



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL
831 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139
617 349-6100

BZA APPLICATION FORM

Plan No: BZA-017219-2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

The undersigned hereby petitions the Board of Zoning Appeal for the following:

Special Permit : _____ Variance : Appeal : _____

PETITIONER : Central Square Redevelopment LLC - C/O Clifford Schorer

PETITIONER'S ADDRESS : 10 Turnpike Road Southborough, MA 01772

LOCATION OF PROPERTY : 544 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA

TYPE OF OCCUPANCY : Assembly, Merchantile, Residential ZONING DISTRICT : Business B Zone/CSQ Overlay

REASON FOR PETITION :

Other: Lot area per dwelling unit variance

DESCRIPTION OF PETITIONER'S PROPOSAL :

Applicant seeks to build 29 micro-Studio apartments where 20 units of any size are permitted by right. Infill location with small building footprint and existing retailers create a hardship for renovating building into larger spaces.

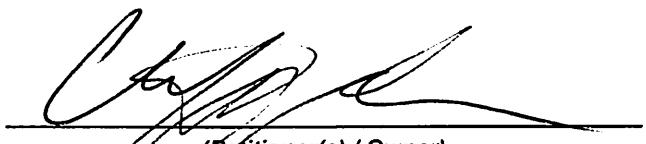
SECTIONS OF ZONING ORDINANCE CITED :

Article 5.000 Section 5.33 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Article 11.000 Section 11.203.5.A,B (Affordable Housing).

Article 10.000 Section 10.30 (Variance).

Original Signature(s) :



(Petitioner(s) / Owner)

Clifford Schorer

(Print Name)

Address : 10 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

Tel. No. : (508)726-5445

E-Mail Address : cschorer@gmail.com

Date : November 26, 2019

BZA APPLICATION FORM - OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

To be completed by OWNER, signed before a notary and returned to
The Secretary of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

I/We Central Square Redevelopment
(OWNER)

Address: 10 TURNPIKE RD. SOUTHBOROUGH, MA

State that I/We own the property located at 544-550 MHSS AVE., which is the subject of this zoning application.

The record title of this property is in the name of CENTRAL Square
Redevelopment

*Pursuant to a deed of duly recorded in the date _____, Middlesex South
County Registry of Deeds at Book _____, Page _____; or
Middlesex Registry District of Land Court, Certificate No. _____

Book _____ Page _____. .

**SIGNATURE BY LAND OWNER OR
AUTHORIZED TRUSTEE, OFFICER OR AGENT***

*Written evidence of Agent's standing to represent petitioner may be requested.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of Middlesex

The above-name Clifford J. Schorer III personally appeared before me, this 14th of November, 2019, and made oath that the above statement is true.

LAIARSHIA R. ELLISON
Notary Public (Notary Seal)
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Commission Expires Mar 20, 2026

- If ownership is not shown in recorded deed, e.g. if by court order, recent deed, or inheritance, please include documentation.

BZA APPLICATION FORM

DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT: Cliff Schorer PRESENT USE/OCCUPANCY: Retail, Office

LOCATION: 544 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA ZONE: Business B Zone/CSQ Overlay

PHONE: REQUESTED USE/OCCUPANCY: Retail, Residential

	<u>EXISTING CONDITIONS</u>	<u>REQUESTED CONDITIONS</u>	<u>ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS</u> ¹	
<u>TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA:</u>	7,879	17,436	20,550	(max.)
<u>LOT AREA:</u>	4,391	4,391	None	(min.)
<u>RATIO OF GROSS FLOOR AREA TO LOT AREA:</u> ²	1.79	3.97	4.0 (SP)	(max.)
<u>LOT AREA FOR EACH DWELLING UNIT:</u>	N/A	151sf	300sf	(min.)
<u>SIZE OF LOT:</u>	WIDTH	49.98'	N/C	None
	DEPTH	89'	N/C	None
<u>SETBACKS IN FEET:</u>	FRONT	0'	N/C	None
	REAR	0'	N/C	None
	LEFT SIDE	5' & 8'	N/C	None
	RIGHT SIDE	0'	N/C	None
<u>SIZE OF BLDG.:</u>	HEIGHT	42'	69' 6"	80' (SP)
	LENGTH	92'	92'	None
	WIDTH	44'	49'	None
<u>RATIO OF USABLE OPEN SPACE TO LOT AREA:</u>	0	1,400	0	(min.)
<u>NO. OF DWELLING UNITS:</u>	0	29	20	(max.)
<u>NO. OF PARKING SPACES:</u>	0	0	.5/du	(min./max)
<u>NO. OF LOADING AREAS:</u>	0	0	None	(min.)
<u>DISTANCE TO NEAREST BLDG. ON SAME LOT:</u>	N/A	N/C	N/A	(min.)

Describe where applicable, other occupancies on same lot, the size of adjacent buildings on same lot, and type of construction proposed, e.g.; wood frame, concrete, brick, steel, etc.

N/A

1. SEE CAMBRIDGE ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE 5.000, SECTION 5.30 (DISTRICT OF DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS).
2. TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA (INCLUDING BASEMENT 7'-0" IN HEIGHT AND ATTIC AREAS GREATER THAN 5') DIVIDED BY LOT AREA.
3. OPEN SPACE SHALL NOT INCLUDE PARKING AREAS, WALKWAYS OR DRIVEWAYS AND SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM DIMENSION OF 15'.

BZA APPLICATION FORM

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR A VARIANCE

EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS FOR A VARIANCE MUST BE ESTABLISHED AND SET FORTH IN COMPLETE DETAIL BY THE APPLICANT IN ACCORDANCE WITH MGL 40A, SECTION 10:

- A)** A Literal enforcement of the provisions of this Ordinance would involve a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant for the following reasons:

A literal enforcement of the Ordinance would require the loss of local retailers and enlargement of the floorplate of each floor to allow for larger residential units, given the extreme high-cost of infill construction and engineering reinforcements required. There is substantial demand for inclusionary and market units at a smaller scale and price point. It is this demand that alleviates the substantial financial hardship of preserving and renovating existing building.

- B)** The hardship is owing to the following circumstances relating to the soil conditions, shape or topography of such land or structures and especially affecting such land or structures but not affecting generally the zoning district in which it is located for the following reasons:

The building is a very unusual shape having been developed over 100 years with additions. There is an easement for public emergency access that runs through the property alley which must be preserved, and the rear of the building may not be increased in height due to existing support structure of a different height to the floors. The area per floor is broken up by the requirement to add an elevator and emergency stair egress. This provides only very small spaces for units. The hardship in this particular location would be great for larger unit sizes.

C) DESIRABLE RELIEF MAY BE GRANTED WITHOUT EITHER:

- 1)** Substantial detriment to the public good for the following reasons:

There is substantial demand for this smaller scale and less expensive housing in Central Square. It will relieve pressure on larger family units in the surrounding neighborhood. With the loss of many SRO and lodging accommodations in the Central Square Area, this is a much needed housing stock category. There is no esthetic, traffic, or quality of life impact and the overall FAR is within the new CSQ guidelines. Permitting this Variance will create 4 additional Inclusionary units which are available at 25% of the applicant's income rather than the usual 30%. The new ordinance is creating far fewer smaller units (16% under old ordinance/12% under new ordinance) and this is a serious need that will only increase. Nearly 50% of the entire need in the City of Cambridge, based on existing inclusionary, is single person occupancy.

- 2)** Relief may be granted without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of this Ordinance for the following reasons:

There will be no change to the proposed exterior of the building and this will allow the improvement of an obsolete structure in the middle of Central Square without displacing the local retailers. As the overall project is very low scale and a small urban infill, rather than the large scale residential development the ordinance is designed to address, this is an exception that is very specific to the challenges of this site that creates enough value to justify the enormous cost per foot, which has permitted most of this side of Mass Ave to fall into long term neglect.

- * If You have any questions as to whether you can establish all of the applicable legal requirements, you should consult with your own attorney.

BZA APPLICATION FORM

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR A SPECIAL PERMIT

Please describe in complete detail how you meet each of the following criteria referring to the property and proposed changes or uses which are requested in your application. Attach sheets with additional information for special permits which have additional criteria, e.g.; fast food permits, comprehensive permits, etc., which must be met.

Granting the Special Permit requested for 544 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA (location) would not be a detriment to the public interest because:

- A) Requirements of the Ordinance can or will be met for the following reasons:
All other requirements of the Ordinance are met. The variance addresses only the need for additional DU per lot area, due to the inclusion of small units.
- B) Traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would not cause congestion hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character for the following reasons:
There is no change to the access and egress and no additional parking or traffic impact anticipated. This is perfectly located above public transportation and has been a failure as office and assembly space on the upper floors leading to deterioration. There is substantial demand in this area for smaller housing units and this number will have no detrimental effect on the overall traffic burden of the area.
- C) The continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would not be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use for the following reasons:
There are numerous local retailers and especially restauranteurs who would only benefit by the addition of residential on this portion of Mass Ave.
- D) Nuisance or hazard would not be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City for the following reasons:
There is no impact on public safety, health or welfare. Units are served by public water and waste.
- E) For other reasons, the proposed use would not impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district or otherwise derogate from the intent or purpose of this ordinance for the following reasons:
This is entirely in the spirit of the recent Zoning changes to the CSQ Overlay in encouraging reuse of obsolete and dilapidated structures and renovation of infill properties which would be too costly without the availability of variances and special permits.

544 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

542-550 Massachusetts, Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

OWNER

Cliff Schorer

xx xxx xxx

xxt, MA xxx

ARCHITECT

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.

1904 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

SURVEY

BOSTON SURVEY, INC.

C4 Shipway Place

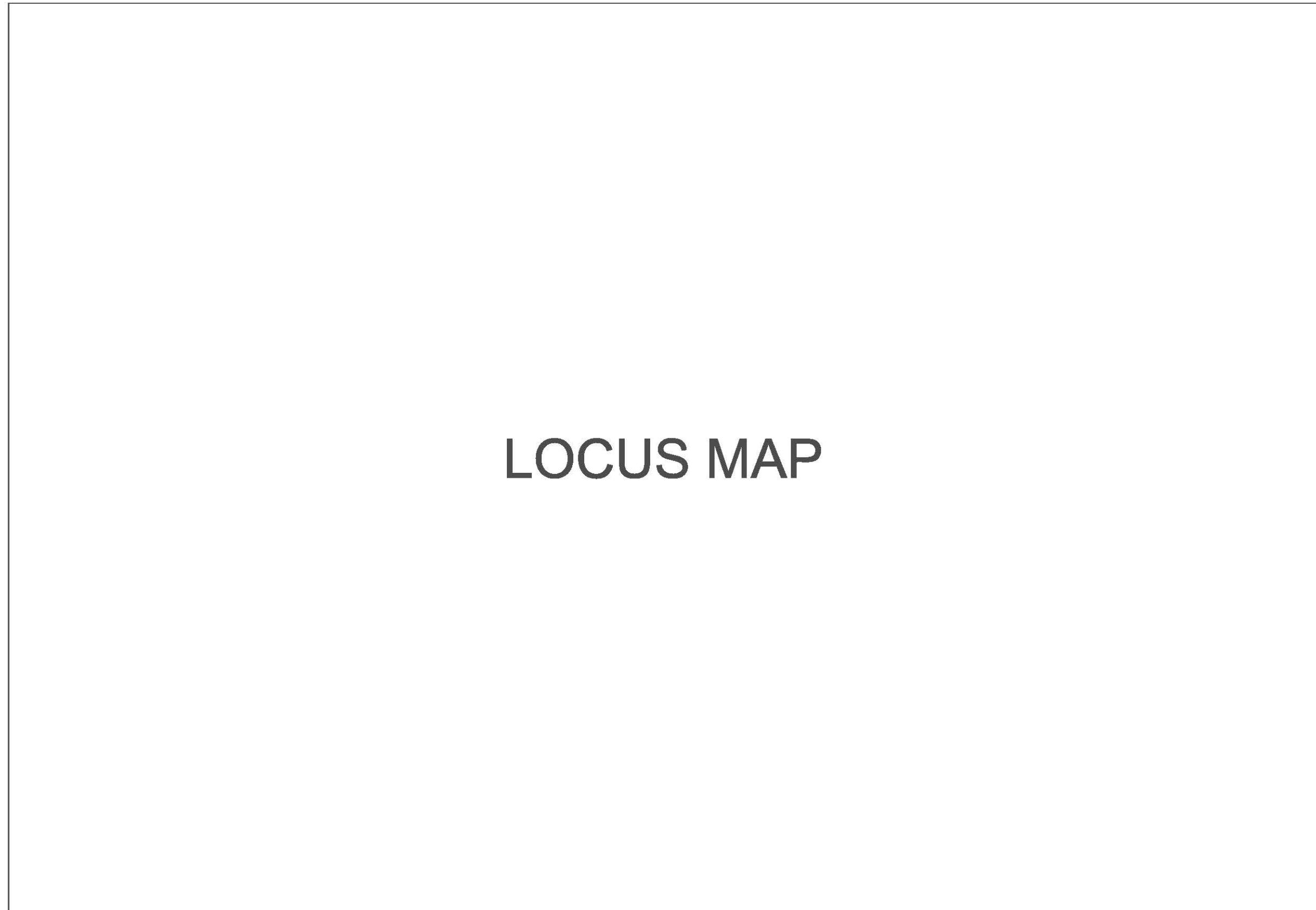
Charlestown, MA 02129

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

LeMESSURIER

1380 Soldiers Field Rd

Boston, MA 02135



LOCUS MAP

DRAWING INDEX

COVER SHEET

A1.1	BASEMENT, SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR PLANS
A1.2	FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH AND ROOF FLOOR PLANS
A2.1	EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS
A3.1	SECTIONS

ZONING:

	Ord. Req.	Existing	Proposed
District:		BB / CSQ Overlay	
Total Grss Flr Area:	22,833 gsf	7,879 gsf	17,436 gsf
Lot Area:		4,391 sf ±	No change
Ratio of Gross Floor Area to Lot Area:	3.97	.56	2.75 / 3.0 (4.0 S.P.)
Width:		50ft	No change
Setbacks:			
Front:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Left Side:	0'-0"	5' & 8'	0' & 8'
Right Side:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Rear:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Max Height:	55'-0"-(80'-0" SP)	TBD	69'-6"
Size of Building:			
Height:			69'-6"
Length:		92'-0"	No change
Width:		44' & 41'	49' & 41'
No. Dwelling Units:		N/A	29
No. Parking Spaces:			
No. Loading Areas:			

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

544 Mass Ave
543-550 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

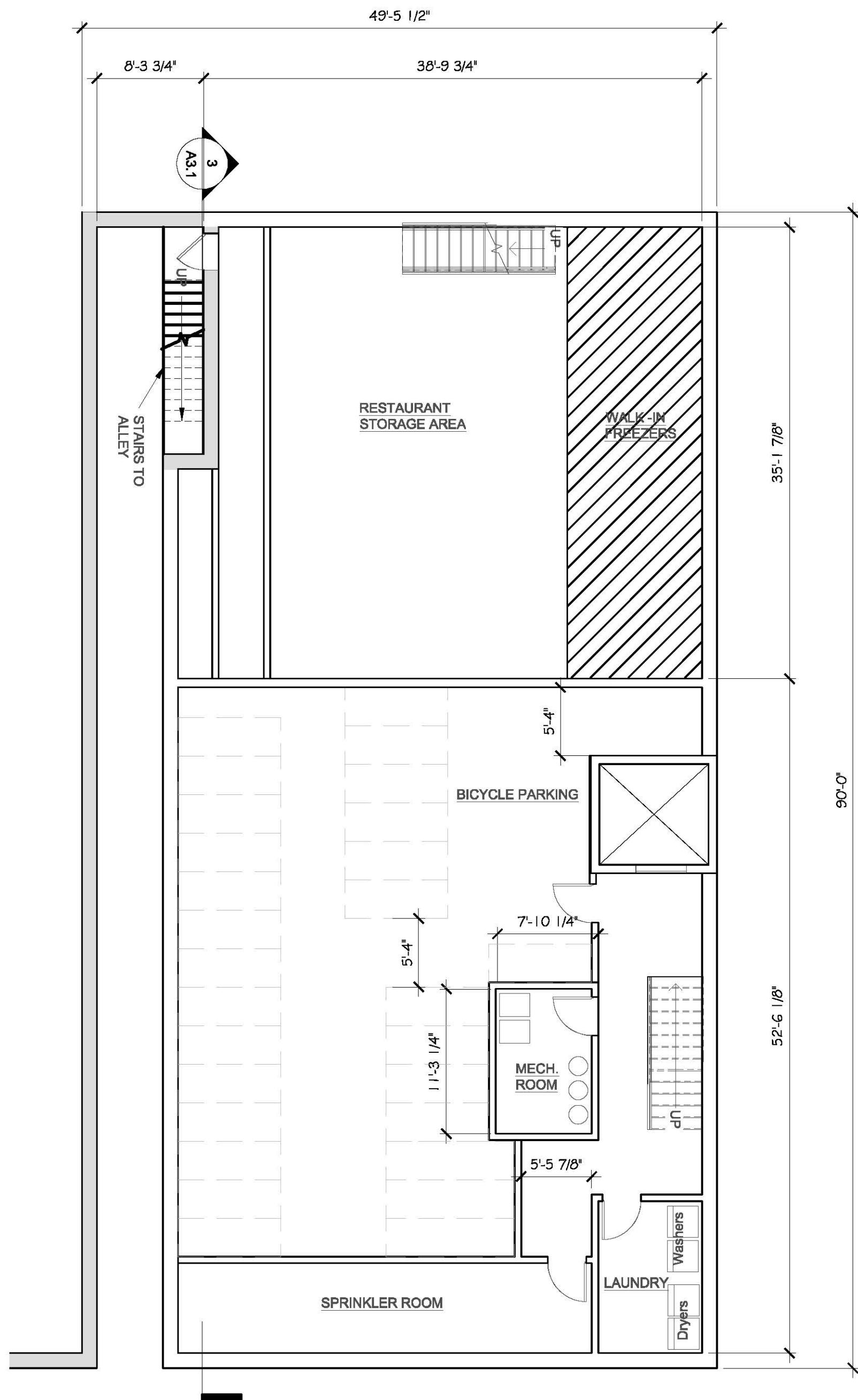
CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617 661-6566 TEL
617 661-6622 FAX
Incorporated 1980

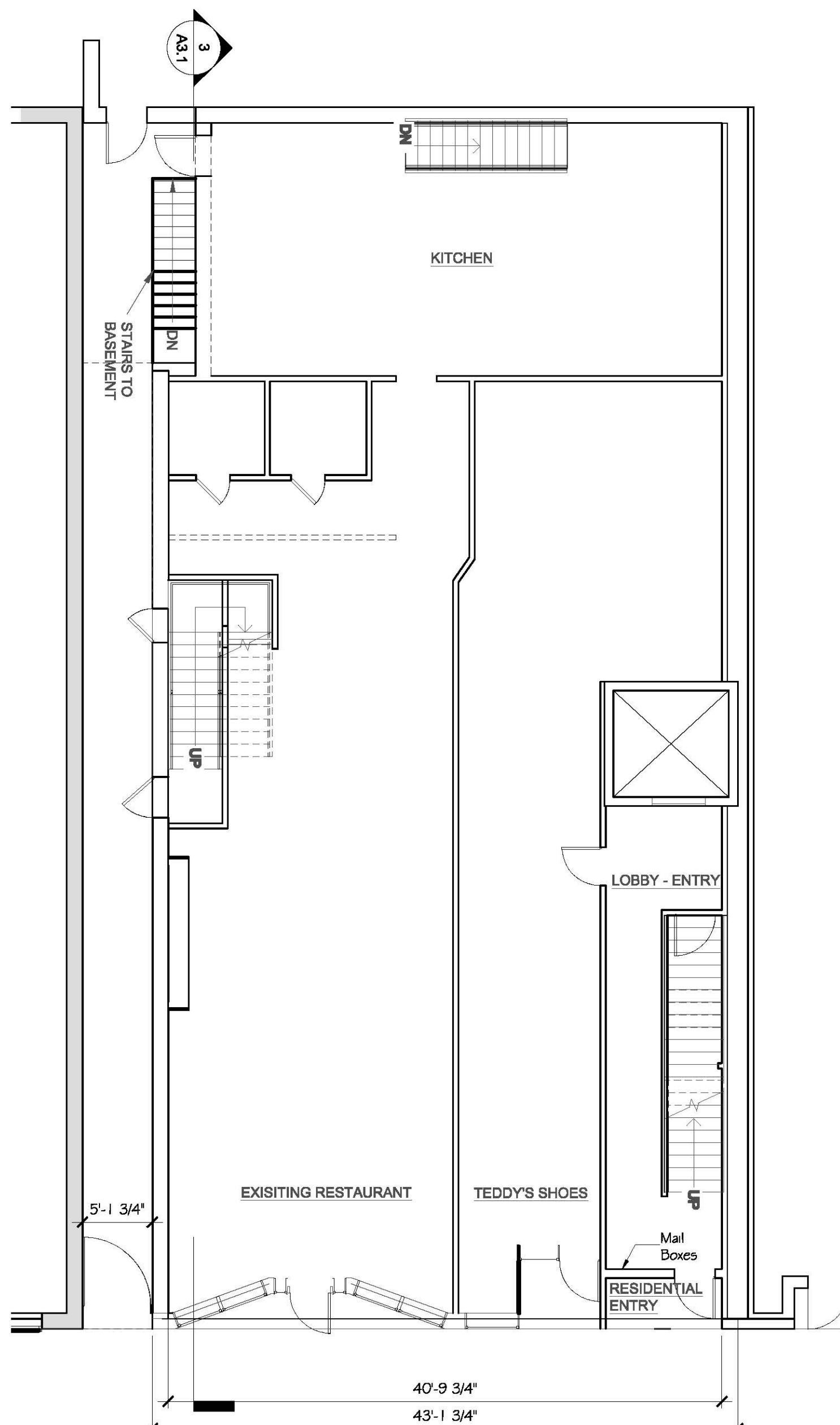
drawing title:
**BASEMENT, 1st,
2nd & 3rd FLR PLANS**

scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
date: 9/19/2019
drawn by: KG
project #: 1703

