addition for this project is considered as “new building or structure” for purposes of determining applicability of Section 22.35.

- (2) **Total Gross Floor Area in New Addition Less Than 25,000:** The total of the Gross Floor Area located in the new addition is 24,751, which is less than 25,000 s.f., based upon a sum of all Gross Floor Area as defined pursuant to Section 2.000 of the Ordinance. See Revised Dimensional Form for reference, and specifically, the FAR Calculation Chart and summary table entitled “Total Gross Floor Area in New Addition”, page 5.

Therefore, the project scope does not trigger the requirement to meet the new requirements established under Section 22.35 et. sec..

### **Feedback from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 PB Hearing and Further Responses:**

- (1) Address Concerns About Impact for Tenant in Cheryl-Ann's Place Apartments; Explore Option to Setback Addition at Fifth Floor.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, after lengthy discussion, the Planning Board continued to express some concerns for the impact of the new addition on the residents of the neighboring building at 5 Temple Street (Cheryl-Ann's Place) and desire to see additional modifications to the plans to address these concerns. It was recommended that the applicant consider the feasibility of stepping back the fifth floor of the addition approximately one-half the width of the sixth floor setback. It was suggested that such an effort would further improve matters for the inhabitants of the Cheryl-Ann's Place.

The applicant proceeded to evaluate and implement changes to accomplish this revised design.

- (2) Design Response -- Setback Fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) Floor Approx. 4 ft. by 75 ft.

The plans provide for the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the addition to be setback approximately 4 feet by 75 feet along the side facing Cheryl-Ann's Place, the full length of the setback for the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor.

- (3) Reduce Parapets.

CDD staff urged the applicant to further reduce roof parapet heights.

The plans eliminate rear portion of upper roof parapet down to roof edge, thereby addressing this concern to the greatest extent possible, in keeping with safety requirements.

The team was able to maintain previous reductions at the upper roof (stair/elevator headhouses, roof deck), relocated mechanicals, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor setback of approximately 10 feet by 75 feet. The cumulative result of all of these changes results in substantial improvements in terms of minimizing impacts of the addition for the occupants of Cheryl-Ann's Place and others in the neighboring community.

### **Revised Project Meets Goals for Issuance of a Special Permit under the Central Square Overlay District:**

This project meets many goals of the Central Square Action Plan and Citywide Urban Design guidelines, rendering it eligible for a special permit under the Central Square Overlay District.

To summarize:

- a) The project will be developed by a local owner and developer with a long-standing commitment to the Central Square community;
- b) The project will strengthen the retail base to serve the needs of the neighborhood;
  - i) Three new small ADA accessible retail spaces
  - ii) Low/no service hotel concept
- c) The project is committed to seeking culturally diverse retail and office tenants, with a hotel concept that will be marketed and attractive to a culturally diverse clientele;
- d) The new ground floor retail will provide opportunities for creative, people oriented spaces;
- e) The project will rehabilitate and improve the existing, aging building, and eliminate a rear-alley prone to vandalism, thereby improving the physical and visual environment;
- f) The existing mural on the West Façade of the existing building will be maintained and Chevron Partners will continue to collaborate with the Central Square Business Improvement District (BID) in efforts that may allow for the property to serve as a place for the display of public art;
- g) The project ensures that the contributing building is not demolished or altered, but instead is restored. This includes the façade restoration work that Chevron Partners has already completed, including the fabrication (in Italy) and installation of replica wrought-iron light sconces, as well as their commitment to remove, refurbish and restore the elaborate grillwork on corner bays of the Massachusetts Avenue façade.
- h) Additionally, the project meets citywide urban design objectives including, but not limited to:
  - i) The project improves the property's pedestrian and bicycle-friendly nature, by opening up the ground floor retail spaces, lowering thresholds and making these spaces fully accessible along Massachusetts Avenue, and providing long-term bicycle parking and facilities for office tenants and hotel guests on site;
  - ii) The renovation and removal of the ground floor stair/office entrance, the project will meet the ground floor transparency guidelines, improving views into and from the new retail space;
  - iii) The new office/hotel entry on Temple Street is designed for safe pedestrian access, encouraging drop-offs and deliveries to occur on a low-

volume, one-way, side street, near a cross walk, and away from the busy Mass. Ave. corridor and bike lane;

