Revitalization of 116 Norfolk Street
Planning Board Affordable Housing Overlay Design Review  |  July 5, 2022
Agenda

• Project Intro & Timeline
• Site Plan & Landscape
• Parking
• Building Design & Renderings
• Unit Layouts & Interior Amenities
• Questions & Comments
Project Intro & Timeline
About 116 Norfolk

- 4 1/2 story masonry building
- 38 single-room occupancy (SRO) units
- Shared spaces include dining, kitchens, bathing facilities, laundry, and lounges
- 1 part-time case manager onsite

Building history:
- Built in 1907, as St. Mary’s Convent
- Acquired and renovated by CHA in 1975
- No comprehensive renovation since 70s
- Not on Federal History Registry, but has important historic value for neighborhood
Existing residents

• 38 residents
• Current population: 85% elderly, 15% non-elderly people with disabilities
• Roughly 1 in 3 residents experienced homelessness before living at 116 Norfolk
• Languages spoken include English, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Bulgarian
• Average annual income = $12,547
• Rent = 30% of income, regardless of income

Residents have attended design and project update meetings on the South Porch and in the Dining Room since January 2021.
Building improvements

• Renovate existing building to convert all SROs to studio apartments
• Add 24 affordable apartments (38 to 62 units) in a new addition
• Replace failing or deficient systems including electrical, plumbing, ventilation and heating
• Install central heating and AC to enhance resident comfort, remove window AC units
• Enhance north yard and resident amenities

Photos: Shared kitchens and baths. The SRO model has not supported residents’ needs, especially in a pandemic environment. Furthermore, 116 Norfolk does not have mechanical ventilation and has failing plumbing, heating, electrical, and fire protection systems.
Sustainable & resilient design

• All electric variant refrigerant flow (VRF) system will provide central heating and cooling
• Infrastructure to allow for all-electric DHW in future
• Roof will be solar ready, with panels installed at end of construction (28.8 kW)
• Tight, well-insulated building envelope minimizes energy use (above code)
• Emergency generator will supply safe and comfortable places for residents in event of outage
• Reusing existing building and wood-frame new construction minimizes embodied carbon
• Enterprise Green Communities and Energy Star Multifamily New Construction certified

CHA’s solar array at LBJ Apartments on Erie St.
Permanent supportive housing for Cambridge residents transitioning out of homelessness

- All current residents have right to return after construction
- Vacant apartments will house people from the Cambridge Coordinated Assessment Network (C-CAN) for people who are unhoused
- 1,500+ Cambridge residents in C-CAN
- Increasing number of service providers from one part-time case manager to four-plus case managers (5x increase in services)
- Partnership with Eliot Community Human Services
- 24/7 emergency call line and overnight security
- Eradicating homelessness by expanding supporting housing opportunities is a stated objective of Envision Cambridge, Community Health Improvement Plan
Project timeline

- **January 2021**: Start resident engagement
- **April 2021 – Present**: 7+ resident meetings
- **April 2021 – June 2021**: Design Meetings with Abutters
- **February 10, 2022**: AHO Neighborhood Meeting #1
- **April 27, 2022**: AHO Neighborhood Meeting #2
- **June 2022**: Start Resident Relocation Process
- **July 5, 2022**: Planning Board Meeting #1
- **Summer/Fall 2022**: Permitting & Bidding
- **Fall 2022**: Relocation Begins
- **January 2023**: Construction Starts (18-20 months)
- **Summer/Fall 2024**: Construction Completion

Residents at a design meeting in Summer 2021.
Resident & neighborhood feedback

• “Private apartments and more services are most important.”
• “The large trees on Worcester are essential to the neighborhood.”
• “The wall adds nice character. I’d like to see it kept with modifications for interactions. I used to be able to sit on the wall as a kid.”
• “I’m more interested in how programming can build community and break down divides.”
• “I would have loved if we’d gone higher, but understand there are constraints.”
• “What’s going to happen so that I feel safe? You picked a densely populated neighborhood for such a risky population.”
• “I’m very concerned about no parking.”
• “If not having parking allows more residents to live in this building and us to preserve trees, then I’m willing to struggle with parking.”
• “Thank you for all the care and attention and thought you have put into this plan. I have three small kids and I’m really excited to tell them that Cambridge is going all out to support the people who need it most.”
Site Plan & Landscape
Neighborhood context

- Port neighborhood
- 0.25 miles to Central
- Services, open space, healthy food and public transit within walking distance
Site context