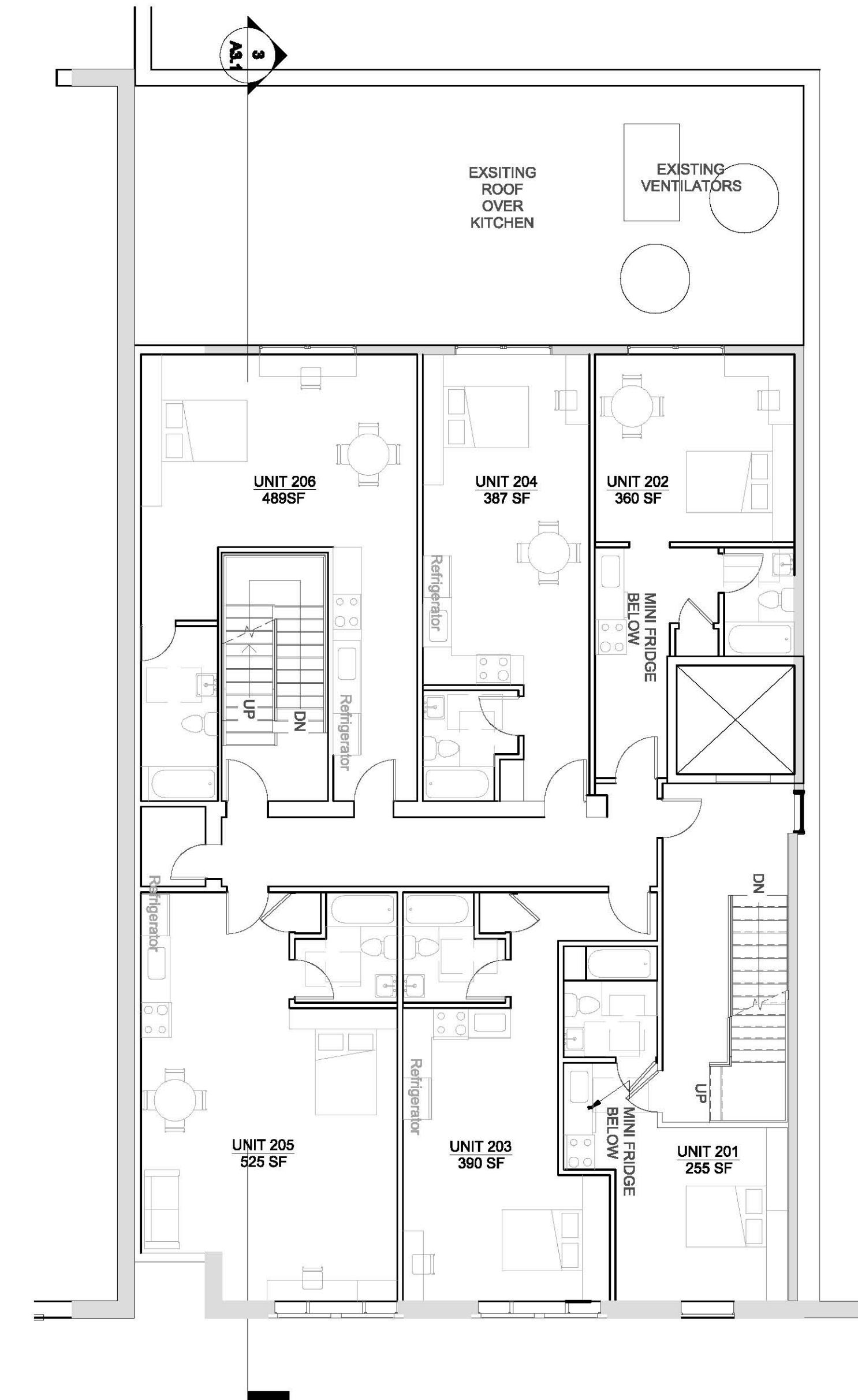
A1.1



BASEMENT PLAN



1ST FLOOR PLAN



2ND FLOOR PLAN (3rd Sim)

Key Plan

544 Mass Ave
642-650 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

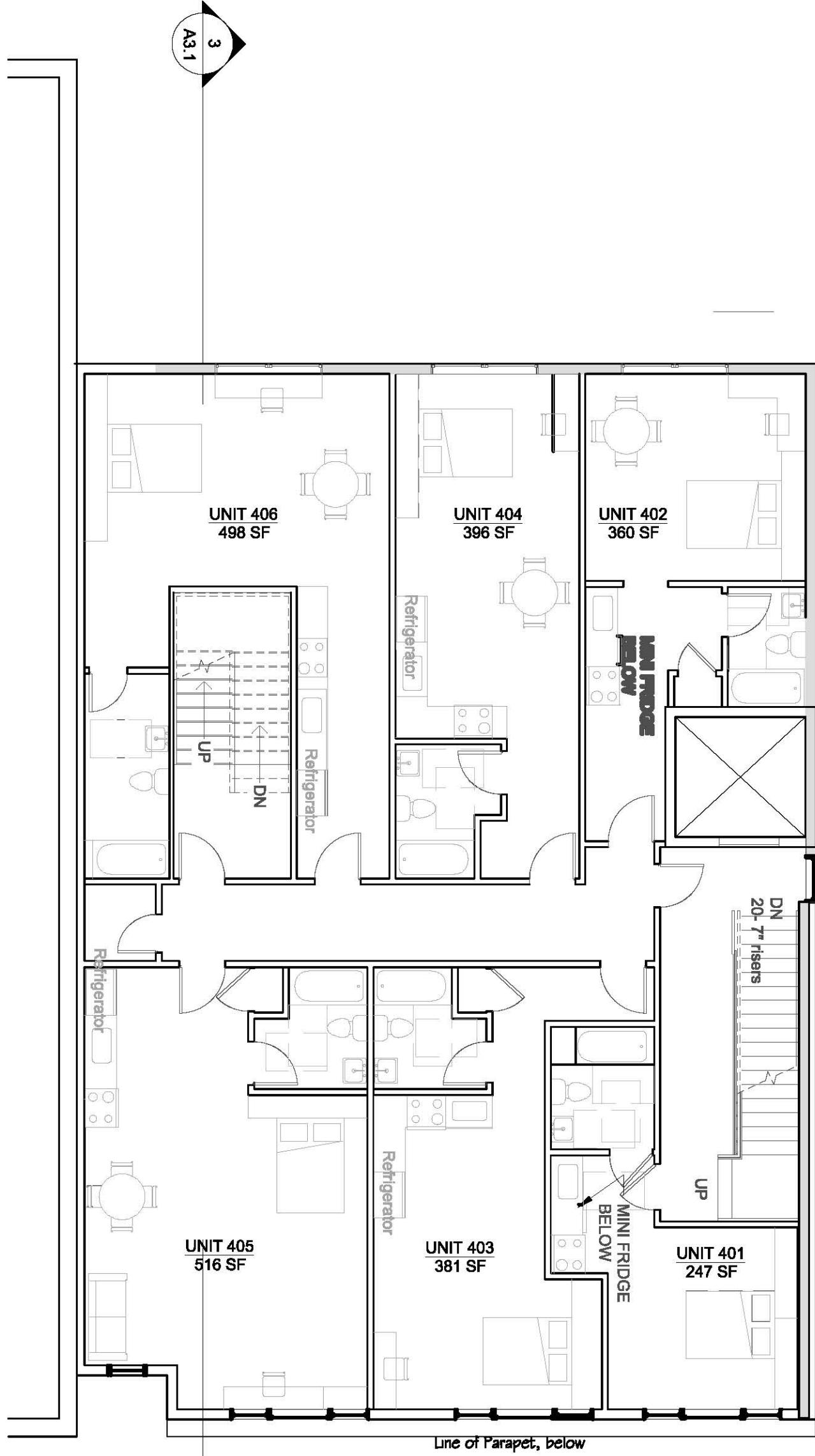
CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
 Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1804 Massachusetts Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02140
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 Incorporated 1980

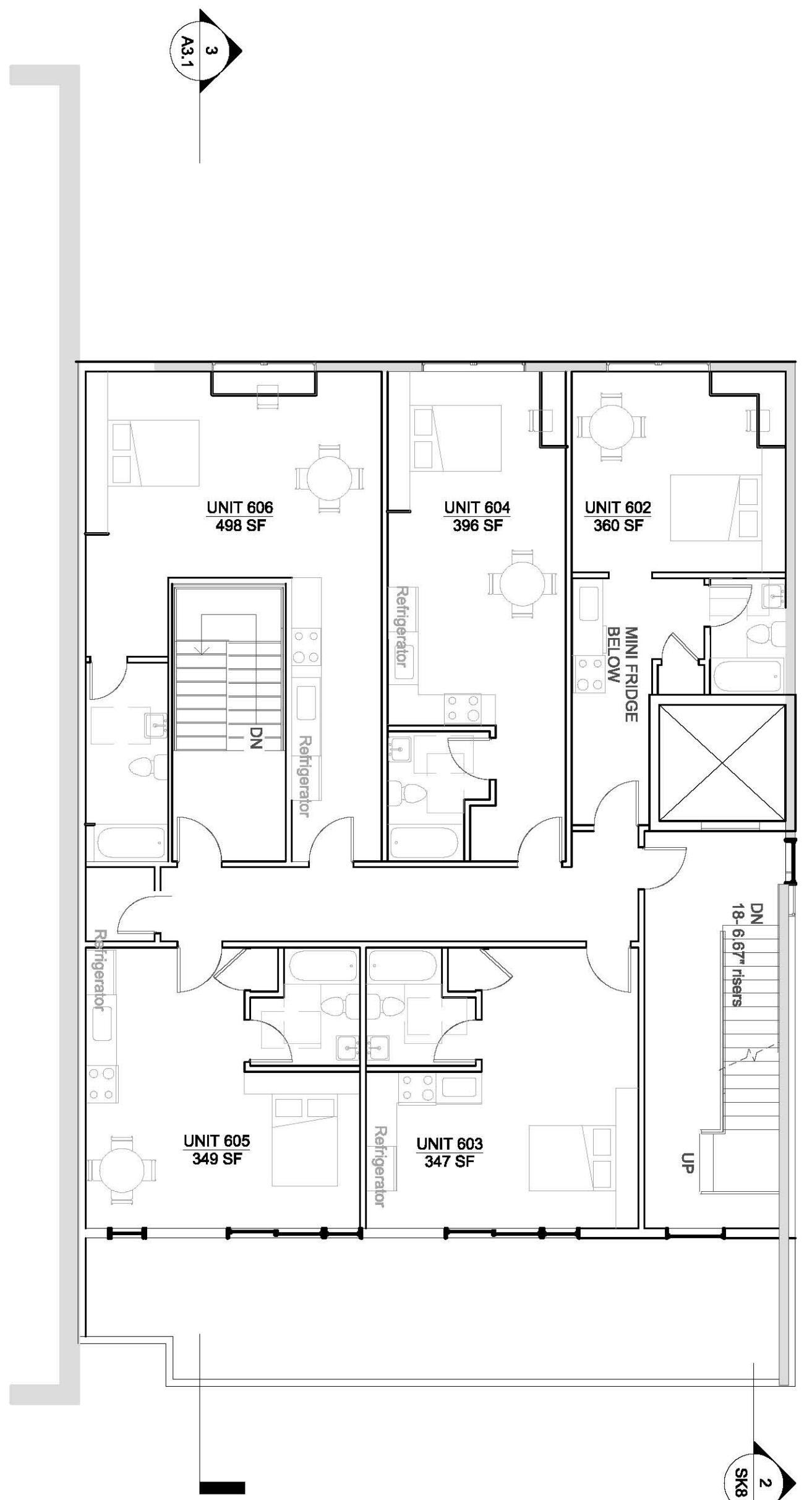
drawing title:
**4th, 5th, 6th &
 ROOF FLR PLANS**

scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
 date: 9/19/2019
 drawn by: KG
 project #: 1703

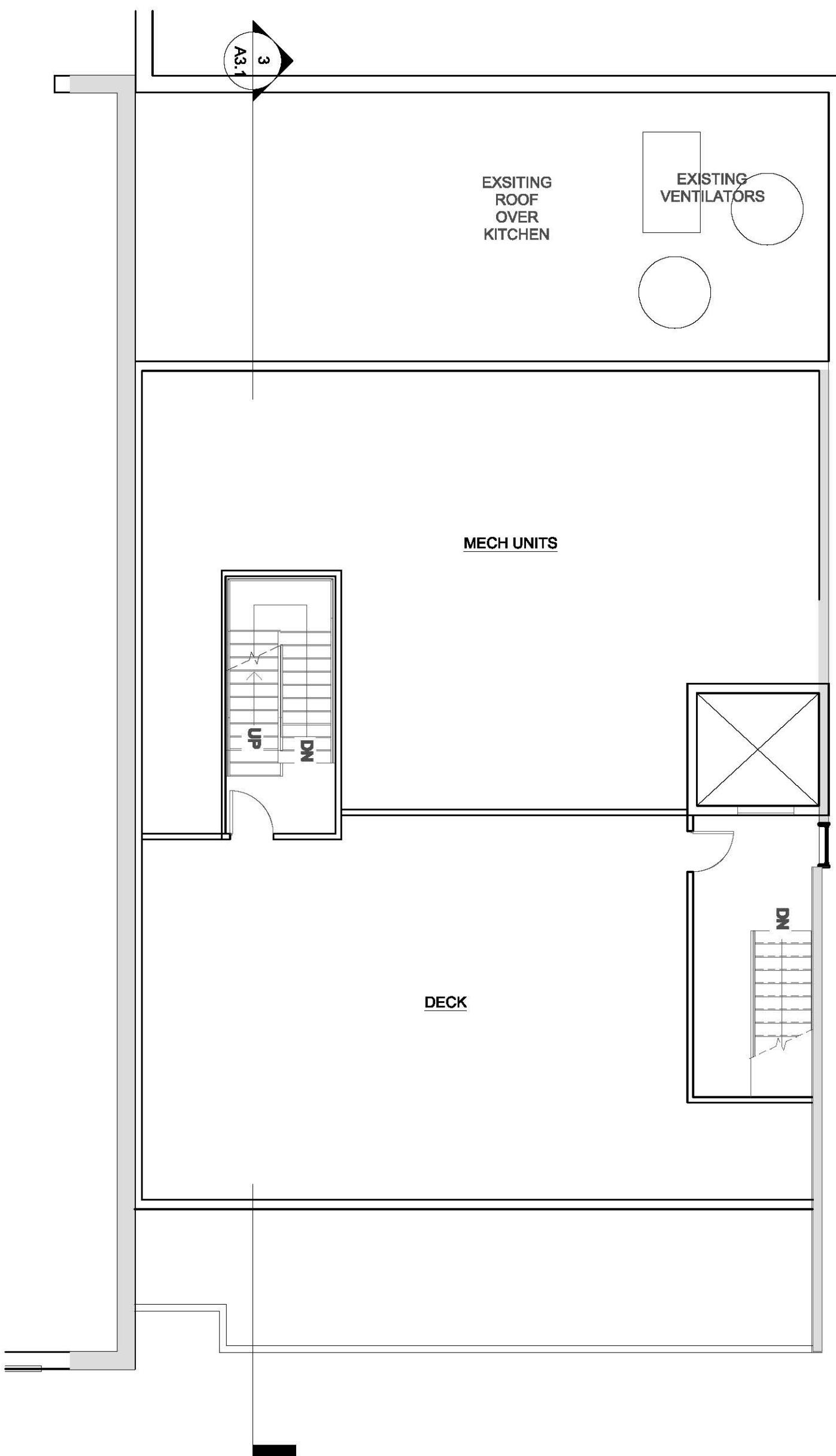
A1.2



4TH & 5TH FLOOR PLAN



6TH FLOOR PLAN



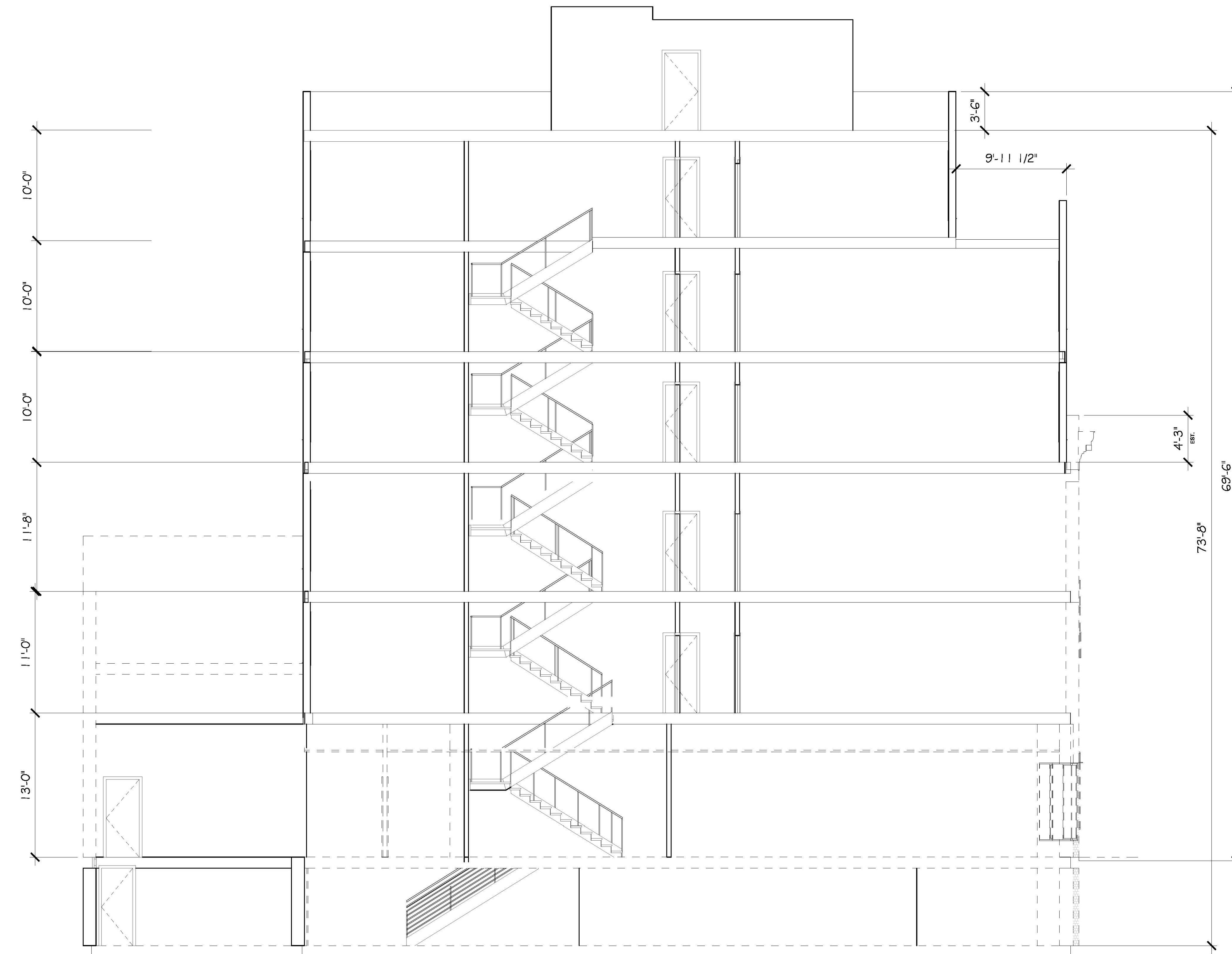
ROOF PLAN

A

B

C

D



544 Mass Ave
642-650 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-661-6564 TEL
617-661-6822 FAX
Incorporated 1980