- iv) The rooftop mechanical equipment is centrally located and screened with exterior cladding and interior acoustical paneling, strategically to avoid it being seen from the street.
- v) The cumulative effects of the revisions to the design have improved shadow impacts on the neighboring properties.
- vi) Exterior lighting has been minimized and other features will be utilized in order to minimize light spill effects for neighboring uses;
- vii) The project is striving for the highest feasible sustainable goals and targeting LEED gold for the overall project.
- i) Other community benefits include the project's contribution to local employment, in that the project is shovel-ready, providing job opportunities. Chevron Partners has committed with the Cambridge Housing Authority to promote hiring from the community.

The owner remains committed to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use development, with its new, accessible, ground floor retail opportunities, improved offices, and new hotel, as a vital contribution to the Central Square business district. The modifications to the proposal serve to honor the distinctive, elegant, historic Gas and Light Co. Building, while creating an elegant, modern extension to that building, with design and façade elements meant to fit within its rich and varied context.

On behalf of the project team, we wish to thank this Board for its consideration and urge you to approve the Special Permit Application as amended.

### **List of Revised Graphic Materials:**

#### Revised Supplemental Graphic Materials:

Pages 13-14, 21-24, 29, 32, 36-37, 39-41, 41 are revised versions of graphic slides included in the original and the supplemental graphic materials previously submitted in connection with this Special Permit Application.

EXHIBIT A

REVISED DIMENSIONAL FORM  
WITH FOOTNOTES AND CALCULATIONS  
ATTACHED



DIMENSIONAL FORM

**Project Address:**

**Application Date:**

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)				
Lot Width (ft)				
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)			*	
Residential Base			*	
Non-Residential Base			*	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus				
Total Floor Area Ratio			*	
Residential Base			*	
Non-Residential Base			*	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus				
Total Dwelling Units				
Base Units				
Inclusionary Bonus Units				
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)				
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)				
Building Height(s) (ft)				
Front Yard Setback (ft)				
Side Yard Setback (ft)				
Side Yard Setback (ft)				
Rear Yard Setback (ft)				
Open Space (% of Lot Area)				
Private Open Space				
Permeable Open Space				
Other Open Space (Specify)				
Off-Street Parking Spaces				
Long-Term Bicycle Parking				
Short-Term Bicycle Parking				
Loading Bays				

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

Please see attached document.

\*Indicates revised dimensional information

## Footnotes:

\*a: Lot area x 4.00 = 42,212 sf

\*b: Proposed Total Gross Floor Area excludes floor area that is exempt either by definition (eg., mechanical spaces and shafts; see CZO Article 2.000, definition of Gross Floor Area, included and excluded), by exemptions and/or special permit relief available for properties in the Central Square Overlay District (eg., ground floor retail spaces, roof decks and balconies; see CZO Article 20.304), and basement uses exempt by grant of a special permit (see CZO Article 2.000, footnote 16).

\*c: Maximum Residential Base floor area allowed pursuant to special permit granted under CZO 20.304.2.4 is less than the total 4.0 FAR for total combined Residential and Non-residential uses in the project.

\*d: Floor Area of common spaces, including stairs and elevators, are distributed to residential and non-residential uses based on their respective ratios. Corridors are directly added to their respective residential and non-residential uses. All mechanical spaces & shafts are excluded from common spaces.

\*e: Same notes as for footnote "d". Additionally, Non-Residential Base excludes each ground floor retail space with a total Gross Floor Area under 1,500 sf.

\*f: Lot area x 3.00 = 31,659 sf

\*g: Allowed FAR is 4.0 with special permit granted under CZO 20.304.2.4.

\*h: Allowed building height is 80 feet with bulk plane setback, with special permit granted under CZO 20.304.2.2.a.

\*i: Other Open Space percentage listed here equals the green roof plus roof deck areas divided by the total lot area.

\*j: There are no City-registered off-street parking spaces on the site.