- 0.6-acre site
- Three front yards
- 2-, 3- and 4-story buildings surround site
- Distances between buildings range from 1'-32'
Existing site plan

North yard:

Parking lot and ramp off Suffolk St:

LEGEND

- Tree to be removed (4)
- Tree to be preserved (9)
Proposed site plan

- Splits impact between Suffolk and Worcester
- Replaces east wing with glazed connection between exiting and addition
- Replaces existing inaccessible main entrance on Norfolk with accessible entrance on Suffolk
- Maximizes setbacks while preserving south yard, partial porch and trees

Tree to be removed (4)
Tree to be preserved (9)
Tree to be planted (19)
Landscape & open space

- 44% open space proposed
- Preserves south yard, adds benches/table
- Sloped path from Norfolk replaces long ramp from Suffolk
- Shortens porch to allow for new, accessible entrance
- Improves north yard with new terrace, landscaping and trees
- Circular walking path around site
- New transformer hidden by ground plantings
- Preserves perimeter wall with breaks for new benches facing Norfolk and Worcester
- Planting strip with 8 columnar trees provides buffer at southeast corner
- Removes curb cut
- Adds 4 short-term bike spaces
- Preserves 9 of 13 existing trees; 19 new trees (net of 15 new)
Parking
Limited parking allowed onsite under the AHO

Parking cannot be located:
- Within 10 ft of building
- Within minimum setback
- Between front lot line and principal wall plane

Underground parking not efficient or affordable
Proposed parking plan

Parking count:
• 9 existing parking spaces
• 0 off-street parking spaces proposed
• 1 on-street pick up/drop off space at entrance
• 36 long-term bike spaces in basement, and
  4 short-term spaces on Suffolk St

Parking need:
• 3 existing residents have cars (for 38 units)
• 5 cars expected after construction (for 62 units)
• Daytime parking for service providers available at nearby CHA properties and 2-hour parking spaces on Norfolk

Transportation Demand Management Plan:
• All residents offered 1-year Bluebikes subscription or 50% off MBTA Zone 1A pass for 6 months
• Screen in lobby for live transit updates
### Available street parking

#### Zone 1

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#### Zone 1 + Zone 2

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Building Design & Renderings
Aerial rendering

- Splits impact between Suffolk and Worcester
- Addition steps down to neighborhood
- Side yard setbacks match or exceed pattern of neighborhood
- Replaces east wing with glazed connection
- Preserves existing building and south yard
- Preserves majority of perimeter brick wall
- Cool color scheme with contrasting window details
- Rooftop PV (not shown)
• Removes wooden fencing above masonry wall
• Provides a break in wall for bench on Norfolk, at pick up/drop off space
• Preserves south yard and part of porch
• Moves main entrance to Suffolk, makes accessible
• Replaces long ramp off Suffolk with sloped path
• Public art at entrance and around site
View from Suffolk

- Side yard setback to allow planted buffer between addition and neighbor, and new street tree
- Short-term bike parking at Suffolk entrance
- Mix of fiber cement (ie Hardie) shingles and horizontal clapboards to match vernacular of neighborhood
- Operable tilt-turn windows and mullions to match existing building
- Modern cornice
View from Worcester

• Addition located to preserve trees in north yard along Worcester

• Addition reflects unique characteristics of existing building (windows that change height each floor, detailed cornice, simple massing, etc.)

• Preserves majority of perimeter brick wall
View from Worcester (North Terrace)

- New, north-facing terrace for residents
- Replaces east wing with glazed connection between existing and addition
- Continuous glazing at connection
- Addition reflects unique characteristics of existing building (windows that change height each floor, detailed cornice, simple massing, etc.)
- Provides a break in perimeter wall for a bench (central armrests not shown) on Worcester
Unit Layouts &
Interior Amenities
Typical studio apartments (350 sf) to replace existing SRO units (215-275 SF)

All apartments include:
- Coat and bedroom closets
- Private kitchen with upper and lower cabinets
- Private bath with walk-in shower and grab bars
- All windows are operable
- Central heating/AC

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First Floor: Multi-Purpose Room, Lounge, Kitchen, Porch and Terrace

Cooking classes in kitchen

Activities in multi-purpose room

Tables and chairs on north terrace

Gatherings on south porch
Upper Floors: Lounges, Fitness Room

South-facing lounges with operable windows
Recumbent bikes in Fitness Room
Thank you!