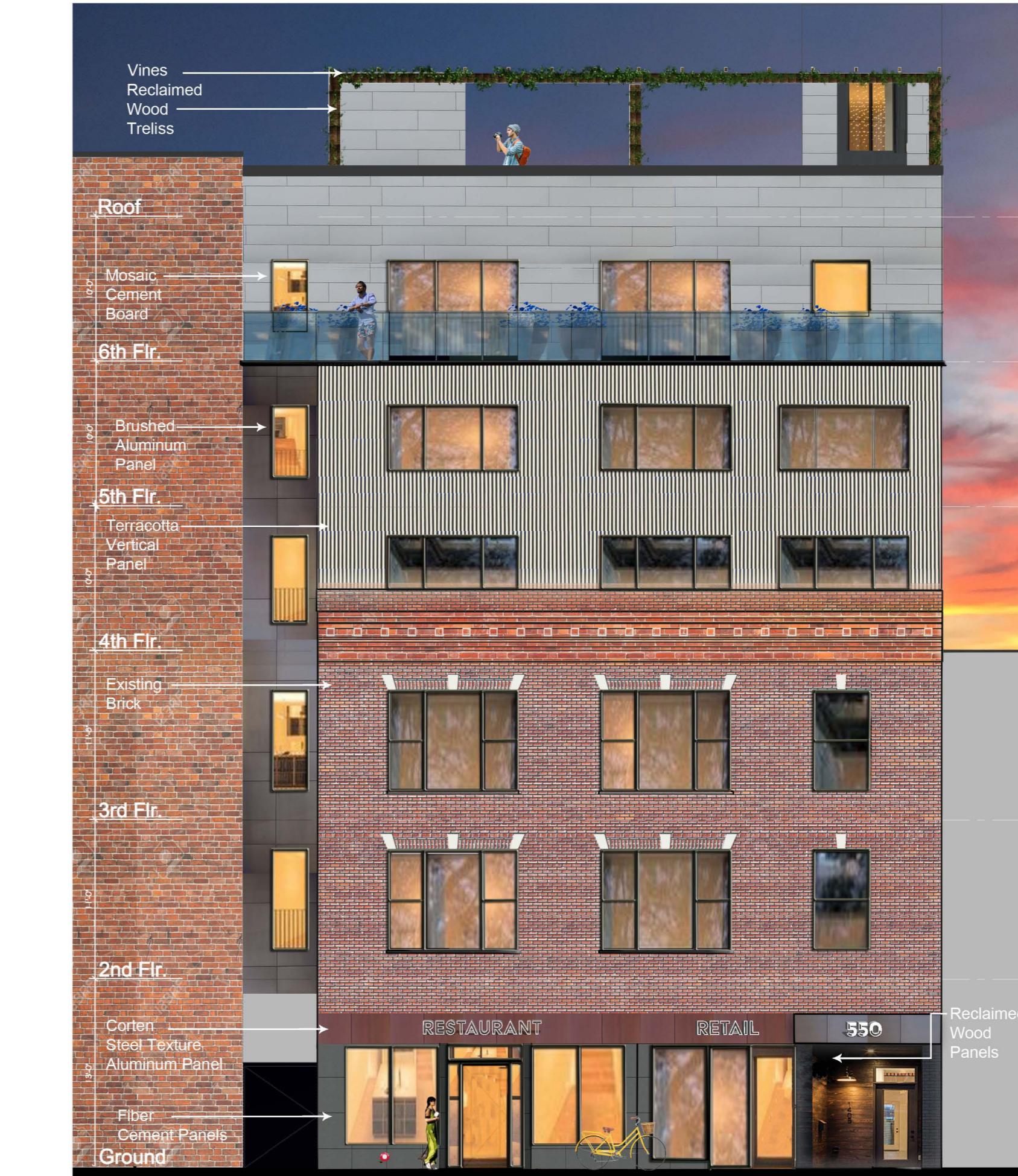
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SECTION

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drawn by: KG
project #: 1703

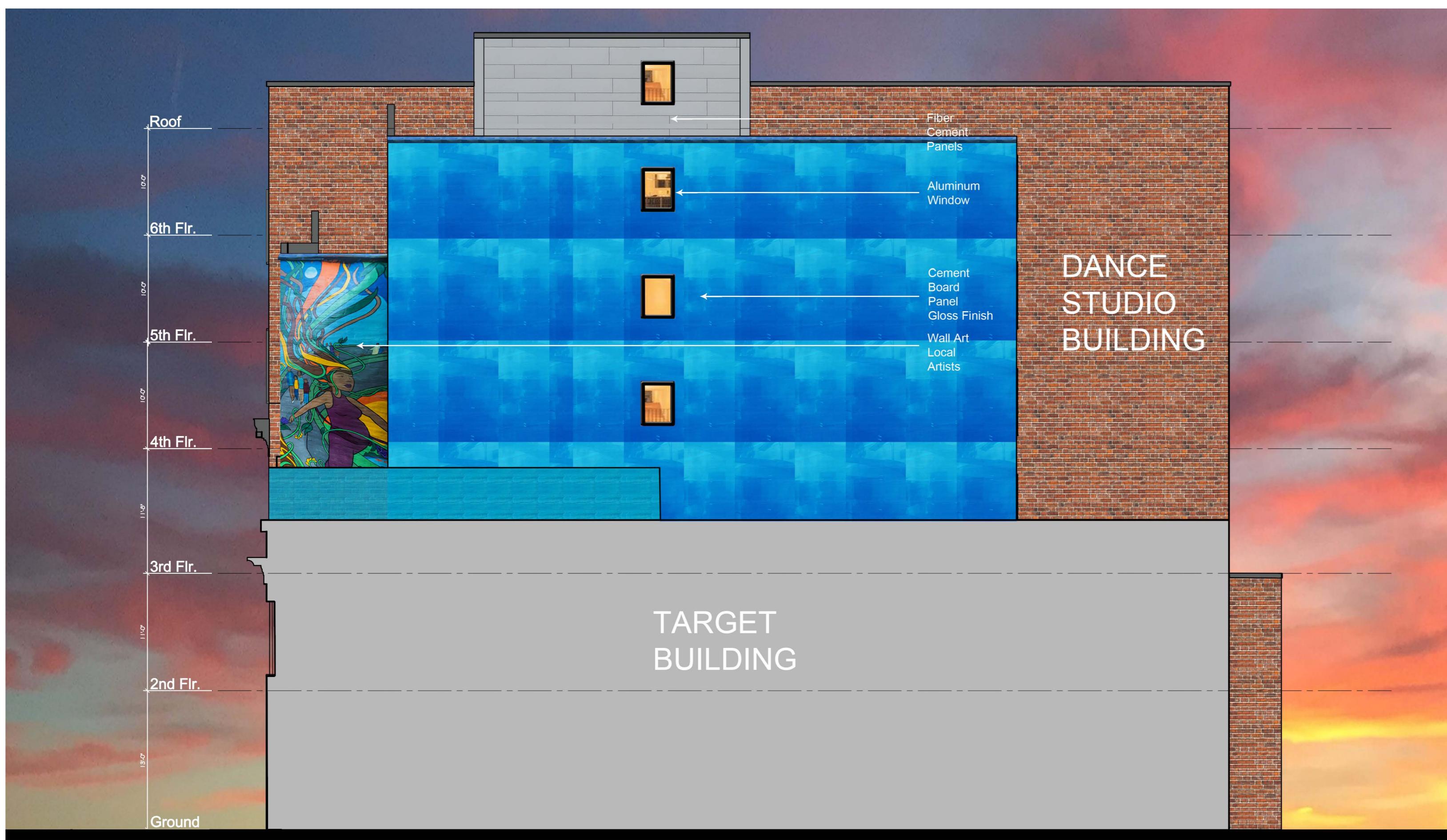
A3.1



2 SOUTHWEST ELEVATION
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 NORTHEAST ELEVATION
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"



3 NORTHWEST ELEVATION
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

Revisions:
no. date description

Key Plan

544 Mass Ave
544 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617 661-6566 TEL
617 661-6822 FAX
Incorporated 1980

drawing title:
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

scale:
date: 9/19/2019
drawn by:
project #: 1703

drawing no:

A 2.1



City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA.
(617) 349-6100

BZA

POSTING NOTICE – PICK UP SHEET

The undersigned picked up the notice board for the Board of Zoning Appeals Hearing.

Name: James Gakke Date: 12/19/19
(Print)

Address: 544 Mass Ave

Case No. BZA-017219 J019

Hearing Date: 1/9/20

Thank you,
Bza Members

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
INSPECTIONAL SERVICES**

**2019 DEC 26 AM 10:00
MEMORANDUM**

To: Cliff Schorer
From: Jean Hermann, RA
Date: December 24, 2019
Re: 544 Massachusetts Avenue - Parking Requirements

Per our telephone conversation yesterday afternoon, we have reviewed the parking requirements for the referenced building in the Cambridge Zoning Code. As noted in earlier conversations with you and overlooked at the time the Zoning form was filled out, the relevant paragraphs of the Zoning Code are as follows:

20.300 - CENTRAL SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT

20.304.6 Parking and Loading Requirements.

The provisions set forth in Article 6.000 shall apply except as modified by the provisions set below.

1. Maximum Parking. Where any of the following listed uses are established in the Central Square Overlay District as of August 1, 2016, the accessory off-street parking for such uses shall be limited by the maximum rates set forth below. For uses not listed below, any maximum rate set forth in Article 6.000 shall apply. Exceeding the maximum allowed parking shall require a waiver of maximum parking under the general provisions of Article 6.000.
 - (a) Residential Uses (6.36.1), excluding Hotel and Motel (i-2 and i-3): 0.75 space per dwelling unit
 - (e) Retail and Consumer Service Establishments (6.36.5): 0.50 space per 1,000 square feet
2. Minimum Parking and Loading. The minimum parking and loading requirements as specified in Section 6.36 Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements shall apply except as set forth below:
 - (a) For Residential Uses (6.36.1), excluding Hotel and Motel (i-2 and i-3), the minimum required parking ratio shall be 0.50 space per dwelling unit.
3. Waiver of Parking and Loading Requirements. Uses in the Central Square Overlay District which meet the following requirements shall be exempt from the parking and loading requirements as specified in Section 6.36 - Schedule of Parking and Loading Requirements and the minimum requirements set forth in Paragraph 2 above.
 - (a) The use is contained within a structure or portion of a structure in existence on or before June 1, 1940 or if constructed later is identified as a National Register or contributing building; or
 - (b) The use is contained in a new structure or new addition to a structure identified in (1.) above, after the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board provided:
 - (i) The total development authorized on the site is reduced to ninety (90) percent of the maximum permitted on the lot; or a cash contribution is made to the Central Square Improvement Fund to be established by the City of Cambridge in an amount equal to fifty (50) percent of the cost of construction of the parking spaces not provided, said contribution to be used by the City of Cambridge for one or more of the following improvements in the Central Square Overlay District:

A revised "BZA Application Form Dimensional Information" is attached.

BZA APPLICATION FORM

DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION Assembly / A-2
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE Business / B
INSPECTION & SERVICES PRESENT USE/OCCUPANCY: Mercantile / M
APPLICANT: Cliff Schonaker

LOCATION: 542-550 Massachusetts Avenue
Central Square **ZONE:** BB / CSQ Overlay

PHONE: 508-726-5445 **REQUESTED USE/OCCUPANCY:** Mercantile / M
Residential / R-2

	<u>EXISTING CONDITIONS</u>	<u>REQUESTED CONDITIONS</u>	<u>ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS</u> ¹
<u>TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA:</u>	7,879gsf	17,436gsf	20,550gsf (max.)
<u>LOT AREA:</u>	4,391sf	No Change	(min.)
<u>RATIO OF GROSS FLOOR AREA TO LOT AREA:²</u>	.56	3.97	2.75/4.0 (SP) (max.)
<u>LOT AREA FOR EACH DWELLING UNIT:</u>	N/A	151sf	300sf (min.)
<u>SIZE OF LOT:</u>	WIDTH	49.98'	No Change (min.)
	DEPTH	89'	No Change None (min.)
<u>Setbacks in Feet:</u>	FRONT	0'	No Change None (min.)
	REAR	0'	No Change None (min.)
	LEFT SIDE	5' & 8'	0' & 8' None (min.)
	RIGHT SIDE	0'	No Change None (min.)
<u>SIZE OF BLDG.:</u>	HEIGHT	42'+/-	69'-6" 55' (80' SP) (max.)
	LENGTH	92'	No Change
	WIDTH	44' & 41' 0	49' & 41' None
<u>RATIO OF USABLE OPEN SPACE TO LOT AREA:³</u>	0sf	1,400sf	0sf (min.)
<u>NO. OF DWELLING UNITS:</u>	0	29	20 (max.)
<u>NO. OF PARKING SPACES:</u>	0	0	0 (min./max)
<u>NO. OF LOADING AREAS:</u>	0	No Change	(min.)
<u>DISTANCE TO NEAREST BLDG. ON SAME LOT:</u>	N/A	No Change	N/A (min.)

Describe where applicable, other occupancies on same lot, the size of adjacent buildings on same lot, and type of construction proposed, e.g.; wood frame, concrete, brick, steel, etc.

N/A

1. SEE CAMBRIDGE ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE 5.000, SECTION 5.30 (DISTRICT OF DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS).
 2. TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA (INCLUDING BASEMENT 7'-0" IN HEIGHT AND ATTIC AREAS GREATER THAN 5') DIVIDED BY LOT AREA.
 3. OPEN SPACE SHALL NOT INCLUDE PARKING AREAS, WALKWAYS OR DRIVEWAYS AND SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM DIMENSION OF 15'.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

December 19, 2019

To: The Board of Zoning Appeal

From: The Planning Board

RE: BZA cases to be heard on January 9, 2019

The Planning Board will not hold a meeting by the January 9th agenda date and will not have any review.



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112

E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic

Bruce A. Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Barton Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
William G. Barry, Jr., Joseph V. Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Jurisdiction Advice

To the Owner of Property at 544 Massachusetts Ave.

The above-referenced property is subject to the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) by reason of the status referenced below:

- Old Cambridge Historic District
 - Fort Washington Historic District
 - (M.G.L. Ch. 40C, City Code §2.78.050)
 - Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District
 - Half Crown – Marsh Neighborhood Conservation District
 - Harvard Square Conservation District
 - Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District
 - Designated Landmark
 - Property is being studied for designation:
(City Code, Ch. 2.78., Article III, and various City Council Orders)
 - Preservation Restriction or Easement (as recorded)
 - Structures are fifty years or more old and is therefore subject to CHC review of any application for a demolition permit, if one is required by ISD. (City Code, Ch. 2.78, Article II). See the back of this page for definition of demolition.
If the project will require a demolition permit (such as for reconstruction, full demolition or partial demolition), it will require a hearing with the Historical Commission as the building is located in the Central Square National Register District.
 - No jurisdiction: not a designated historic property and the structure is less than fifty years old.
 - No local jurisdiction, but the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; CHC staff is available for consultation, upon request.
- Staff comments: _____

The Board of Zoning Appeal advises applicants to complete Historical Commission or Neighborhood Conservation District Commission reviews before appearing before the Board.

If a line indicating possible jurisdiction is checked, the owner needs to consult with the staff of the Historical Commission to determine whether a hearing will be required.

CHC staff initials SLB

Date January 8, 2020

Received by Uploaded to Energov

Date January 8, 2020

Relationship to project BZA 017219-2019

cc: Applicant
 Inspectional Services Commissioner

Demolition Delay Ordinance and Application Information

The Demolition Delay Ordinance (Chapter 2.78, Article II of the Cambridge Municipal Code) was adopted by the City Council in 1979 to afford public review of demolition permit applications for potentially significant buildings. When the Historical Commission determines that a building is significant and should be preserved, demolition will be delayed for up to six months so that solutions can be sought to preserve the building indefinitely. The Ordinance covers all buildings over 50 years old, city-wide. The Historical Commission archives provide dates of construction for all properties in the City.

Demolition is defined in the ordinance as "the act of pulling down, destroying, removing or razing a building or commencing the work of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same." The Inspectional Services Commissioner has provided further guidelines to outline what actions require a demolition permit. **In addition to complete demolition of a building, the following actions may require a demolition permit,**

- **removal of a roof,**
- **removal of one side of a building,**
- **gutting of a building's interior to the point where exterior features (windows, etc.) are impacted, and**
- **removal of more than 25% of a structure.**

Please contact the building inspector or a staff member of the Historical Commission if you have questions about whether a demolition permit is required for a particular project.

Demolition permit applications can be obtained from the Inspectional Services Department. The completed application should be submitted to the Historical Commission, where the staff will review the application. If the Executive Director of the Historical Commission makes an initial determination that the building is significant, a public hearing will be scheduled with Historical Commission. If the staff makes an initial determination that the building is not significant, the application is released for further review by the Building Commissioner.

More information about the demolition permit application procedures is available on the Historical Commission's web site or by calling or dropping by the Historical Commission office.

July 2003

Cambridge Historical Commission

831 Massachusetts Ave., 2nd Fl.

Cambridge, MA 02139

Ph: 617/349-4683 or TTY: 617/349-6112

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>

Pacheco, Maria

From: Luke Edson <luke.edson01@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2020 3:34 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Public Comment on BZA-017219-2019

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Cambridge resident, and I wanted to write in support of the petition to build 29 micro-studio apartments on a property where 20 units are allowed by-right. Cambridge does not have enough small studio apartments, which forces students and recent graduates to share larger units that could have served families instead. Small, dense units near public transit are also an important piece of meeting Cambridge's environmental goals.

Please approve the variance to allow the construction of these units.

Sincerely,

Luke Edson
29 Frost St
Cambridge, MA

Studio at 550
550 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-863-2550
www.studioat550.org
callie@studioat550.org

January 8, 2020

To the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals:

We are writing to protest case# BZA-017219-2019, for a variance for the building addressed at 544 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge due to objections to the following:

The applicant, Cliff Schorer is requesting variance request on 3 ordinances: Lot area for each dwelling unit to be decreased from 300sf to 151ft; Number of dwelling units to be increased from 20 to 29; and Number of parking spaces to be decreased from .5/du to 0.

Citing item B of supporting statement where applicant writes, "*There is no change to the access and egress and no additional parking or traffic impact anticipated. This is perfectly located above public transportation and has been a failure as office and assembly space on the upper floors leading to deterioration.*". We object to, especially the last part of the argument noting that Studio at 550 is a very active arts organization who serves nearly 300 artists per week providing much needed rehearsal, class, and performance space which contributes to the cultural identity of Central Square. Since the transfer of ownership of the building Studio at 550 has paid our \$2300/month rent on time every month, contradicting the argument that the business is a "failure" as an assembly space. Studio at 550 provides not just space to artists but also much needed programs and community engagement efforts which not only engage artists, but also neighbors to Central Sq, the greater Boston arts scene, and artists and audiences from throughout New England and beyond.

Studio at 550 has operated in the 3rd floor space since 2016, and while we agree that the building has fallen into disrepair, a more fitting solution to the development of the space would be to make efforts to include an already existing arts space into the plan for development of the building.

Citing item E of the applicant's supporting statement where he argues that the conversion of zoning from retail/office to retail/residential would be "in the spirit of recent Zoning changes to the CSQ Overlay" we would argue the following: There has been some considerable effort in establishing an Arts Overlay District within Central Sq, with Councillor Mallon chairing Mayor McGovern's Arts Task Force in efforts to support existing artists to strengthen Central Square as an Arts and Cultural District. There has been considerable work in advocacy with the newly established Central Square Business Improvement District in the same vein. Converting existing artist space to residential space would directly contradict these efforts blindly knocking out a much needed resource for the community which the City and other agencies are fighting so hard to retain.

From the perspective of leasee of the 3rd floor of 550 Massachusetts Ave., Callie Chapman, Director of Studio at 550:

A) I never was in correspondence with the current landlord (Cliff Schorer) at all before this request was filed. No effort was made on his part to even engage in conversation prior to his application and posting for request of variance..

B) I showed up at 550 Mass Ave. and there was a notice posted on the building only 7 days before the hearing. Even though one of the property owners (Jim) was in the building 1 day before to check on a leak in the ceiling, he never mentioned it while he met with me.

C) The property owner is citing a "hardship" as the reason he is requesting a variance. Whereas due to financial circumstances surrounding his purchase of the building are interesting there is nothing dire to prevent compliance with existing ordinances.

All requests for variance due to the overarching objective to transform existing arts/assembly space into rental apartment units would detrimentally change in the essential character of the neighborhood. Citing multiple efforts by community members, associations, individual businesses, individual artists, arts organizations, City councilors, mayors, and citizens of Cambridge to keep the arts in Central Sq in particular, this project will contradict these efforts and strip one more arts organization from the district. Contributing to the ongoing deterioration of stability for the arts in Cambridge.