\*k: No parking spaces or loading bays required for uses within existing (pre-1940) building; and no parking spaces or loading bays required with grant of special permit waiver and payment to City's parking fund under CZO 20.304.6.3. 12 vehicle off-site parking spaces are required for the uses within the new addition only.

\*l: The number of proposed short-term bicycle parking was studied and determined not feasible.

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FAR Calculation Summary Chart

Lot Size (sqft)	10,553
Maximum Allowable FAR 4.0	42,212

Total Exempted Areas (sqft)	15,029
Proposed FAR	3.83
Final Gross Area (sqft)	40,432

Residential vs Non-Residential Areas Chart (Sq ft):

	Total without Common spaces	Ratio of Common Spaces	Total with Common Spaces
Total Non-Residential Areas (retail under 1,500 sf excluded)	14,374	1,300	15,674
Total Residential Areas (w/ hotel in the exist. b.):	22,704	2,054	24,758
Common Areas (wo/ mech & shafts)	3,354		
Total Residential and Non-Residential Areas	37,078		40,432

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FAR Calculation Chart (Sq ft)

727 Mass Ave /Area Calculation (based on 210615 proposed plans)

	Existing Condition	New Addition	Proposed Project Gross A.	Exempted Areas	Total
	Original Building Areas	New Addition Zone	Proposed plans (both existing and new addition)	Basement & Retail Exemption & Mechanical Spaces	Proposed Project Area (-Minus) Exempted Areas
<b>Basement</b>					
Office	6,013	0	4,386	4,386	0
Hotel Support	0	712	712	712	0
Stairs/Elev	329	625	625	625	0
Mech R. & shafts	1,158	939	3,955	3,955	0
<b>First</b>					
Office	4,215	0	3,870	0	3,870
Retail	2,881	0	3,066	3,066	0
Hotel	0	1,398	1,398	0	1,398
Stairs/Elev	407	679	679	0	679
Mech R. & shafts	0	238	673	673	0
<b>Second</b>					
Office	3,997	1,633	6,091	0	6,091
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	0	0	0	0
Stairs/Elev	440	571	571	0	571
Mech R. & shafts	0	193	226	226	0
<b>Third</b>					
Office	6,997	1,563	4,413	0	4,413
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	0	4,503	0	4,503
Stairs/Elev	440	526	526	0	526
Mech R. & shafts	0	185	280	280	0
<b>Fourth</b>					
Office	0	0	0	0	0
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	5,931	5,931	0	5,931
Stairs/Elev	0	526	526	0	526
Mech R. & shafts	0	276	276	276	0
<b>Fifth</b>					
Office	0	0	0	0	0
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	5,657	5,657	0	5,657
Stairs/Elev	0	526	526	0	526
Mech R. & shafts	0	281	281	281	0
<b>Sixth</b>					
Office	0	0	0	0	0
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	5,215	5,215	0	5,215
Stairs/Elev	0	526	526	0	526
Mech R. & shafts	0	275	275	275	0
<b>Roof</b>					
Office	0	0	0	0	0
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Hotel	0	0	0	0	0
Stairs/Elev	0	0	0	0	0
Mech R. & shafts	0	274	274	274	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,877</b>	<b>28,749</b>	<b>55,461</b>	<b>15,029</b>	<b>40,432</b>

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**Traffic Study Calculation Chart (Sq ft)**

	Existing Condition	New Addition	Proposed Project	Uses within Existing Building
Office	21,222	3,196	18,760	15,564
Retail	2,881	0	3,066	3,066
Hotel	0	18,913	23,416	4,503
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,103</b>	<b>22,109</b>	<b>45,242</b>	<b>23,133</b>

Note: Square footage (SF) calculations shown in this Traffic Study Calculation Chart includes SF located in the basement and ground-floor retail spaces that will be exempt with granting of a Special Permit and excludes common areas, including stairs, and elevators.

**Total Gross Floor Area in New Addition (Sq ft)**

First Floor	<b>2,077</b>
Second Floor	<b>2,204</b>
Third Floor	<b>2,089</b>
Fourth Floor	<b>6,457</b>
Fifth Floor	<b>6,183</b>
Sixth Floor	<b>5,741</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,751</b>
Basement*	<b>1,337</b>

*Exempt with grant of special permit
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