With objection to the variances requested,

Signed:

Eric	Bornstein	(617) 417-4961	Artist, Arts Educator, Performer
Aislinn	Brophy	(561) 504-9288	Freelance Theatre Artist & Arts Administrator
Margaux	Skalecki		Director of Theater Arte Being Seen Being Heard
Jack	Tan	(857) 207-7907	Student/Dancer
Irene	Hsi	(510) 304-3877	Choreographer/Renter
Ellen	Godena	(617) 407-2333	Movement Educator/Choreographer
David	Karger	(617) 767-6527	
Katerine	Gagnon	(413) 424-6665	Dancer, Ensemble Inédit
Dayenne	Walters	(617) 894-6885	Member of Dance Community since 1998
Emily	Beattie	(617) 256-8789	Choreographer and Dancer
Carl	Alleyne	(617) 905-0512	Dance Instructor
Anna	Patterson	(781) 439-7601	Arts admin/dancer/choreographer Dance teacher , choreographer and director artistic Papsy Naay Leer Dance Company
Papa	Sy	(631) 805-7172	
Arthur	Duffy	(617) 671-6576	
Meghan	McLyman	(617) 320-4764	Dance Professor at Salem State University
Jason	Weeks	(617) 349-4383	Executive Director/Cambridge Arts Council
Benjamin	Cuba	(508) 736-3871	Dance Accompanist/Studio@550,The Dance Complex
Anastasia	Yendiki	(734) 222-0907	Dance instructor, Flamenco Boston
Erin	Scarry	(857) 600-1714	Independent Performing Artist
Callie	Chapman	(617)863-2550	Director, Studio at 550, Choreographer and Multi-Media Artist
Ivan	Korn	(781)640-7648	Musician

Lalia Roberts 6173317729 - DANCER
Paulyn Bowden 617-429-4656 dancer
Ricard Thibodeau 6179539103 dancer
Malick Ngom 646 934 3041

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals City of Cambridge,

My name is Carl Alleyne and I am a dance instructor and performing artist teaching in the city of Cambridge. I teach at Studio 550, and I and my students love it there! The studio has a great owner in Callie Chapman and a fantastic community.

I am writing in support of Callie Chapman of Studio 550. I've known Callie for a number of years and have rented studio space for a number of years. Studio at 550 is active and has a great community, and is one of the pillars when it comes to dance in Cambridge. Musicians and other artists also go to this location to enhance their craft. I even had the TV show "Chronicle" come and interview me, and we did the interview at the Studio at 550.

This is a very dire time right now, as a lot of artists are displaced and do not have homes to continue to enhance community and culture through the arts.

Converting existing arts space to residential space would put a big dent in our community. I ask that this letter be considered.

Sincerely,

Carl Alleyne
Dance Instructor/ Performing Artist

January 9, 2020

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals, City of Cambridge,

My name is Benjamin Cuba, and I am active, working musician in the Somerville and Cambridge arts community. This letter is in response to the potential and possible closing or rezoning of Studio @550 and other business at the 550 Massachusetts Ave. address. Studio @550 and other businesses and units should not be closed in this process.

Studio @550 provides a useful and exciting space for rehearsals, residencies, and performances for creative, intelligent artists in the Boston dance community. A lot of purposeful and engaging work has been crafted and presented in such a space. Studio @550 has showcased and harnessed the talent from the dancers, choreographers, musicians, and artists across this city, and continues to support projects from experts and novices alike. It is more than merely a studio, but rather a keystone community center where patrons and lovers of the arts can admire and learn from each other.

Furthermore, this rezoning situation has not been executed with much clarity or consideration to the working parties involved.

Central Square should not lose another creative space. Cambridge can achieve a more vibrant artistic community. Please reconsider your efforts to close an already functioning and successful creative space.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Benjamin Cuba

January 9, 2020

To: The Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Cambridge

From: the undersigned dancers

We are writing about the Variance Request submitted by Clifford Schorer. If his variance is granted, Studio 550 will be impacted, possibly removed. Studio 550 is an important resource for the dance community in Cambridge and several of the surrounding cities and towns. It provides rehearsal space for dancers and musicians and performance space for various events. The dance community in Central Square has already been very hard hit by the closure of Green Street Studios to development. Central Square prides itself on being a center for the arts. Don't let Studio 550 be yet another loss for the local dance community.

Sincerely,

Allison Ross
Vicky Steinberg
Sue Penney
Julie Dearoth
Joanie Block
Karen Klein

READY WHEN YOU ARE

6:09 PM

Hi Callie

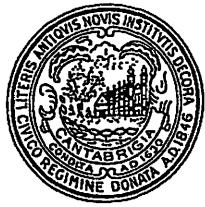
I apologize for the lateness of
this

I tried to get folks to hearing
tonight and it slipped my mind
later today to push

if it helps add any fuel to the
fire you can say that you have
written word from the Dance
Complex that we've not been
recently reached out to about
any details and that we certainly
would have a concern about
the general nature of significant
changes to our view



Thank you Peter. No worries
about lateness. I can see if I



City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA.
(617) 349-6100

2020 JAN 13 AM 11:30

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Board of Zoning Appeal Waiver Form

**The Board of Zoning Appeal
831 Mass Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139**

RE: Case # 017219 - 2019

Address: 544 Mass Ave.

**Owner, Petitioner, or Representative: Cliff Sahas,
(Print Name)**

**Hereby waives the Petitioner's and/or Owner's right to a Decision by the Board of
Zoning Appeal on the above referenced case within the time period as required by
Section 9 or Section 15 of the Zoning Act of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, and/or Section 6409 of the federal Middle
Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, codified as 47 U.S.C. §1455(a), or any
other relevant state or federal regulation or law.**

Date: 1/9/20

Signature

Pacheco, Maria

From: Michael Matson <michaelwmatson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2020 11:29 AM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Case: BZA-017219-2019

Hello,

My name is Michael Matson and I currently live at 48 Bishop Allen Drive in Cambridge. As a renter who will soon be displaced by luxury apartments, I would like to submit my full support for the micro units proposed at 544 Mass Ave.

Cambridge, and in particular Central Square, is severely lacking in affordable housing options. Rents have skyrocketed to the point where residents require a six figure salary in order to deem any of the current units as affordable. The only way to offer immediate relief is rapid housing development to meet the soaring need.

I urge the board to unanimously approve this project and ensure it is built as quickly as possible and takes up the maximum space that is allowed.

Thank you,
Michael Matson



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL
831 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

617 349-6100

2019 NOV 27 AM 11:13

BZA APPLICATION FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS \$9

The undersigned hereby petitions the Board of Zoning Appeal for the following:

Special Permit : _____

Variance :

Appeal : _____

PETITIONER : Central Square Redevelopment LLC - C/O Clifford Schorer

PETITIONER'S ADDRESS : 10 Turnpike Road Southborough, MA 01772

LOCATION OF PROPERTY : 544 Massachusetts Ave Cambridge, MA

TYPE OF OCCUPANCY : Assembly, Merchantile, Residential ZONING DISTRICT : Business B Zone/CSQ Overlay

REASON FOR PETITION :

Other: Lot area per dwelling unit variance

DESCRIPTION OF PETITIONER'S PROPOSAL :

Applicant seeks to build 29 micro-Studio apartments where 20 units of any size are permitted by right. Infill location with small building footprint and existing retailers create a hardship for renovating building into larger spaces.

SECTIONS OF ZONING ORDINANCE CITED :

Article 5.000 Section 5.33 (Table of Dimensional Requirements).

Article 11.000 Section 11.203.5.A,B (Affordable Housing).

Article 10.000 Section 10.30 (Variance).

Original Signature(s) :

(Petitioner(s) / Owner)

Clifford Schorer

(Print Name)

Address : 10 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

Tel. No. : (508)726-5445

E-Mail Address : cschorer@gmail.com

Date : November 26, 2019

1

* * * * *

2 (8:49 p.m.)

3 Sitting Members: Brendan Sullivan, Andrea A. Hickey,
4 Jim Monteverde, Laura Wernick, and Slater
5 W. Anderson

6 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: The Board will hear -- is it
7 8:00 yet? Yes, it is. The Board will hear Case Number
8 017219 -- 2019, 544 Mass Avenue.

9 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Good evening.

10 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Good evening.

11 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay. My name is Cliff Schorer.
12 I'm a managing member of Central Square Redevelopment, which
13 owns 544 - 550 Mass Ave. We are here actually on a very,
14 very fine point.

15 I've been sent here by the Planning Board to begin
16 a process that we began two years ago, which started with
17 environmental remediation, and then spent a year on planning
18 in terms of construction process, et cetera.

19 When we went to planning to discuss the eventual
20 application of a special permit application, we were told
21 that we need to start with the Zoning Board on a formality,
22 because they cannot --

1 COLLECTIVE: Mr. Chair, some people can't hear.

2 Yeah, use the microphone. Get very, very, close to the mic.

3 CLIFFORD SCHORER: -- rule at the Planning Board
4 fine point of our application. And because our application
5 hinges upon this question, they suggested that we make this
6 application prior to our community meetings, which are
7 scheduled, first Cambridge Board community group on the
8 twenty-eighth, and a number of other meetings that are
9 scheduled thereafter.

10 So I just want to be very clear on the fine point,
11 because I've heard some of you raise objections about what
12 we hear about -- specifically plan objections, other issues.

13 Our zoning application before you is merely about
14 the lot area per unit, and it determines what the unit count
15 in the eventual proposal will be that is brought for special
16 permits, that will be pending in the future.

17 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Okay.

18 CLIFFORD SCHORER: So I just want to be very clear
19 about that.

20 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: All right. Let me tell you
21 where I am, and then, you know, we can discuss that.

22 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay.

1 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Section 20.303.1 of the
2 ordinance:

3 "Central Square Overlay District shall be
4 considered an area of special planning. The development
5 proposal is listed in subsection 19, except that any large
6 project review, new buildings of 2,000 square feet or more,
7 which you are putting up a new building -- 2,000 square feet
8 or more -- shall be conducted in large project review, shall
9 be conducted by the Central Square Advisory Committee using
10 procedures as specified in subsection 20.

11 "The committee shall undertake all large project
12 reviews, and shall receive all application for variances and
13 special permits for activities within the Central Square
14 Overlay District for review and comment.

15 "Within the six months preceding any application,
16 the committee shall prepare a written report of findings and
17 recommendations with respect to the applicant's proposed
18 project. The report shall be forwarded to the applicant,
19 and shall be included any application for building permit,
20 special permit or variance.

21 "It is expected that in making a decision
22 regarding special permits and variances within the Overlay

1 District, the Planning Board and/or the Board of Zoning
2 Appeal will give due consideration to the report and
3 recommendation of the Advisory Committee."

4 Then it was talking about the maximum height and
5 what have you. I guess my question is, have you been before
6 the Central Square Overlay District Commission?

7 CLIFFORD SCHORER: We informally met yesterday, at
8 their request, through actually the Central Square Business
9 Committee I believe it is -- the office Michael Monestime
10 runs, and they had an informal meeting yesterday morning, at
11 which we discussed the idea of having that process before we
12 passed the zoning question, and the discussion was that to
13 do so would be to rule on a project that doesn't yet have a
14 basis.

15 So in other words, the Planning Board has still
16 got the special permit authority that you address in there,
17 and therefore between the two meetings, open this meeting,
18 sound the opinion of the zoning on this fine question, the
19 question that the Planning Board cannot rule on, and then we
20 go and do that process for the X number of months.

21 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Well, my feeling is that you
22 need to go before the Central Square Advisory Committee with

1 a formal plan, have a hearing on that, and hearing of use,
2 and then have them file a report to any permit granting
3 authority. I think that's -- to me, the way I read this --
4 is that would be step number one.

5 And how you proceed vis-à-vis the Planning Board,
6 Zoning Board -- my own personal view is I would -- and
7 again, I'm a little bit unclear -- I can't connect the dots
8 about the Planning Board's reasoning. I think we sort of
9 like to be the last stop before the permitting, rather than
10 having another one over us, because somebody over us could
11 -- you know --

12 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Right.

13 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: -- change it. And then you'd
14 have to come back again.

15 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Right.

16 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: And I think that as far as the
17 public is concerned, that there should be an orderly
18 progression of events. It starts with the Central Square
19 Advisory Committee, number one, it may go to Planning, or we
20 may have some discussion -- maybe I would ask Planning Board
21 to submit some correspondence to us explaining their
22 position. And then, you know, so there's one -- one step,

1 two steps, three steps.

2 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Just to be sort of clear on the
3 sort of cart before the horse is what you're suggesting. So
4 the plan that we bring forward to the Planning Board, the
5 building itself there are no changes. The question that
6 comes down to the ZBA, or the BZA, is the lot area per unit
7 count?

8 And even though the plan doesn't change -- what
9 changes is the unit count and the number of inclusionary
10 units. So for us to propose two plans -- one by right, and
11 one assuming that at the end of that whole process the ZBA
12 would revisit the unit count, that -- I understand the
13 Planning Board's logic.

14 This is a rare occasion where the ordinance in
15 question does not change the actual physical structure of
16 the building. The ordinance in question just changes the
17 unit count we propose, and the number of inclusionary units.

18 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: And there's ramifications for
19 that.

20 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Correct.

21 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: That's right, so --

22 JOHN HAWKINSON: Mr. Chair?

1 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: In a minute. So that's why I
2 -- again, I would lean towards going before the Central
3 Square Advisory Committee, having the input of the committee
4 and of the neighborhood, and then you make the decision and
5 have some more discussion with whomever whether you go to
6 Planning, and then come to us, whether you come to us, and
7 then go back -- the Planning Board really is -- I think is
8 the parking. Is that --

9 CLIFFORD SCHORER: No, actually. The Planning
10 Board is the special permit for height, special permit for
11 the VAR enhancement for local retail preservation.

12 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. There are a
13 number of stubs here.

14 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yeah, there's three.

15 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Yeah, that's right. Okay.

16 CLIFFORD SCHORER: And that's why they determined
17 that unless we have a hearing count, all of the other
18 questions -- parking, et cetera, are all contingent. So
19 that's why they suggested this guy.

20 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Okay.

21 ANDREA HICKEY: I just wanted to add it's my
22 understanding we can't sort of hear the case piecemeal.

1 Either we hear the whole case, or we wait until another time
2 to hear the whole case. We can't give an advisory opinion
3 on a very narrow issue. That's my understanding.

4 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: That's correct.

5 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Right. And I'm sorry, maybe
6 the phraseology was incorrect. What I'm asking for is BZA
7 approval on the question of a waiver of the lot area per
8 unit count, and nothing else.

9 And then we have to go through -- because
10 obviously we have two full special permits to seek through
11 the Planning Department, which involves the entire process
12 that you're describing, including the -- we understand your
13 position, but it's exactly counter to what the Planning
14 Board has --

15 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Right. But I would, again,
16 lean on, I would welcome the input of the Advisory
17 Committee, and they obviously will have input from the
18 community. And formulating and coming forth with whatever
19 plan you want to at the end.

20 Any other questions or --

21 JOHN HAWKINSON: Mr. Chair, sorry, would it be
22 helpful if the Chair could distinguish between the Planning

1 Board and Community Development staff, because they're not
2 the same, and the Planning Board has not met on this in any
3 fashion? Thank you.

4 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Community Development is -- has
5 under their umbrella the Central Square Overlay District.

6 JOHN HAWKINSON: Also true, but the petitioner
7 referenced the Planning Board several times, and I think
8 that was very confusing to some of the audience.

9 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Right. Okay. Anyhow, I had a
10 thought here.

11 JOHN HAWKINSON: I could clarify that, if you
12 like.

13 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: No, that's okay. Slater, any
14 questions?

15 SLATER ANDERSON: I'm a little confused as to
16 what's -- this unit count, why are we asking -- and I want
17 to be careful, we haven't started this. This isn't heard
18 yet, or are we in this thing?

19 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: No, we're not even getting into
20 the merits of anything.

21 SLATER ANDERSON: Yeah. So I don't want to ask
22 questions.

1 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: No. And that might be an
2 issue. But to me, whether it's one unit or 29 units or 129
3 units, until it has gone before the Central Square Advisory
4 Committee, had a hearing, neighborhood input and so on and
5 so forth, and then that comes back to us with their
6 recommendation or they may come back and say, "this page was
7 left intentionally blank -- " you know, whatever.

8 But that's a starting point with me. Do that,
9 have that hearing, have them correspond, and then we will
10 hear the unit count.

11 JOHN HAWKINSON: Okay.

12 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: And whether or not it's --

13 CLIFFORD SCHORER: If I may ask one quick
14 question, just to not basically go back to the Planning
15 Board staff and say we've heard the opposite -- if we start
16 with the community approval process --

17 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: I think it's quite clear what
18 you have to do.

19 CLIFFORD SCHORER: If we start with that, is the
20 next step to logically establish the unit count before we go
21 back to the Planning Board for our special permit?

22 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: I would say yes. I would say

1 whatever you are going to ultimately submit to us should be
2 submitted to the Advisory Committee, plain and simple, as
3 far as -- that's the way I read it.

4 ANDREA HICKEY: I'm not sure that wasn't the
5 question.

6 CLIFFORD SCHORER: That wasn't the question -- the
7 question, I'm sorry, is that we need special permission from
8 the Planning Board, but the entire foundation of that
9 question is what is the unit count, which has to be
10 established by the Zoning Board. So --

11 JIM MONTEVERDE: I understand. But I think what
12 the Chair has said, and the way the regulations read, you've
13 got to run it up the flagpole with the --

14 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yep.

15 JIM MONTEVERDE: -- whole group, period. You've
16 got to put your plan on the table and go from there.

17 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay, that's fine. And then
18 return to the Zoning Board, before the planning?

19 JIM MONTEVERDE: I think you laid out a process
20 that indicated it could be either the Planning Board or the
21 Zoning Board, that's your call.

22 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Or with -- simultaneously.

1 JIM MONTEVERDE: You'll get the advice under which
2 way it goes, but if you got to do that first step first; put
3 the plan that you proposed --

4 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Laura, any comment at all?

5 LAURA WERNICK: No, I think that's correct.

6 Andrea, any?

7 ANDREA HICKEY: No. It does sound like the number
8 of units is going to be -- and the Planning Board decisions
9 are going to be contingent upon a set number of units. So
10 the -- I see the logic, but you have to go through the
11 Advisory -- the route of going through the Advisory
12 Committee.

13 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: All right. So you've asked for
14 a continuance --

15 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yes, please.

16 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: -- to this matter. Let me make
17 a motion then to continue this matter as a case not heard.
18 Now, I guess the question is, okay, we have January 9 and we
19 got February, we got March. At what point would you be
20 comfortable in scheduling a date?

21 CLIFFORD SCHORER: I think probably we need to
22 have some feedback in terms of the schedule on the other

1 approval process, and then come back to you with a day at
2 the staff level, if that's possible.

3 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: No, we have to set it now. I
4 mean, we can set it -- you can set it February 27, March 12,
5 March 26.

6 CLIFFORD SCHORER: We have a January 28 schedule
7 date, and I think we can probably work in the schedule. So
8 we'll -- how about we try for February 27?

9 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: February 27?

10 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yeah.

11 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Okay. Does that work, Sisia?

12 SISIA DAGLIAN: Yeah.

13 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: As a case not heard? The
14 motion then is to continue this matter until February 27,
15 2020, on the condition that the petitioner change the
16 acoustic sign to reflect the new date of twenty-seventh of
17 February at 7:00 p.m. -- that any submissions to the Board
18 should be in the file no later than the Monday prior to the
19 February 27 hearing.

20 That the petitioner agrees to sign a waiver of a
21 timeframe for rendering a decision on this, if you would
22 sign the waiver?

1 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Sure.

2 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Anything else to --

3 MICHAEL WIGGINS: Mr. Chair, for the record, what
4 is the meeting on the twenty-eight? January 28 is the
5 meeting with who?

6 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: That's the Cambridgeport
7 Neighborhood Association. That's the first of our
8 neighborhood association meetings.

9 MICHAEL WIGGINS: Okay.

10 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: On the motion to continue this
11 matter?

12 [ALL FIVE VOTE YES]

13 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Five in favor. All right.

14 Thank you.

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O'Grady, Sean

From: Pacheco, Maria
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 3:31 PM
To: O'Grady, Sean
Subject: Fw: 544 Mass Ave - CSAC written report
Attachments: csac_200221_544 Mass Ave_Report.pdf

Sean,
Can you print this email and attachment and get back to him.

Thanks
Maria

From: Kane, Drew <dkane@cambridgema.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 12:43:30 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria <mpacheco@cambridgema.gov>
Subject: 544 Mass Ave - CSAC written report

Hi Maria,

How are you? I'm Drew Kane, the planner who will be staffing the Central Square Advisory Committee in Wendell Joseph's absence. Wendell, unfortunately for us, has left CDD for a new position. So, for the time being, I'll be taking over. I'm literally just getting up to speed on things, but it was brought to my attention that it would be helpful for the BZA to have the summary report from the CSAC on the 544 Mass Ave case.

Does the BZA generally request written reports from CSAC for zoning matters under the purview of the BZA? Wendell mentioned that he'll provide them for the planning board when relevant.

Thanks so much, and nice to meet you!

-Drew

Drew Kane, AICP

Land Use Planner
City of Cambridge Community Development Department
dkane@cambridgema.gov | 617.349.4640



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI

Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 2/21/20
Re: 544 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 to review and comment on the Central Square Redevelopment LLC (c/o Cliff Schorer) (the “Applicant”) proposal to build 29 micro-unit apartments – where 20 units of any size are allowed by right – above existing ground-floor retail at 544 Mass Ave.

This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The Committee is appointed by the City Manager to undertake all large project reviews of variances and special permits for activities within the Central Square Overlay District (the “District”), and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study (the “Study”).

* * *

According to the Applicant, due to the high costs of construction, a literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in the loss of local retailers and an enlargement of the floorplate on each floor to allow for larger residential units. Additionally, per the Applicant, due to the substantial demand for inclusionary and market units at a smaller scale and lower price point, the addition of 29 micro-units could address this demand, relieve pressure on existing family-size units in the surrounding neighborhood, and alleviate the substantial financial hardship of preserving and renovating the existing building.

The Committee’s comments spoke to the complexity of the issues that impact this project, reiterating the need for a wide variety of housing options and the need to preserve and nurture cultural assets. A Committee member stated that, while the use of micro-size seems appropriate on this site, given the project’s constraints, there is still a substantial need for family-sized units. Another pointed out the unfortunate nature of pitting housing needs against the arts, however unintentional it may be. Both are critical needs in the District and require creative solutions.

Committee members in attendance were not opposed to the proposed project.

Additional Committee Questions/Comments

- *Since the Dance Complex is not set back on the upper floors, could you approach this building in the same way? Is it possible to match the massing of the adjacent building?*
 - The current zoning ordinance does not allow it. Also, the current façade is weak and must be restructured in order to accommodate the additional weight.
- *The property does not extend all the way to Green Street. How do you anticipate constructing on such a limited site?*
 - It's extremely challenging. As much as possible, it must be prepared off-site then assembled on site. In order to access the basement to work on the building's foundation, there must be an arrangement with Teddy's Shoes. The other issue is how to keep retail viable during this process (Teddy's Shoes and Five Spices House).



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI

Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

- **What's the expected price point for the micro-units?**

- The price points are based on \$47/sf which is the market average in the area. It ranges between \$1320-1800 a month, depending on unit size.

Public Questions/Comment

There were 19 members of the public present.

Members of the public in attendance spoke in support of the existing tenants of the upper floors – Studio 550 and the Center for Marxist Education – who would likely be displaced. The Applicant made known the commitment to assist in finding suitable and appropriate locations for these tenants.

Public comment also spoke to the larger issue of a history in Central Square of the displacement of cultural assets, which is ironic for a place that has been designated as an “cultural district” by the State. How can we put a stop to this cycle? How can we protect the uses in buildings that are used for and by the arts community? “What can the City do to preserve its cultural assets, particularly when the arts are a major factor in creating the social and economic base that facilitate development”, one member of the public expressed.

On the topic of housing in Central Square, a member of the public expressed their lack of enthusiasm for the micro-units. At the time that the inclusionary percentage was increased, they explained, the City said there was a lack of 3bd units. Tenants said they would hold out on studio-size units in favor of the larger ones. In the rezoning of Central Square, many in the community specifically said that micro-units were not a desire. We wanted units that people could stay in for longer periods of time. These units are not providing the kind of housing that we really need.

Letters of support were also sent electronically. They have been attached to this report.

Committee Members Present

- Melissa Greene
- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent

- Joel Altstein
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Michael Monestime

Project Team

- Cliff Schorer, *Central Square Redevelopment LLC*

submitted on behalf of the Committee,
Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner
Community Development Department

IDENTITY

USE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTS

TRANSPORTATION

METRICS

SOLUTIONS?

Studio at 550 is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization residing at 550 Mass. Ave, in Central Sq on the 3rd floor. The Studio is comprised of one open space of approximately 1,000 sq ft equipped with dance marley floor, mirrors, a sound system, with various theatrical components. This creates a modular environment for rehearsals, classes, and performances across many disciplines (such as dance, music, theatre, photography, videography, and experimental art) to be practiced. Over 750+ artists have walked through Studio at 550's doors over the past 3.8 years it has existed under this organization. Previously the space was home to Boston Dance Company for 20 years, a ballet company which had it's own programming including its annual Nutcracker and various performances throughout the year, lead by former Boston Ballet dancer Jimmy Rearden.

Currently, the Studio has provided platform for a multitude of various rehearsals, photoshoots, videoshoots, performances, events, and classes. Throughout the relatively short period of time of its existence, the Studio has harnessed so much creative activity within its walls. Not only cultivating the creativity of established artists, but also providing the spark to young and burgeoning artists as well. From providing space for the various documentaries focusing on software engineer Margaret Hamilton, to providing space for the Swissnex to present experimental music performance of Marcel Zeis Studio at 550 has provided necessary platform for the practice, learning, and presentation of arts for not only Central Square, but on an international scale as well.

The Studio prides itself for having a central location that is part of the cultural hub that is Central Sq. Dance, in particular has deep roots here in Central Square and providing multiple dance in relative close proximity is necessary to sustain a community which requires a considerable amount of resources in order to operate. It is not by chance that Studio at 550 has the amenities that make dance "possible". As director I have dedicated my life as a dance artist who has been also practicing and studying media/projection art in parallel. Due to the considerable amount of resources required for dance, it's sometimes more difficult to integrate other arts disciplines due to lack of safe and appropriate amenities in spaces designed for other disciplines. It is with this premise that Studio provides one of the few spaces in Massachusetts outside of University where dance can exist to interact with other disciplines in practice, not only in performance.

Central Sq provides a unique and important location for Studio at 550. With artists coming from Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Arlington, Somerville, Lynn, Salem, Revere, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Brighton, Boston, and some out of state. Central Square is a transportation center which makes cultivating professional artistic relationships a reality. This is especially important due to the proximity to Dance Complex and formerly Green Street Studios. Dance happens when there are people in a studio space to work. It can't work in our backyards, or kitchens, or a painting studio. Dance requires multiple bodies at time who come from various locations to meet up, and spend a few hours to rehearse, take class, or perform.

Studio at 550 has over 57 monthly members, 624 active contacts who rent out the space on the continuum, 18 ongoing weekly classes with over 360 students who come weekly. Over 24 performances per year happen here, and with a staff of 1 + 1 workstudy. I'm sincerely proud of all of what was created and possible within the last 3.8 years.

We are aware that the space where Studio at 550 currently resides is intended on developing micro unit apartments. And while we feel yes, housing is a benefit of this plan, displacing an arts organization which feeds the cultural vitality of not only Central Sq, but the greater Boston/Cambridge area would be a substantial detriment to the Central Square Cultural District which will ultimately diminish the value of the district considerably. After losing many arts organizations over the years due to development, and within these last few months another dance organization Green Street Studios, it would be not only a shame, but a slap in the face for the Cultural District who have fewer and fewer arts organizations who help get the district its name. I'm here with an open mind to figure out ways in which we can work together as a community to create solutions for situations such as this.

Callie Chapman
Director
Studio@550

Dear Cambridge Council (via Callie at Studio at 550),

Over the last few years, Central Square (and the greater Cambridge area) has lost important arts communities & venues such as the EMF space, Green Street Studios, and TT the Bears to the "progress" of high end real estate development and raising rents. As a successfully self-employed musician living in Cambridgeport, I marvel and am disgusted by Central Square's Cultural District designation. What can those words mean to those who care about the vitality of the arts in Cambridge and see the city do nothing to support the arts communities that have contributed successfully to the Square to give it that designation? They are empty words and a convenient way for the city to capitalize on the culture that these arts groups have worked so hard to foster without any work from the city. Please do not let the Studio at 550 be another victim of the Cambridge Council's inability to step in to maintain the arts component of Central Square's Cultural District by stopping the proposal of the landlord of 544-550 Mass Ave. to redevelop the property into micro-unit residential apartments. Stop the previous cycle in Cambridge of taking advantage of thriving arts communities for the city's economic gain and support the arts communities that are still left in Central Square while we still have them.

Thank you,
Valerie Thompson

Studio at 550
550 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-863-2550
www.studioat550.org
callie@studioat550.org

January 8, 2020

To the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals:

We are writing to protest case# BZA-017219-2019, for a variance for the building addressed at 544 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge due to objections to the following:

The applicant, Cliff Schorer is requesting variance request on 3 ordinances: Lot area for each dwelling unit to be decreased from 300sf to 151ft; Number of dwelling units to be increased from 20 to 29; and Number of parking spaces to be decreased from .5/du to 0.

Citing item B of supporting statement where applicant writes, "*There is no change to the access and egress and no additional parking or traffic impact anticipated. This is perfectly located above public transportation and has been a failure as office and assembly space on the upper floors leading to deterioration.*" We object to, especially the last part of the argument noting that Studio at 550 is a very active arts organization who serves nearly 300 artists per week providing much needed rehearsal, class, and performance space which contributes to the cultural identity of Central Square. Since the transfer of ownership of the building Studio at 550 has paid our \$2300/month rent on time every month, contradicting the argument that the business is a "failure" as an assembly space. Studio at 550 provides not just space to artists but also much needed programs and community engagement efforts which not only engage artists, but also neighbors to Central Sq, the greater Boston arts scene, and artists and audiences from throughout New England and beyond.

Studio at 550 has operated in the 3rd floor space since 2016, and while we agree that the building has fallen into disrepair, a more fitting solution to the development of the space would be to make efforts to include an already existing arts space into the plan for development of the building.

Citing item E of the applicant's supporting statement where he argues that the conversion of zoning from retail/office to retail/residential would be "in the spirit of recent Zoning changes to the CSQ Overlay" we would argue the following: There has been some considerable effort in establishing an Arts Overlay District within Central Sq, with Councillor Mallon chairing Mayor McGovern's Arts Task Force in efforts to support existing artists to strengthen Central Square as an Arts and Cultural District. There has been considerable work in advocacy with the newly established Central Square Business Improvement District in the same vein. Converting existing artist space to residential space would directly contradict these efforts blindly knocking out a much needed resource for the community which the City and other agencies are fighting so hard to retain.

From the perspective of leasee of the 3rd floor of 550 Massachusetts Ave., Callie Chapman, Director of Studio at 550:

A) I never was in correspondence with the current landlord (Cliff Schorer) at all before this request was filed. No effort was made on his part to even engage in conversation prior to his application and posting for request of variance..

B) I showed up at 550 Mass Ave. and there was a notice posted on the building only 7 days before the hearing. Even though one of the property owners (Jim) was in the building 1 day before to check on a leak in the ceiling, he never mentioned it while he met with me.

C) The property owner is citing a "hardship" as the reason he is requesting a variance. Whereas due to financial circumstances surrounding his purchase of the building are interesting there is nothing dire to prevent compliance with existing ordinances.

All requests for variance due to the overarching objective to transform existing arts/assembly space into rental apartment units would detrimentally change in the essential character of the neighborhood. Citing multiple efforts by community members, associations, individual businesses, individual artists, arts organizations, City councilors, mayors, and citizens of Cambridge to keep the arts in Central Sq in particular, this project will contradict these efforts and strip one more arts organization from the district. Contributing to the ongoing deterioration of stability for the arts in Cambridge.

With objection to the variances requested,

Signed:

Eric	Bornstein	(617) 417-4961	Artist, Arts Educator, Performer
Aislinn	Brophy	(561) 504-9288	Freelance Theatre Artist & Arts Administrator
Margaux	Skalecki		Director of Theater Arte Being Seen Being Heard
Jack	Tan	(857) 207-7907	Student/Dancer
Irene	Hsi	(510) 304-3877	Choreographer/Renter
Ellen	Godena	(617) 407-2333	Movement Educator/Choreographer
David	Karger	(617) 767-6527	
Katherine	Gagnon	(413) 424-6665	Dancer, Ensemble Inédit
Dayenne	Walters	(617) 894-6885	Member of Dance Community since 1998
Emily	Beattie	(617) 256-8789	Choreographer and Dancer
Carl	Alleyne	(617) 905-0512	Dance Instructor
Anna	Patterson	(781) 439-7601	Arts admin/dancer/choreographer Dance teacher , choreographer and director artistic Papsy Naay Leer Dance Company
Papa	Sy	(631) 805-7172	
Arthur	Duffy	(617) 671-6576	
Meghan	McLyman	(617) 320-4764	Dance Professor at Salem State University
Jason	Weeks	(617) 349-4383	Executive Director/Cambridge Arts Council
Benjamin	Cuba	(508) 736-3871	Dance Accompanist/Studio@550,The Dance Complex
Anastasia	Yendiki	(734) 222-0907	Dance instructor, Flamenco Boston
Erin	Scarry	(857) 600-1714	Independent Performing Artist
Callie	Chapman	(617)863-2550	Director, Studio at 550, Choreographer and Multi-Media Artist
Ivan	Korn	(781)640-7648	Musician

Lilia Roberts 617 331 7729 - DANCER.
Pauline Bowden 617-429-4656 dancer
Richard Thibodeau 617 953 9103 dancer
Malick Ngom 646 934 3041
Cassandra Charles 857-318-5546
Joe Buego 617 686 4146 dancer, ensemble Inédit

I THE DanceComplex I

536 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

February 18, 2020

To: Central Square Advisory Committee
Cc: Callie Chapman, Director, Studio 550; Michael Monestime, Executive Director, Central Square Business Improvement District; Jason Weeks, Executive Director, Cambridge Arts; Vice Mayor Alana Mallon, City of Cambridge (chair of Mayor's Arts Task Force); Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, City of Cambridge

To Our Friends of the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I am writing today to express concern for more development that would infringe on at least two arts institutions in Central Square, a state-designated Cultural District: Studio 550 at 550 Mass Ave, and our own The Dance Complex.

There has been great effort and articulation heeding us as a city to be aware of how our specific arts ecology is eroding in the Square. In recent discussions, including those of the 10th months study the Mayor's Arts Task Force undertook, the closure of Green Street Studios, the EMF artists' studios, great and sound statements are made that we can't allow more of our arts businesses and community to be forced out.

I bring these thoughts to the discussion on February 19th, as Central Square Development proposes plans to develop the buildings where Studio 550 is housed, and adjacent to our property. We would welcome in-depth discussion with the developers on their plans, and would also welcome a guiding hand from the City that would encourage these and any developers to work with us in the arts community. If the goal is to retain the unique-ness of Central Square as a vibrant and dynamic center of art and culture – and developers are using this as a selling point to their tenants – then we have the opportunity to stop the erosion of long standing contributors to that vibrancy and dynamism we as arts institutions bring.

I appreciate the many discussions that have occurred since the Green Street closure- the ones we have been included in and, likely, countless other ones that have occurred. I know there is great sentiment to support the arts. It is time for us as citizens to act upon the wishes of what we want Central Square to be, what we want it to sustain. And we count on our city government, including its arts council, to find ways to encourage all who have a stake here to work together toward our goals.

Aside from being introduced to the developers proposing the build-up of 550 Mass Ave, we have not been engaged by the developers in any discussions regarding their plans, seeking our input. We would hope that any developer would be seeking to sustain the arts organization on site or find ways to support it in transition; and as a neighboring business alone we should be consulted; that we are a nonprofit and arts organization should make the consult even more necessary.

New development should contribute to the place keeping of our community and in this specific case, to the sustenance of the cultural and arts community. It should not be allowed to dismantle it. We are Cambridge, and we know better. Happy to be part of further discussions.

Sincerely,



Peter DiMuro
Executive Artistic Director

 617.547.9363

 /DanceComplex

 /TheDanceComplex

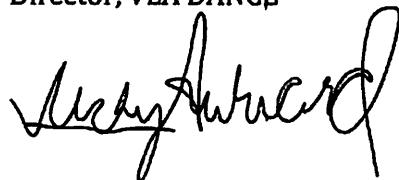
 /DanceComplex

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing in regards to Studio at 550.

I am a professional dance artist who got their start working with organizations such as Studio at 550. When I first graduated from college and moved back home to the Cambridge area, I did a work-study program led by Callie Chapman at Studio at 550. In exchange for strengthening my administrative skills via work at Studio at 550 I received studio space for rehearsals. These rehearsals served as a stepping ground for my new dance company (2 years later) VLA DANCE. Without organizations like Studio at 550 so many artists, dancers, musicians, and community members would not have access to structures that support their first steps in creating on a larger scale. Studio at 550 is integral to Cambridge and Boston arts scene. Without Studio at 550 the performing arts community would only have one accessible dance studio in Central Square, Cambridge and that is not a sustainable structure. Thus we also need Studio at 550 to continue on because it provides options and more space. Studio at 550 serves people of all kind – not just professional dancers, although the support for professional dancers is currently unparalleled in this city. Recently I met a woman who holds SOCA dance classes at Studio at 550 and she told me that her main clientele are people who work in the corporate sector (based in both Cambridge and Boston) who want to dance to balance out their work life schedule. This serves as a wonderful example as to how the arts support a livable community. No one wants to live somewhere where there are no arts. Central Square is the art capital of Cambridge. I grew up in the suburbs of Boston and traveled 30-minutes on the weekends to come take dance classes in Central Square, Cambridge. People travel to Central Square for the arts; it's one of the most beautiful and authentic places in Massachusetts. Studio at 550 contributes to that landscape and it would be an incredibly horrendous mistake to get rid of this wonderful organization.

Thank you for your time,
Victoria Lynn Awkward
Director, VLA DANCE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Lynn Awkward".

Subject: Studio @ 550
From: Eric Bornstein <behindthemask1@gmail.com>
Date: 2/18/2020, 10:57 PM
To: Callie Chapman <callie@studioat550.org>

Letter of support for the Studio at 550

To Whom It May Concern,

I lived in Central for over 20 years from 1981. I still go onto Central regularly for dance classes and other arts programming. This is where the young artist I was evolved into a career professional artist who has contributed to the cultural life of Cambridge and beyond for almost 40 years as a Fulbright Scholar, IRNE award winner, and designer for institutions like Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Underground Railway Theater, and many others. Central Square was essential not just for me but to generations of artists who are daily nurtured and inspired by the dance schools and other artist spaces. So many arts orgs have closed over the past 30+ years. Our cultural centers have become gentrified and sterilized. There are fewer places for young artists to thrive and for professional artists to work and teach. Artists need urban cultural centers like Central to create their necessary work. Callie has been an ardent and tireless advocate of the arts as well as a brilliant artist herself. Her Studio at 550 is the kind of institution that makes Central a desirable destination for dance students and professionals. After the loss of the Green Street Studios, I would think that those who are caretakers of the Central legacy would protect this vital institution. Please support Callie's effort to preserve the Studio at 550.

Thank you,

Eric Bornstein

To the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I'm writing in support of keeping Studio at 550 in Central Square, ideally in its current building.

I live in North Cambridge, work at a tech company in Kendall Square, and have been taking flamenco classes for the past five years; these classes just moved to Studio at 550 after the Green Street Studios closure this past fall.

The recent Mayor's Arts Task Force Report noted the importance of having artist space within a 5-minute "pedestrian walkshed" of the Central T stop for accessibility. Accepting the loss of Studio at 550 would mean losing 900 square feet of artist space that is very much within this pedestrian walkshed.

This space has been used for dance for decades. While The Dance Complex is wonderful, it cannot absorb everyone who has been displaced from Green Street Studios and may be displaced from Studio at 550.

Employers locate in Cambridge because this is a desirable place to live for the talented, creative, passionate people they want to hire and retain. Cambridge's creative economy connects its residents to one another, enriching the lives and opportunities of all people, particularly those in marginalized groups.

If we treat this as an externality which can be taken for granted, it will disappear. This city's innovation economy will become even more unequal, and eventually hollow out.

Cambridge is a vital and growing city in need of more housing, in no small part because of why Central Square was named a Cultural District. Let's find a way to have residential, retail, and artist space here.

Sincerely,
Barb Strom

February 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a Boston based dancer my whole life. As a life long resident, it is especially apparent to me that art spaces, particularly dance spaces are disappearing at a rapid rate. Studio at 550 is one of the few affordable dance spaces within the Boston/Cambridge area. It is incredibly important for dance makers, particularly those who are not established yet (I am 31 and just honing in on my professional career) to have affordable spaces to rent.

Studio at 550 has housed rehearsals for my small dance company, I have participated in performances in the space, and they support the arts community in Cambridge/Boston in a myriad of ways. They offer a residency program for companies that provides free rental space and mentor-ship.

In a city that is becoming every increasing difficult to live in due to cost, it is paramount that we support our cities artists and those who make Cambridge an interesting place to live. Artists need spaces in which to practice. The dance community just lost Green St Studios, one of the only other affordable performance/rental spaces. Don't let Boston/Cambridge loose one of our last creative spaces in support of affordable housing. We need your help to keep the creativity in our city.

Best,
Adriane Brayton

12 Adelaide St.
Boston, MA

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of Studio at 550 in Central Square to try to ensure that the studio is not displaced by development in the building. Although I understand the need for housing in Cambridge, Studio 550 is a venue that provides critical rehearsal and teaching space for dance artists from Cambridge and beyond.

With the loss of Green Street Studio in the Square, the arts community can't afford to lose another space. Central Square has been a magnet for artists since the 1970s because of affordable rehearsal, teaching and performance space. In addition to bringing working artists to the neighborhood, these spaces attract students, audience members and others who come to the square for classes and rehearsals but also eat at the restaurants, shop at stores and generally bring a lively, engaged and positive energy to Central Square.

Please make certain that this important space continues to be a resource to Cambridge and the wider community.

Respectfully,
Amy Zell Ellsworth
Board Member, New England Foundation for the Arts

January 9, 2020

Dear City of Cambridge,

My name is Benjamin Cuba, and I am active, working musician in the Somerville and Cambridge arts community. This letter is in response to the potential and possible closing or rezoning of Studio @550 and other business at the 550 Massachusetts Ave. address. Studio @550 and other businesses and units should not be closed in this process.

Studio @550 provides a useful and exciting space for rehearsals, residencies, and performances for creative, intelligent artists in the Boston dance community. A lot of purposeful and engaging work has been crafted and presented in such a space. Studio @550 has showcased and harnessed the talent from the dancers, choreographers, musicians, and artists across this city, and continues to support projects from experts and novices alike. It is more than merely a studio, but rather a keystone community center where patrons and lovers of the arts can admire and learn from each other.

Furthermore, this rezoning situation has not been executed with much clarity or consideration to the working parties involved.

Central Square should not lose another creative space. Cambridge can achieve a more vibrant artistic community. Please reconsider your efforts to close an already functioning and successful creative space.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Benjamin Cuba

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals City of Cambridge,

My name is Carl Alleyne and I am a dance instructor and performing artist teaching in the city of Cambridge. I teach at Studio 550, and I and my students love it there! The studio has a great owner in Callie Chapman and a fantastic community.

I am writing in support of Callie Chapman of Studio 550. I've known Callie for a number of years and have rented studio space for a number of years. Studio at 550 is active and has a great community, and is one of the pillars when it comes to dance in Cambridge. Musicians and other artists also go to this location to enhance their craft. I even had the TV show "Chronicle" come and interview me, and we did the interview at the Studio at 550.

This is a very dire time right now, as a lot of artists are displaced and do not have homes to continue to enhance community and culture through the arts.

Converting existing arts space to residential space would put a big dent in our community. I ask that this letter be considered.

Sincerely,

Carl Alleyne
Dance Instructor/ Performing Artist

January 9, 2020

To: The Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Cambridge

From: the undersigned dancers

We are writing about the Variance Request submitted by Clifford Schorer. If his variance is granted, Studio 550 will be impacted, possibly removed. Studio 550 is an important resource for the dance community in Cambridge and several of the surrounding cities and towns. It provides rehearsal space for dancers and musicians and performance space for various events. The dance community in Central Square has already been very hard hit by the closure of Green Street Studios to development. Central Square prides itself on being a center for the arts. Don't let Studio 550 be yet another loss for the local dance community.

Sincerely,

Allison Ross
Vicky Steinberg
Lae Lomney
Julie Dearoth
Joanie Block
Karen Klein

Dear CDD and staff:

I want to register my horror that the city would even consider taking over one of the LAST public art spaces in Central Sq. I know how hard it has been to keep the Dance Complex from being taken over and Callie Chapman has put in her own resources to provide a place to make art - It is not only unfair unjust and unnecessary but

a contradiction to the promises the city manager and staff has made to make Central sq. a registered artistic center.

I know there are alternatives for building micro-units so please keep the studio open for me and all the other artists in Cambridge .

Sincerely
Alice Heller
22 Corporal Burns Rd

Joseph, Wendell

From: Flightorvisibility Music <flightorvisibilitymusic@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2020 7:39 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Statement read at committee meeting

Hello Mr. Joseph,

Thanks for asking me to send you the statement I read at your committee meeting.

Here's the statement:

Hi, my name is Rafael Natan, I am a local performance artist and I am also the events coordinator at Make Shift Boston. I was a Cambridge resident last year but was priced out.

Today I am here in Solidarity with Studio at 550. Like Make Shift, Studio 550 is one of the few spaces in the greater city where any artist can rent space affordably to realize their vision. I remember going to one particularly memorable event at Studio 550 where musicians and dancers were encouraged to develop an improvised story performance together. This event completely changed the way I perform and teach and it is of utmost importance that we as citizens of the Greater Boston area continue to hold space for these kinds of community events.

In my 9 years in Boston, I have seen at least 12 different community spaces like Studio 550 shut down, that rate being greater than 1 per year. Rents for such spaces are going up and we honestly can't afford to lose any more of these spaces.

Additionally, I've seen an influx of new luxury housing units, often remaining vacant for years while market rate of the neighborhood catches up to the rate of the new developments. Meanwhile our homeless population is growing and the income metric to consider a unit "affordable" is significantly higher than the annual income made by anyone i know in the extended artist community.

The landlord of 550 mass ave mentioned \$30,000 a year as a metric for affordability. As a full-time artist, I make about \$5,000 a year and I'm one of the lucky ones, one of the few people who does not have student debt. If I did, I would not be able to live in Boston at all.

So my question is how are we going to continue to hold space for working artists and how are we going to insure that new housing projects actually cater to those who need housing the most?

Sincerely,

--
Rafael Natan
Oboist, Violinist, Singer, Songwriter, Educator
pronouns: They/Them/Theirs

IG: @flightorvisibility

New single: Always

Joseph, Wendell

From: Studio at 550 <callie@studioat550.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 12:07 AM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Fwd: support letter

Dear Central Square Advisory Committee,

I write this letter as a performing artist who moved to Cambridge 10 years ago because of the work and professional development opportunities this city offered. While I no longer live in Cambridge due to rising rents, it has continued to be the home of my artistic practice thanks to places like Studio550, The Dance Complex and Green Street Studios, which have been the equivalents of offices or workshops for me and so many other artists who need the resource of space to develop their work. It is due to this practice, in these places, that I am able to teach and enrich the lives of people in the community at places like the Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Citywide Senior Center and Cambridge Friends School, and create and perform work in countless venues and public places around the Boston area.

As arts organizations and businesses such as Out of the Blue Gallery, EMF, Green Street Studios and others have been forced to close due to egregious rents and what seems to be the prioritizing of income versus healthy, robust communities by both property owners and the city, I am deeply concerned that these places of work, creation and leisure are not being protected. Once a beacon of productivity, hope and innovation in the arts, Cambridge is becoming a place of gentrified, class homogeny.

I urge you to actually demonstrate your proclamation of Central Square being a "Cultural District" by saving our spaces for arts and culture for all residents and visitors alike. Insist that developers and property owners respect Cambridge's long standing commitment to supporting people of all walks of life. Help them to realize that taking away spaces for arts and culture takes away jobs, opportunities for personal and communal growth and the character that helps to make Cambridge the special city that it is.

I am happy to discuss this further and help advocate for Studio 550 and other spaces. I can be reached at kara@karafili.com should you like to connect.

Thank you for reading and for your work on this matter,

Kara Fili

--
Educator / Artist / Administrator
MFA Interdisciplinary Arts; Concentration in Performance Creation
www.karafili.com
978 - 500 - 1079
She / Her / Hers

"It Goes Like This...Stories of Movement"
a multi-modal evening of storytelling at The Dance Complex
March 27, 2020
<https://storiesofmovement20.eventbrite.com>
IGLT fundraising page: gf.me/u/xf3ct5

@ItGoesLikeThis_Events

#itgoeslikethis2020

FB Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/156699349082500/>

Joseph, Wendell

From: Olive Rappoli <orappoli@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 6:31 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Cc: sjoseph@cambridge.gov
Subject: 550 Massachusetts Ave

Hello Wendell,

My name is Olive, I attended the Central Square Advisory Committee meeting on February 19th regarding the proposed development at 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue. I'd like to say first off, thank you for facilitating the meeting, I found it very informative! I am a shy soul and this was the first meeting of its kind that I have attended, but I felt very much compelled to be present to support the case for preserving the arts scene in Central Square.

I have been coming to Central Square for dance, music and art for the last 7+ years. I am a dance student with Flamenco Boston, which holds its classes at Studio@550, and prior to its closing I also took classes at Green Street Studios. I have lived and worked in the Boston/Cambridge area my entire life, and Central Square has one of the most vibrant personalities of all the neighborhoods that I have come to know. All of the squares in Cambridge have restaurants, bars and storefronts, but Central Square has so much more than that. The high concentration of artists, music venues, dance studios and socials has provided a home for the arts community that is extremely unique. To have so many businesses and organizations dedicated to the arts clustered together and accessible to the public is truly special and important to the strength of the community, and is not something that can be easily rebuilt once dispersed. As a hub for the arts community, these spaces also draw consumers for other businesses in Central Square.

The loss of Green Street Studios was a difficult one, and it would be a shame to see the same happen to Studio@550. I could go on for many pages describing what dancing means to me personally, and can only imagine how devastated other members of the dance community were, who rely on these spaces for their livelihood, physical and mental health, and recreation. It is so important to preserve places like these that bring together people of all races, ages and backgrounds. So many diverse artists were displaced with the closure of GSS, and many have found new home at Studio@550. Spaces like Studio@550 need to remain open not only for the existing community but also to inspire and foster future artists and allow unique cultural neighborhoods like Central Square to thrive.

Thank you so much for your time, and best of luck on your new position!

Best Regards,
Olive Rappoli



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI

Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 2/21/20
Re: 544 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 to review and comment on the Central Square Redevelopment LLC (c/o Cliff Schorer) (the "Applicant") proposal to build 29 micro-unit apartments – where 20 units of any size are allowed by right – above existing ground-floor retail at 544 Mass Ave.

This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The Committee is appointed by the City Manager to undertake all large project reviews of variances and special permits for activities within the Central Square Overlay District (the "District"), and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study (the "Study").

* * *

According to the Applicant, due to the high costs of construction, a literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in the loss of local retailers and an enlargement of the floorplate on each floor to allow for larger residential units. Additionally, per the Applicant, due to the substantial demand for inclusionary and market units at a smaller scale and lower price point, the addition of 29 micro-units could address this demand, relieve pressure on existing family-size units in the surrounding neighborhood, and alleviate the substantial financial hardship of preserving and renovating the existing building.

The Committee's comments spoke to the complexity of the issues that impact this project, reiterating the need for a wide variety of housing options and the need to preserve and nurture cultural assets. A Committee member stated that, while the use of micro-size seems appropriate on this site, given the project's constraints, there is still a substantial need for family-sized units. Another pointed out the unfortunate nature of pitting housing needs against the arts, however unintentional it may be. Both are critical needs in the District and require creative solutions.

Committee members in attendance were not opposed to the proposed project.

Additional Committee Questions/Comments

- *Since the Dance Complex is not set back on the upper floors, could you approach this building in the same way? Is it possible to match the massing of the adjacent building?*
 - The current zoning ordinance does not allow it. Also, the current façade is weak and must be restructured in order to accommodate the additional weight.
- *The property does not extend all the way to Green Street. How do you anticipate constructing on such a limited site?*
 - It's extremely challenging. As much as possible, it must be prepared off-site then assembled on site. In order to access the basement to work on the building's foundation, there must be an arrangement with Teddy's Shoes. The other issue is how to keep retail viable during this process (Teddy's Shoes and Five Spices House).

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Cambridge, MA 02139
Voice: 617 349-4600
Fax: 617 349-4669
TTY: 617 349-4621
www.cambridgema.gov



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Chief of Administration

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Chief of Planning

- **What's the expected price point for the micro-units?**

- The price points are based on \$47/sf which is the market average in the area. It ranges between \$1320-1800 a month, depending on unit size.

Public Questions/Comment

There were 19 members of the public present.

Members of the public in attendance spoke in support of the existing tenants of the upper floors – Studio 550 and the Center for Marxist Education – who would likely be displaced. The Applicant made known the commitment to assist in finding suitable and appropriate locations for these tenants.

Public comment also spoke to the larger issue of a history in Central Square of the displacement of cultural assets, which is ironic for a place that has been designated as an “cultural district” by the State. How can we put a stop to this cycle? How can we protect the uses in buildings that are used for and by the arts community? “What can the City do to preserve its cultural assets, particularly when the arts are a major factor in creating the social and economic base that facilitate development”, one member of the public expressed.

On the topic of housing in Central Square, a member of the public expressed their lack of enthusiasm for the micro-units. At the time that the inclusionary percentage was increased, they explained, the City said there was a lack of 3bd units. Tenants said they would hold out on studio-size units in favor of the larger ones. In the rezoning of Central Square, many in the community specifically said that micro-units were not a desire. We wanted units that people could stay in for longer periods of time. These units are not providing the kind of housing that we really need.

Letters of support were also sent electronically. They have been attached to this report.

Committee Members Present

- Melissa Greene
- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent

- Joel Altstein
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Michael Monestime

Project Team

- Cliff Schorer, *Central Square Redevelopment LLC*

submitted on behalf of the Committee,
Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner
Community Development Department

IDENTITY

Studio at 550 is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization residing at 550 Mass. Ave. in Central Sq on the 3rd floor. The Studio is comprised of one open space of approximately 1,000 sq ft equipped with dance marley floor, mirrors, a sound system, with various theatrical components. This creates a modular environment for rehearsals, classes, and performances across many disciplines (such as dance, music, theatre, photography, videography, and experimental art) to be practiced. Over 750+ artists have walked through Studio at 550's doors over the past 3.8 years it has existed under this organization. Previously the space was home to Boston Dance Company for 20 years, a ballet company which had its own programming including its annual Nutcracker and various performances throughout the year, lead by former Boston Ballet dancer Jimmy Rearden.

USE

Currently, the Studio has provided platform for a multitude of various rehearsals, photoshoots, videoshoots, performances, events, and classes. Throughout the relatively short period of time of its existence, the Studio has harnessed so much creative activity within its walls. Not only cultivating the creativity of established artists, but also providing the spark to young and burgeoning artists as well. From providing space for the various documentaries focusing on software engineer Margaret Hamilton, to providing space for the Swissnex to present experimental music performance of Marcel Zeis Studio at 550 has provided necessary platform for the practice, learning, and presentation of arts for not only Central Square, but on an international scale as well.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTS

The Studio prides itself for having a central location that is part of the cultural hub that is Central Sq. Dance, in particular has deep roots here in Central Square and providing multiple dance in relative close proximity is necessary to sustain a community which requires a considerable amount of resources in order to operate. It is not by chance that Studio at 550 has the amenities that make dance "possible". As director I have dedicated my life as a dance artist who has been also practicing and studying media/projection art in parallel. Due to the considerable amount of resources required for dance, it's sometimes more difficult to integrate other arts disciplines due to lack of safe and appropriate amenities in spaces designed for other disciplines. It is with this premise that Studio provides one of the few spaces in Massachusetts outside of University where dance can exist to interact with other disciplines in practice, not only in performance.

TRANSPORTATION

Central Sq provides a unique and important location for Studio at 550. With artists coming from Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Arlington, Somerville, Lynn, Salem, Revere, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Brighton, Boston, and some out of state. Central Square is a transportation center which makes cultivating professional artistic relationships a reality. This is especially important due to the proximity to Dance Complex and formerly Green Street Studios. Dance happens when there are people in a studio space to work. It can't work in our backyards, or kitchens, or a painting studio. Dance requires multiple bodies at time who come from various locations to meet up, and spend a few hours to rehearse, take class, or perform.

METRICS

Studio at 550 has over 57 monthly members, 624 active contacts who rent out the space on the continuum, 18 ongoing weekly classes with over 360 students who come weekly. Over 24 performances per year happen here, and with a staff of 1 + 1 workstudy. I'm sincerely proud of all of what was created and possible within the last 3.8 years.

SOLUTIONS?

We are aware that the space where Studio at 550 currently resides is intended on developing micro unit apartments. And while we feel yes, housing is a benefit of this plan, displacing an arts organization which feeds the cultural vitality of not only Central Sq, but the greater Boston/Cambridge area would be a substantial detriment to the Central Square Cultural District which will ultimately diminish the value of the district considerably. After losing many arts organizations over the years due to development, and within these last few months another dance organization Green Street Studios, it would be not only a shame, but a slap in the face for the Cultural District who have fewer and fewer arts organizations who help get the district its name. I'm here with an open mind to figure out ways in which we can work together as a community to create solutions for situations such as this.

Callie Chapman
Director
Studio@550

Dear Cambridge Council (via Callie at Studio at 550),

Over the last few years, Central Square (and the greater Cambridge area) has lost important arts communities & venues such as the EMF space, Green Street Studios, and TT the Bears to the "progress" of high end real estate development and raising rents. As a successfully self-employed musician living in Cambridgeport, I marvel and am disgusted by Central Square's Cultural District designation. What can those words mean to those who care about the vitality of the arts in Cambridge and see the city do nothing to support the arts communities that have contributed successfully to the Square to give it that designation? They are empty words and a convenient way for the city to capitalize on the culture that these arts groups have worked so hard to foster without any work from the city. Please do not let the Studio at 550 be another victim of the Cambridge Council's inability to step in to maintain the arts component of Central Square's Cultural District by stopping the proposal of the landlord of 544-550 Mass Ave. to redevelop the property into micro-unit residential apartments. Stop the previous cycle in Cambridge of taking advantage of thriving arts communities for the city's economic gain and support the arts communities that are still left in Central Square while we still have them.

Thank you,
Valerie Thompson

Studio at 550
550 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-863-2550
www.studioat550.org
callie@studioat550.org

January 8, 2020

To the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals:

We are writing to protest case# BZA-017219-2019, for a variance for the building addressed at 544 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge due to objections to the following:

The applicant, Cliff Schorer is requesting variance request on 3 ordinances: Lot area for each dwelling unit to be decreased from 300sf to 151ft; Number of dwelling units to be increased from 20 to 29; and Number of parking spaces to be decreased from .5/du to 0.

Citing item B of supporting statement where applicant writes, "*There is no change to the access and egress and no additional parking or traffic impact anticipated. This is perfectly located above public transportation and has been a failure as office and assembly space on the upper floors leading to deterioration.*" We object to, especially the last part of the argument noting that Studio at 550 is a very active arts organization who serves nearly 300 artists per week providing much needed rehearsal, class, and performance space which contributes to the cultural identity of Central Square. Since the transfer of ownership of the building Studio at 550 has paid our \$2300/month rent on time every month, contradicting the argument that the business is a "failure" as an assembly space. Studio at 550 provides not just space to artists but also much needed programs and community engagement efforts which not only engage artists, but also neighbors to Central Sq, the greater Boston arts scene, and artists and audiences from throughout New England and beyond.

Studio at 550 has operated in the 3rd floor space since 2016, and while we agree that the building has fallen into disrepair, a more fitting solution to the development of the space would be to make efforts to include an already existing arts space into the plan for development of the building.

Citing item E of the applicant's supporting statement where he argues that the conversion of zoning from retail/office to retail/residential would be "in the spirit of recent Zoning changes to the CSQ Overlay" we would argue the following: There has been some considerable effort in establishing an Arts Overlay District within Central Sq, with Councillor Mallon chairing Mayor McGovern's Arts Task Force in efforts to support existing artists to strengthen Central Square as an Arts and Cultural District. There has been considerable work in advocacy with the newly established Central Square Business Improvement District in the same vein. Converting existing artist space to residential space would directly contradict these efforts blindly knocking out a much needed resource for the community which the City and other agencies are fighting so hard to retain.

From the perspective of leasee of the 3rd floor of 550 Massachusetts Ave., Callie Chapman, Director of Studio at 550:

A) I never was in correspondence with the current landlord (Cliff Schorer) at all before this request was filed. No effort was made on his part to even engage in conversation prior to his application and posting for request of variance..

B) I showed up at 550 Mass Ave. and there was a notice posted on the building only 7 days before the hearing. Even though one of the property owners (Jim) was in the building 1 day before to check on a leak in the ceiling, he never mentioned it while he met with me.

C) The property owner is citing a "hardship" as the reason he is requesting a variance. Whereas due to financial circumstances surrounding his purchase of the building are interesting there is nothing dire to prevent compliance with existing ordinances.

All requests for variance due to the overarching objective to transform existing arts/assembly space into rental apartment units would detrimentally change in the essential character of the neighborhood. Citing multiple efforts by community members, associations, individual businesses, individual artists, arts organizations, City councilors, mayors, and citizens of Cambridge to keep the arts in Central Sq in particular, this project will contradict these efforts and strip one more arts organization from the district. Contributing to the ongoing deterioration of stability for the arts in Cambridge.

With objection to the variances requested,

Signed:

Eric	Bornstein	(617) 417-4961	Artist, Arts Educator, Performer
Aislinn	Brophy	(561) 504-9288	Freelance Theatre Artist & Arts Administrator
Margaux	Skalecki		Director of Theater Arte Being Seen Being Heard
Jack	Tan	(857) 207-7907	Student/Dancer
Irene	Hsi	(510) 304-3877	Choreographer/Renter
Ellen	Godena	(617) 407-2333	Movement Educator/Choreographer
David	Karger	(617) 767-6527	
Katherine	Gagnon	(413) 424-6665	Dancer, Ensemble Inédit
Dayenne	Walters	(617) 894-6885	Member of Dance Community since 1998
Emily	Beattie	(617) 256-8789	Choreographer and Dancer
Carl	Alleyne	(617) 905-0512	Dance Instructor
Anna	Patterson	(781) 439-7601	Arts admin/dancer/choreographer
Papa	Sy	(631) 805-7172	Dance teacher , choreographer and director artistic Papsy Naay Leer
Arthur	Duffy	(617) 671-6576	Dance Company
Meghan	McLyman	(617) 320-4764	Dance Professor at Salem State University
Jason	Weeks	(617) 349-4383	Executive Director/Cambridge Arts Council
Benjamin	Cuba	(508) 736-3871	Dance Accompanist/Studio@550,The Dance Complex
Anastasia	Yendiki	(734) 222-0907	Dance instructor, Flamenco Boston
Erin	Scarry	(857) 600-1714	Independent Performing Artist
Callie	Chapman	(617)863-2550	Director, Studio at 550, Choreographer and Multi-Media Artist
Ivan	Korn	(781)640-7648	Musician

Lila Roberts 617 331 7729 - DANCER
Pauline Bowden 617-429-4656 dancer
Richard Thibodeau 617 953 9103 dancer
Malick Ingram 646 934 3047
Cassandra Charles 857-318-5546
Joe Burgos 617 686 4146 creative, ensemble/medit

| THE DanceComplex |

536 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

February 18, 2020

To: Central Square Advisory Committee
Cc: Callie Chapman, Director, Studio 550; Michael Monestime, Executive Director, Central Square Business Improvement District; Jason Weeks, Executive Director, Cambridge Arts; Vice Mayor Alana Mallon, City of Cambridge (chair of Mayor's Arts Task Force); Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, City of Cambridge

To Our Friends of the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I am writing today to express concern for more development that would infringe on at least two arts institutions in Central Square, a state-designated Cultural District: Studio 550 at 550 Mass Ave, and our own The Dance Complex.

There has been great effort and articulation heeding us as a city to be aware of how our specific arts ecology is eroding in the Square. In recent discussions, including those of the 10th months study the Mayor's Arts Task Force undertook, the closure of Green Street Studios, the EMF artists' studios, great and sound statements are made that we can't allow more of our arts businesses and community to be forced out.

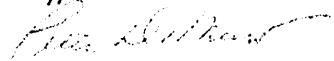
I bring these thoughts to the discussion on February 19th, as Central Square Development proposes plans to develop the buildings where Studio 550 is housed, and adjacent to our property. We would welcome in-depth discussion with the developers on their plans, and would also welcome a guiding hand from the City that would encourage these and any developers to work with us in the arts community. If the goal is to retain the unique-ness of Central Square as a vibrant and dynamic center of art and culture – and developers are using this as a selling point to their tenants – then we have the opportunity to stop the erosion of long standing contributors to that vibrancy and dynamism we as arts institutions bring.

I appreciate the many discussions that have occurred since the Green Street closure- the ones we have been included in and, likely, countless other ones that have occurred. I know there is great sentiment to support the arts. It is time for us as citizens to act upon the wishes of what we want Central Square to be, what we want it to sustain. And we count on our city government, including its arts council, to find ways to encourage all who have a stake here to work together toward our goals.

Aside from being introduced to the developers proposing the build-up of 550 Mass Ave, we have not been engaged by the developers in any discussions regarding their plans, seeking our input. We would hope that any developer would be seeking to sustain the arts organization on site or find ways to support it in transition; and as a neighboring business alone we should be consulted; that we are a nonprofit and arts organization should make the consult even more necessary.

New development should contribute to the place keeping of our community and in this specific case, to the sustenance of the cultural and arts community. It should not be allowed to dismantle it. We are Cambridge, and we know better. Happy to be part of further discussions.

Sincerely,



Peter DiMuro

Executive Artistic Director

 617.547.9363

 /DanceComplex

 /TheDanceComplex

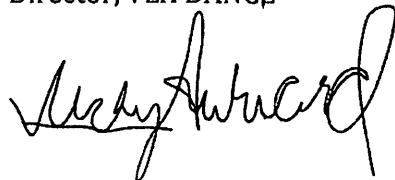
 /DanceComplex

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing in regards to Studio at 550.

I am a professional dance artist who got their start working with organizations such as Studio at 550. When I first graduated from college and moved back home to the Cambridge area, I did a work-study program led by Callie Chapman at Studio at 550. In exchange for strengthening my administrative skills via work at Studio at 550 I received studio space for rehearsals. These rehearsals served as a stepping ground for my new dance company (2 years later) VLA DANCE. Without organizations like Studio at 550 so many artists, dancers, musicians, and community members would not have access to structures that support their first steps in creating on a larger scale. Studio at 550 is integral to Cambridge and Boston arts scene. Without Studio at 550 the performing arts community would only have one accessible dance studio in Central Square, Cambridge and that is not a sustainable structure. Thus we also need Studio at 550 to continue on because it provides options and more space. Studio at 550 serves people of all kind – not just professional dancers, although the support for professional dancers is currently unparalleled in this city. Recently I met a woman who holds SOCA dance classes at Studio at 550 and she told me that her main clientele are people who work in the corporate sector (based in both Cambridge and Boston) who want to dance to balance out their work life schedule. This serves as a wonderful example as to how the arts support a livable community. No one wants to live somewhere where there are no arts. Central Square is the art capital of Cambridge. I grew up in the suburbs of Boston and traveled 30-minutes on the weekends to come take dance classes in Central Square, Cambridge. People travel to Central Square for the arts; it's one of the most beautiful and authentic places in Massachusetts. Studio at 550 contributes to that landscape and it would be an incredibly horrendous mistake to get rid of this wonderful organization.

Thank you for your time,
Victoria Lynn Awkward
Director, VLA DANCE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Lynn Awkward".

Subject: Studio @ 550
From: Eric Bornstein <behindthemask1@gmail.com>
Date: 2/18/2020, 10:57 PM
To: Callie Chapman <callie@studioat550.org>

Letter of support for the Studio at 550

To Whom It May Concern,

I lived in Central for over 20 years from 1981. I still go onto Central regularly for dance classes and other arts programming. This is where the young artist I was evolved into a career professional artist who has contributed to the cultural life of Cambridge and beyond for almost 40 years as a Fulbright Scholar, IRNE award winner, and designer for institutions like Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Underground Railway Theater, and many others. Central Square was essential not just for me but to generations of artists who are daily nurtured and inspired by the dance schools and other artist spaces. So many arts orgs have closed over the past 30+ years. Our cultural centers have become gentrified and sterilized. There are fewer places for young artists to thrive and for professional artists to work and teach. Artists need urban cultural centers like Central to create their necessary work. Callie has been an ardent and tireless advocate of the arts as well as a brilliant artist herself. Her Studio at 550 is the kind of institution that makes Central a desirable destination for dance students and professionals. After the loss of the Green Street Studios, I would think that those who are caretakers of the Central legacy would protect this vital institution. Please support Callie's effort to preserve the Studio at 550.

Thank you,

Eric Bornstein

To the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I'm writing in support of keeping Studio at 550 in Central Square, ideally in its current building.

I live in North Cambridge, work at a tech company in Kendall Square, and have been taking flamenco classes for the past five years; these classes just moved to Studio at 550 after the Green Street Studios closure this past fall.

The recent Mayor's Arts Task Force Report noted the importance of having artist space within a 5-minute "pedestrian walkshed" of the Central T stop for accessibility. Accepting the loss of Studio at 550 would mean losing 900 square feet of artist space that is very much within this pedestrian walkshed.

This space has been used for dance for decades. While The Dance Complex is wonderful, it cannot absorb everyone who has been displaced from Green Street Studios and may be displaced from Studio at 550.

Employers locate in Cambridge because this is a desirable place to live for the talented, creative, passionate people they want to hire and retain. Cambridge's creative economy connects its residents to one another, enriching the lives and opportunities of all people, particularly those in marginalized groups.

If we treat this as an externality which can be taken for granted, it will disappear. This city's innovation economy will become even more unequal, and eventually hollow out.

Cambridge is a vital and growing city in need of more housing, in no small part because of why Central Square was named a Cultural District. Let's find a way to have residential, retail, and artist space here.

Sincerely,
Barb Strom

February 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a Boston based dancer my whole life. As a life long resident, it is especially apparent to me that art spaces, particularly dance spaces are disappearing at a rapid rate. Studio at 550 is one of the few affordable dance spaces within the Boston/Cambridge area. It is incredibly important for dance makers, particularly those who are not established yet (I am 31 and just honing in on my professional career) to have affordable spaces to rent.

Studio at 550 has housed rehearsals for my small dance company, I have participated in performances in the space, and they support the arts community in Cambridge/Boston in a myriad of ways. They offer a residency program for companies that provides free rental space and mentor-ship.

In a city that is becoming every increasing difficult to live in due to cost, it is paramount that we support our cities artists and those who make Cambridge an interesting place to live. Artists need spaces in which to practice. The dance community just lost Green St Studios, one of the only other affordable performance/rental spaces. Don't let Boston/Cambridge loose one of our last creative spaces in support of affordable housing. We need your help to keep the creativity in our city.

Best,
Adriane Brayton

12 Adelaide St.
Boston, MA

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of Studio at 550 in Central Square to try to ensure that the studio is not displaced by development in the building. Although I understand the need for housing in Cambridge, Studio 550 is a venue that provides critical rehearsal and teaching space for dance artists from Cambridge and beyond.

With the loss of Green Street Studio in the Square, the arts community can't afford to lose another space. Central Square has been a magnet for artists since the 1970s because of affordable rehearsal, teaching and performance space. In addition to bringing working artists to the neighborhood, these spaces attract students, audience members and others who come to the square for classes and rehearsals but also eat at the restaurants, shop at stores and generally bring a lively, engaged and positive energy to Central Square.

Please make certain that this important space continues to be a resource to Cambridge and the wider community.

Respectfully,
Amy Zell Ellsworth
Board Member, New England Foundation for the Arts

January 9, 2020

Dear City of Cambridge,

My name is Benjamin Cuba, and I am active, working musician in the Somerville and Cambridge arts community. This letter is in response to the potential and possible closing or rezoning of Studio @550 and other business at the 550 Massachusetts Ave. address. Studio @550 and other businesses and units should not be closed in this process.

Studio @550 provides a useful and exciting space for rehearsals, residencies, and performances for creative, intelligent artists in the Boston dance community. A lot of purposeful and engaging work has been crafted and presented in such a space. Studio @550 has showcased and harnessed the talent from the dancers, choreographers, musicians, and artists across this city, and continues to support projects from experts and novices alike. It is more than merely a studio, but rather a keystone community center where patrons and lovers of the arts can admire and learn from each other.

Furthermore, this rezoning situation has not been executed with much clarity or consideration to the working parties involved.

Central Square should not lose another creative space. Cambridge can achieve a more vibrant artistic community. Please reconsider your efforts to close an already functioning and successful creative space.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Benjamin Cuba

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals City of Cambridge,

My name is Carl Alleyne and I am a dance instructor and performing artist teaching in the city of Cambridge. I teach at Studio 550, and I and my students love it there! The studio has a great owner in Callie Chapman and a fantastic community.

I am writing in support of Callie Chapman of Studio 550. I've known Callie for a number of years and have rented studio space for a number of years. Studio at 550 is active and has a great community, and is one of the pillars when it comes to dance in Cambridge. Musicians and other artists also go to this location to enhance their craft. I even had the TV show "Chronicle" come and interview me, and we did the interview at the Studio at 550.

This is a very dire time right now, as a lot of artists are displaced and do not have homes to continue to enhance community and culture through the arts.

Converting existing arts space to residential space would put a big dent in our community. I ask that this letter be considered.

Sincerely,

Carl Alleyne
Dance Instructor/ Performing Artist

January 9, 2020

To: The Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Cambridge

From: the undersigned dancers

We are writing about the Variance Request submitted by Clifford Schorer. If his variance is granted, Studio 550 will be impacted, possibly removed. Studio 550 is an important resource for the dance community in Cambridge and several of the surrounding cities and towns. It provides rehearsal space for dancers and musicians and performance space for various events. The dance community in Central Square has already been very hard hit by the closure of Green Street Studios to development. Central Square prides itself on being a center for the arts. Don't let Studio 550 be yet another loss for the local dance community.

Sincerely,

Allison Ross
Vicky Steinley
Sue Lemney
Julie Dearst
Joanie Block
Karen Klein

Dear CDD and staff:

I want to register my horror that the city would even consider taking over one of the LAST public art spaces in Central Sq. I know how hard it has been to keep the Dance Complex from being taken over and Callie Chapman has put in her own resources to provide a place to make art - It is not only unfair unjust and unnecessary but

a contradiction to the promises the city manager and staff has made to make Central sq. a registered artistic center.

I know there are alternatives for building micro-units so please keep the studio open for me and all the other artists in Cambridge .

Sincerely
Alice Heller
22 Corporal Burns Rd

Joseph, Wendell

From: Flightorvisibility Music <flightorvisibilitymusic@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2020 7:39 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Statement read at committee meeting

Hello Mr. Joseph,

Thanks for asking me to send you the statement I read at your committee meeting.

Here's the statement:

Hi, my name is Rafael Natan, I am a local performance artist and I am also the events coordinator at Make Shift Boston. I was a Cambridge resident last year but was priced out.

Today I am here in Solidarity with Studio at 550. Like Make Shift, Studio 550 is one of the few spaces in the greater city where any artist can rent space affordably to realize their vision. I remember going to one particularly memorable event at Studio 550 where musicians and dancers were encouraged to develop an improvised story performance together. This event completely changed the way I perform and teach and it is of utmost importance that we as citizens of the Greater Boston area continue to hold space for these kinds of community events.

In my 9 years in Boston, I have seen at least 12 different community spaces like Studio 550 shut down, that rate being greater than 1 per year. Rents for such spaces are going up and we honestly can't afford to lose any more of these spaces.

Additionally, I've seen an influx of new luxury housing units, often remaining vacant for years while market rate of the neighborhood catches up to the rate of the new developments. Meanwhile our homeless population is growing and the income metric to consider a unit "affordable" is significantly higher than the annual income made by anyone i know in the extended artist community.

The landlord of 550 mass ave mentioned \$30,000 a year as a metric for affordability. As a full-time artist, I make about \$5,000 a year and I'm one of the lucky ones, one of the few people who does not have student debt. If I did, I would not be able to live in Boston at all.

So my question is how are we going to continue to hold space for working artists and how are we going to insure that new housing projects actually cater to those who need housing the most?

Sincerely,

--
Rafael Natan
Oboist, Violinist, Singer, Songwriter, Educator
pronouns: They/Them/Theirs

IG: @flightorvisibility

New single: Always

Joseph, Wendell

From: Studio at 550 <callie@studioat550.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 12:07 AM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Fwd: support letter

Dear Central Square Advisory Committee,

I write this letter as a performing artist who moved to Cambridge 10 years ago because of the work and professional development opportunities this city offered. While I no longer live in Cambridge due to rising rents, it has continued to be the home of my artistic practice thanks to places like Studio550, The Dance Complex and Green Street Studios, which have been the equivalents of offices or workshops for me and so many other artists who need the resource of space to develop their work. It is due to this practice, in these places, that I am able to teach and enrich the lives of people in the community at places like the Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Citywide Senior Center and Cambridge Friends School, and create and perform work in countless venues and public places around the Boston area.

As arts organizations and businesses such as Out of the Blue Gallery, EMF, Green Street Studios and others have been forced to close due to egregious rents and what seems to be the prioritizing of income versus healthy, robust communities by both property owners and the city, I am deeply concerned that these places of work, creation and leisure are not being protected. Once a beacon of productivity, hope and innovation in the arts, Cambridge is becoming a place of gentrified, class homogeny.

I urge you to actually demonstrate your proclamation of Central Square being a "Cultural District" by saving our spaces for arts and culture for all residents and visitors alike. Insist that developers and property owners respect Cambridge's long standing commitment to supporting people of all walks of life. Help them to realize that taking away spaces for arts and culture takes away jobs, opportunities for personal and communal growth and the character that helps to make Cambridge the special city that it is.

I am happy to discuss this further and help advocate for Studio 550 and other spaces. I can be reached at kara@karafili.com should you like to connect.

Thank you for reading and for your work on this matter,

Kara Fili

--

Educator / Artist / Administrator
MFA Interdisciplinary Arts; Concentration in Performance Creation
www.karafili.com
978 - 500 - 1079
She / Her / Hers

"It Goes Like This...Stories of Movement"
a multi-modal evening of storytelling at The Dance Complex
March 27, 2020
<https://storiesofmovement20.eventbrite.com>
IGLT fundraising page: gf.me/u/xf3ct5

@ItGoesLikeThis_Events

#itgoeslikethis2020

FB Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/156699349082500/>

Joseph, Wendell

From: Olive Rappoli <orappoli@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 6:31 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Cc: sjoseph@cambridge.gov
Subject: 550 Massachusetts Ave

Hello Wendell,

My name is Olive, I attended the Central Square Advisory Committee meeting on February 19th regarding the proposed development at 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue. I'd like to say first off, thank you for facilitating the meeting, I found it very informative! I am a shy soul and this was the first meeting of its kind that I have attended, but I felt very much compelled to be present to support the case for preserving the arts scene in Central Square.

I have been coming to Central Square for dance, music and art for the last 7+ years. I am a dance student with Flamenco Boston, which holds its classes at Studio@550, and prior to its closing I also took classes at Green Street Studios. I have lived and worked in the Boston/Cambridge area my entire life, and Central Square has one of the most vibrant personalities of all the neighborhoods that I have come to know. All of the squares in Cambridge have restaurants, bars and storefronts, but Central Square has so much more than that. The high concentration of artists, music venues, dance studios and socials has provided a home for the arts community that is extremely unique. To have so many businesses and organizations dedicated to the arts clustered together and accessible to the public is truly special and important to the strength of the community, and is not something that can be easily rebuilt once dispersed. As a hub for the arts community, these spaces also draw consumers for other businesses in Central Square.

The loss of Green Street Studios was a difficult one, and it would be a shame to see the same happen to Studio@550. I could go on for many pages describing what dancing means to me personally, and can only imagine how devastated other members of the dance community were, who rely on these spaces for their livelihood, physical and mental health, and recreation. It is so important to preserve places like these that bring together people of all races, ages and backgrounds. So many diverse artists were displaced with the closure of GSS, and many have found new home at Studio@550. Spaces like Studio@550 need to remain open not only for the existing community but also to inspire and foster future artists and allow unique cultural neighborhoods like Central Square to thrive.

Thank you so much for your time, and best of luck on your new position!

Best Regards,
Olive Rappoli

O'Grady, Sean

From: Sheli <sheliwortis@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 4:45 PM
To: O'Grady, Sean
Subject: Please no micro-units

Cambridge needs long-term affordable housing.

Please do not accept the proposal for Variance: To build a 29-unit micro-studio apartment building at 544 Mass. Ave. in Central Sq.

Thank you!

Sheli Wortis
106 Berkshire St. 02141

Sent from Xfinity Connect Application

O'Grady, Sean

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 5:50 PM
To: O'Grady, Sean
Subject: Opposition to BZA-017219-2019 544 Mass. Ave. from Cambridge. Residents Alliance

Dear BZA members,

The Cambridge Residents Alliance opposes BZA approval of Case 017219-2019.

The Cambridge Residents Alliance worked with others to pass the recent Central Sq. Restoration zoning which seeks to encourage housing in Central Sq. That zoning did not allow micro-units. The Cambridge Residents Alliance wants new housing to be aimed at longer-term residents who are more likely to be involved in the community, and therefore thinks that micro-units are a bad idea, because it is hard for people to live long-term in micro-units. We oppose the project being allowed to develop 29 micro-units.

The proposed development would also force yet another arts space, The Studio@550, that is used by hundreds of performers each week, to leave Central Sq. One of the goals of the Central Sq. re-zoning was to strengthen the Central Sq. Arts district. Since The Studio@550 would be displaced by this proposal, we ask that the BZA not approve the proposal.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris
269 Norfolk St. 02139
Cambridge Residents Alliance
Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge

O'Grady, Sean

From: Smith, Jacquelyn A <jams@bu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2020 6:02 PM
To: O'Grady, Sean
Subject: Micro units @ 544 Mass AVE

I cannot attend tonight's meeting but want to register my concern and opposition to building micro units in the proposed space. Cambridge needs affordable - that translates to me as middle and lower income housing units that are 1,2 and 3 bedroom units for residents who plan to stay long term and become part of the community. I am also concerned for homeless individuals who need a place while waiting for a permanent placement. Micro units could fulfill that need. If the biotech and technical businesses need housing for their temporary employees or visiting staff, they can look to the properties they already have and adjust the space.

Jacquelyn Smith. Cambridge resident 02139Sent from my iPhone

Central Square Redevelopment LLC
10 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772
(508)726-5445

February 27, 2020

To the Members of the Cambridge BZA
delivered by hand with a request for a meeting continuance on February 27, 2020

RE: Zoning Variance hearing 544-550 Mass Ave Cambridge, MA

Dear Members of the Cambridge BZA:

First let me thank the Board for the continuance this evening and I look forward to returning when the Planning Board process is nearing completion.

To explain: We have received advice from our counsel, confirmed by the staff at Planning (see attached email from Wendell Joseph, Swaathi Joseph and Jeff Roberts of February 21, 2020, that although section 10.45 allows the BZA and Planning Board to combine the process of Special Permits required from each board into one process, by “not requiring a separate application”, in this case, because we are seeking a Variance from the BZA and Special Permits from the Planning Board, the process must remain two separate processes that may run in tandem. From a practical standpoint, the Planning Board application should make its way through the process before the BZA closes the process in order to avoid duplicate work by the Boards.

In this interest, we have been advised to ask for a continuance of the Variance application hearing, during which time we will advance the Planning Board process. We will return to the BZA when the Planning Board process has ruled on the application, and then only with the unit count per lot area variance request which is the question before the BZA.

I attach for the board’s information the Central Square Advisory Committee report from the meeting that was held on February 19th. The Advisory Committee stated in summary: “The Committee members in attendance were not opposed to the proposed project”.

In addition there were a large number of people in attendance who were opposed to the project on the basis that a tenant on the top floor of the building called Studio 550 will be displaced by the construction and the redevelopment. The message from the dance community was heard loud and clear. Although we have no space available for this use in the future project, I am committed over the next few months to work with Callie Chapman, the Director of the Studio to seek alternative spaces and non-profit support for her mission.

Page 2: 550 Mass Ave February 27, 2020 Letter to the Cambridge BZA

The project at has agreed to create a small community meeting space onsite for the Marxist Bookstore and other organized meetings, as this has been located on this site since the 1970's. This will have a small impact on the square footage of the largest units and will be revised prior to the first Planning Board meeting.

There were a number of comments regarding the small units and the extra inclusionary units that would be created by allowing this Variance. Some were highly supportive and others are committed to larger units, which this project does not offer. It is our belief there must be a mix of unit sizes in the permitting pipeline if any progress is to be made on the housing pressure in Cambridge. The facts are that the number of inclusionary units would increase by 3 with this variance granting, to 5 total, the total unit count increase by 9 and the rent of the market-rate studio units would be among the least expensive new units being created in the Square of any size in all of the new developments. The waiting list for studios and one bedrooms is the longest waiting list and there has been a 12% drop in the creation of smaller units since the zoning favoring larger units and the inclusionary rent percentage being reduced to 25% of the applicants income, inclusive of all utilities, rather than the previous 30%.

There is no doubt that allowing these additional nine units of smaller housing units will provide a dramatic social good, and have no demonstrable downside from a housing perspective. As every study demonstrates more units will ease housing pressure, and not every one of them can be \$4,000 - \$6,000 per month Luxury units, as most new development is offering.

I look forward to returning when the Planning Board has had sufficient time to rule on the Special Permits Application and we will then ask to be put on the agenda and will repost the required notices.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Cliff Schorer
Manager, Central Square redevelopment LLC



Cj S <cschorer@gmail.com>

544 Mass Ave Report

Joseph, Wendell <wjoseph@cambridgema.gov>
To: "cschorer@gmail.com" <cschorer@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 21, 2020 at 5:57 PM

Hello Cliff,

Thanks again for sharing your proposal with the Central Square Advisory Committee. I know you've heard from some of these folks before, but I do appreciate you sticking around for as long as you did to hear from the public.

Also, as a follow up to the question you asked me a couple of days ago, it is possible that this project would have to go through separate processes with the different boards. You cited Section 10.45 in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 10.45) which states:

10.45 Any development application requiring a special permit from the Planning Board that contains elements requiring a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeal may be allowed by the Planning Board within the scope of the Planning Board special permit and shall not require a separate application to the Board of Zoning Appeal.

I checked in with staff and they informed me that the Planning Board can indeed review & grant BZA special permits if the project also requires a special permit from the Planning Board. However, this only applies to BZA special permits and not variances. Since your project would require a variance for exceeding the maximum number of allowed residential units, and only BZA can grant variances, the Planning Board would not be able to grant it. Essentially, there would have to be two processes: one for the variance from the BZA, and another for the special permit from the Planning Board. If you have any follow up questions, please feel free to contact Swaathi Joseph or Jeff Roberts.

Attached to this email, you will find a copy of the report I will send to the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Board. Best of luck moving forward!!

Regards,

Wendell

Wendell T. Joseph, Neighborhood Planner

Community Development Department, City of Cambridge

344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

Work: (617) 349-9462

Mobile: (617) 544-7884

Email: wjoseph@cambridgema.gov

Website: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD>

P R O C E E D I N G S

* * * *

3 | (7:01 p.m.)

9 These are cases that are started at an earlier
10 date, but for one reason or another were not resolved, and
11 were referred until this evening. And after that, we'll go
12 to our regular agenda.

13 But before I call the first of the continued
14 cases, I'm going to read a statement.

After notifying the Chair, any person may make a video or audio recording of our open sessions, or may transmit the meeting through any media, subject to reasonable requirements that the Chair may impose as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used, so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair will inform other attendees at that meeting that a recording is

1 being made.

2 And I wish to advise that not at least two
3 recordings are being made. Our stenographer makes a
4 recording to assist her when she prepares a transcript of
5 the meeting, and a citizen of the city is also recording
6 this meeting, and he's left his tape recorder on the front
7 desk right here.

8 Is there anyone else planning to record, or
9 whatever -- record or film this meeting? None? Okay. With
10 that out of the way, let's start, and I'm going to first
11 call Case Number 017219 -- 544 Massachusetts Avenue. Anyone
12 here wishing to be heard on this matter?

13 THE REPORTER: Can you spell your name for the
14 record?

15 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Sure. My name is Clifford
16 Shore, that's S-c-h-o-r-e-r. That's all you need?

17 THE REPORTER: And your address?

18 CLIFFORD SCHORER: 15 Concord Square, Boston,
19 Mass. So basically, I'm here to just read a letter into the
20 record and then submit some materials, and then ask for
21 another continuance. That's the advice I've been given by
22 staff of both Board, if that's okay.

1 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: We won't consider any of
2 that. We'll put it in the files.

3 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay, that would be --

4 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: That's not what we have in
5 the real hearing.

6 CLIFFORD SCHORER: -- that would be perfect. Let
7 me first thank the Board for the continuance this evening,
8 and I look forward to returning when the Planning Board
9 process is nearing completion.

10 To explain, we received advice from Counsel
11 confirmed by the staff of Planning -- see attached e-mail
12 from Wendell Joseph, Swathi Joseph and Jeff Roberts of
13 February 21, 2020 -- that although Section 10.45 allows the
14 BZA and Planning Board to combine the processes of special
15 permit requested from each Board into one process by, "not
16 requesting a separate application," in this case, because we
17 are seeking a variance from the BZA and special permits from
18 the Planning Board, the process must remain two separate
19 processes that may run in tandem.

20 From a practical standpoint, the Planning Board
21 application should make its way through the process before
22 the BZA closes the process in order to avoid duplicate work

1 by the Boards.

2 In this interest, I've been advised to ask for her
3 a continuance of the variance application hearing, during
4 which time we will advance the Planning Board process.

5 We'll return to the BZA when the Planning Board
6 process has ruled on the application, and then only with the
7 unit count for lot area of variance requested, as it was
8 initially.

9 I attach for the Board's information the Central
10 Square Advisory Committee's report from the meeting that was
11 held February 19. The Advisory Committee stated in the
12 summary, "The committee members in attendance were not
13 opposed to the participated project. In addition, there
14 were a large number of people in attendance who were opposed
15 to the project on the basis that a tenant on the top floor
16 of the building, called, 'Studio 550' will be displaced by
17 the construction and redevelopment.

18 "The message from the dance community was heard
19 loud and clear. Although we have no space available for
20 this use in the future project, I am committed over the next
21 few months to work with Callie Chapman, the Director of the
22 Studio, to seek alternative spaces and nonprofit support for

1 her mission.

2 "The project has agreed to create a community
3 meeting space on site for the Marxist (sic) book store and
4 other organized meetings of community organizations.

5 "This has been located on this site since the
6 1970s. This will be a small impact on the square footage of
7 the largest units, and will be revised before the first
8 Planning Board meeting.

9 "There were a number of comments regarding the
10 small units and the extra inclusionary units that would be
11 created by allowing this variance. Some were highly
12 supportive, and others are committed only to larger units,
13 which this project does not offer.

14 "It is our belief there must be a mix of unit
15 sizes, and a permanent pipeline if any progress is to be
16 made on the housing pressure in Cambridge.

17 "The facts are that the number of inclusionary
18 units would increase by 3, with this variance granted, to
19 five total. The total unit count increased by 9, and the
20 rent of the market-rate studio units would be among the
21 lowest and least expensive units created in the square in
22 any of the new developments.

1 "The waiting list for studios and one-bedrooms is
2 the longest waiting list there is, and there's been a 12
3 percent drop in the creation of small units since the
4 zoning, favoring large units, and inclusionary rent
5 percentages being reduced to 25 percent of the applicant's
6 income, inclusive of all utilities rather than the previous
7 30.

8 "There is no doubt that allowing these additional
9 nine units of smaller housing will provide a dramatic social
10 good, and have no demonstrable downside from a housing
11 perspective.

12 "As every study demonstrates, more units relieve
13 housing pressure, and not every one of them can be \$4,000 to
14 \$6,000 per month luxury units, as nearly all new
15 developments are offering.

16 "I look forward to returning when the Planning
17 Board has had sufficient time to rule on the special permit
18 application, and we ask that we be put on the agenda at your
19 convenience, and we'll repost the required notices at that
20 time.

21 "Please feel free to contact me with any questions
22 or concerns."

1 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Before we get to the
2 actual continuance, it's not a time for discussion, okay?
3 Let me point out something to you, you should be well aware
4 of it. Our role as a Board is far different from the
5 Planning Board Central Square Advisory Committee.

6 They can make discretionary decisions to do things
7 they believe in the best interest of the city. We don't
8 have that discretion. We have a very tight state law. The
9 legal standard has to be satisfied.

10 So when you come back and seek the variance,
11 assuming that you will, you've got to make sure you
12 understand what you've got for a case to try to present to
13 us. You've got to demonstrate that unless we grant the
14 relief, you will suffer a substantial hardship.

15 And it's not a hardship for the people who own the
16 property now, it's a hardship for anybody who owns the
17 property.

18 And that this hardship, you've got to make sure
19 you've got it right -- this hardship is owing to
20 circumstances and -- reading from the statute -- relating to
21 the soil conditions, shape or topography of such land or
22 structures, and especially affecting them. But not

1 generally affecting the zoning district in which it is
2 located. That's a narrow type standard, the third word
3 that's more general.

4 That's what you're going to have to deal with,
5 assuming you get back to us, you get the variance you seek.
6 There should be no misunderstanding about that.

7 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yes, no, thank you for the
8 counsel. And our original application focused on those
9 questions. This is what we were advised to --

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: No, no, I meant -- I
11 wasn't sitting on the case when you came the last time.
12 That's exactly what you do. I just want to make sure
13 there's no misunderstanding when you do come back. I wasn't
14 aware of that. So good.

15 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: All to the better.

17 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay.

18 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: So you have a date you
19 want to suggest to people?

20 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Based on the schedule of the
21 Planning Board, I would suggest two months, so -- two months
22 would give us time.

1 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: If there's a citizen who
2 wishes to speak -- James? Plans?

3 JAMES WILLIAMSON: So James Williamson, 1000
4 Jackson Place. I just want to point out that --

5 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, what's your address?

6 JAMES WILLIAMSON: 1000 Jackson Place in
7 Cambridge. So I just want to mention I went by Inspectional
8 Services because the deadline for submitting materials, my
9 understanding, is 5:00 on Monday.

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Mm-hm.

11 JAMES WILLIAMSON: I went by at about 7:00, 7:30.
12 Maria Pacheco didn't happen to be there Monday, was there
13 Tuesday apparently. But the material in the file, there was
14 no mention at all of there being a request for a
15 continuance.

16 I'm sympathetic to there being a continuance, but
17 I -- it's troubling to me that maybe more than one person
18 has shown up here tonight not being aware of the fact that a
19 continuance would be requested, and also mention made of the
20 memorandum for the Central Square Advisory Committee is also
21 not yet in the file.

22 So I was pretty much in the dark, and there may be

1 some other people.

2 In fact, I told at least one other person in the
3 room -- two other people maybe -- that it would probably be
4 a good idea to be here, but there was no...

5 And I just wonder if this communication aspect
6 couldn't be managed better, so that we would know that the
7 proponent was asking, was planning to ask for a continuance,
8 or that it could have happened, and that information could
9 have been in the file by the deadline of 5:00 Monday.

10 And I'm not saying it's anybody -- you know, Cliff
11 may have done everything he thought he was honestly supposed
12 to do, I just wonder if this could be addressed.

13 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Our practice I think,
14 James, is with regard to the 5:00 p.m. on the Monday before,
15 that relates to drawings, dimensional forms, factual
16 matters.

17 And so, that gives to our Board members, and the
18 citizens of the city the opportunity to read them, study
19 them, and be prepared for the hearing on Thursday night.
20 This is a case for a continuance. There's no requirement
21 that that request for the continuance be in the file.

22 The way it works is he could have just shown up

1 here tonight. We knew in advance, through Maria, that he
2 was going to seek a continuance. But we didn't have to
3 know. It wouldn't be out of line if we didn't. To be sure,
4 it can create inconveniences for citizens of the city,
5 that's just the way it is.

6 Continuances can be for many reasons, and
7 sometimes it's not apparent until the hearing starts that
8 there's a need for a continuance, okay?

9 So do you want to two for now?

10 SISIA DAGLIAN: Well April 30 is the first date we
11 have available anyway.

12 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: April?

13 SISIA DAGLIAN: April 30.

14 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: April 30. Is the
15 thirtieth -- got to give you -- give your name and address
16 to the stenographer, please.

17 HATCH STUART: My name is Hatch Stuart.

18 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Your name, I'm sorry?

19 HATCH STUART: Hatch Stuart. I live at 12
20 Portland Street in Area 4. Okay.

21 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Now, you're only going to
22 speak to the request for a continuance. Don't get into the

1 merits of the case.

2 HATCH STUART: Well, actual, if there's request
3 for a variance --

4 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Yeah, we're not hearing
5 that tonight.

6 HATCH STUART: -- a variance has to be -- you did
7 mention the hardship requests the variance?

8 SISIA DAGLIAN: No.

9 HATCH STUART: But I would -- in the BZA
10 deliberations look very carefully, whether what he considers
11 -- a developer considers the hardship has to do with --

12 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Sir --

13 HATCH STUART: -- not the characteristics --

14 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Sir!

15 HATCH STUART: -- of the property.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: You give, you're going
17 beyond what you can talk about right now.

18 HATCH STUART: Okay.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: All we're talking about is
20 should we continue this case.

21 HATCH STUART: It's very fundamental. Thank you.

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: April 30 it is. Case not

1 heard, so.

2 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Do you need these?

3 COLLECTIVE: No.

4 CLIFFORD SCHORER: And these are the materials
5 that the Cambridge --

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Give it to Sisia.

7 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Yeah, okay.

8 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: It will go in the files,
9 and any member of the city, any person -- citizen -- can
10 come back and read them.

11 CLIFFORD SCHORER: Okay. Thank you very much.

12 SISIA DAGLIAN: He has to sign a waiver, right?

13 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Well, he's already signed
14 one.

15 SISIA DAGLIAN: Oh, he has? Okay.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Don't go yet, until we
17 finish this vote. Okay. The Chair moves that we continue
18 this case as a case not heard until 7:00 p.m. on April 30,
19 subject to the following conditions:

20 First is that the petitioner sign a waiver of time
21 for decision, and he's already done that in connection with
22 the first continuance.

1 Second, that a new posting sign or a modified
2 posting sign reflecting the new date, April 30, and the new
3 time, 7:00 p.m., must be posted and maintained for the 14
4 days before April 30 date, just as you did when you had your
5 first application, or first hearing.

6 And lastly, usually if I talk to James, any
7 modification in the building plans, dimensional forms,
8 should be in our files no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday
9 before.

10 In this regard, we will expand that, and any
11 report from the Planning Board, you don't control that, but
12 I would ask you to request the Planning Board -- what do you
13 have in your Planning Board hearing, by the way? How much
14 in advance of April 30?

15 CLIFFORD SCHORER: It is the second, it's the --

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Of April?

17 CLIFFORD SCHORER: It's the beginning of April.

18 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: So are you planning to --
19 we would like, and the citizens of the city are entitled to
20 see -- whatever their report or recommendations are. So
21 they should be in our files, Inspectional Services files, no
22 later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday before April 30.

1 All those in favor of continuing the case, please
2 say, "Aye."

3 THE BOARD: Aye.

4 [All vote YES]

5 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Five in favor, case
6 continued. We'll see you on April 30 along with a couple
7 other people.

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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Massachusetts

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA.

617) 349-6100

April 15, 2020

Central Square Redevelopment LLC
C/o Clifford Schorer
10 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772

RE: 544 Mass Avenue – BZA-017219-2019

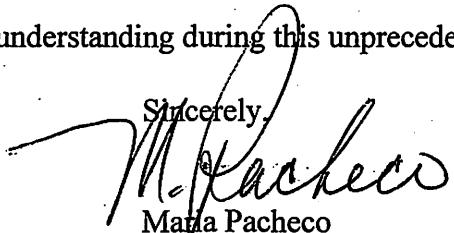
Dear Mr. Schorer,

I am writing to you in regard to your above up-coming Board of Zoning Appeal Hearing.

At this time the City will not be holding any non-essential public meetings due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the City Manager's closure of all City buildings to non-essential business. On April 3, 2020, the Governor signed into law Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 ("Act"), which extends all land use permitting deadlines until after the State of Emergency is lifted. In light of the extensions provided for in the Act and the closure of City buildings, at this time the Board of Zoning Appeal will be rescheduling all public hearings in accordance with the extensions permitted under the Act. You will receive notice of the new date, once the hearing is rescheduled.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,



Maria Pacheco
Administrative Assistant

1 | * * * * *

2 (7:13 p.m.)

3 Sitting Members: Constantine Alexander, Brendan Sullivan,
4 Janet Green, Jim Monteverde, Slater W.
5 Anderson

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The Chair will now call

7 Case Number 017219 -- 544 Massachusetts Avenue. Anyone here
8 wishing to be heard on this matter? Apparently not. We'll
9 see if there's a letter in the file.

10 SISIA DAGLIAN: Hang on, there's someone that
11 raised their hand.

12 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I'm sorry?

13 SISIA DAGLIAN: There's someone that raised their
14 hand.

15 | Technical difficulties

16 | PATRICIA LEE FARRIS? Can you hear me?

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Yes. Could you identify
18 yourself, please?

19 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: Yes. This is Patricia Lee
20 Farris, and I'm speaking regarding 544, although I thought
21 that I would be speaking after a presentation. So is the
22 presentation not happening?

1 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: It is not happening. We
2 have a -- we've been advised that the petitioner wishes to
3 continue the case, and is not ready or does not want to make
4 a presentation at this point.

5 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: Could I request a quick
6 verbal review of the number of continuances this applicant
7 has received? Because I believe this might be the third
8 time that I've showed up and -- either virtually or in
9 person, and the case has been continued.

10 And I would also ask how many times is a
11 continuance allowed?

12 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Very good questions, and I
13 should have addressed that myself. Our rule of thumb -- and
14 it is a rule of thumb, it's not a legal requirement -- is
15 that we grant no more than two variances. And after that,
16 the case goes forward, come hell or high water.

17 This is a case we're going to go to our third
18 continuance. But I think, in my mind and other members of
19 the Board can feel differently -- this is an interesting and
20 maybe important case for the City of Cambridge. And I think
21 it's fair to allow the petitioner time to get his or her
22 ducks in order, so we have a thorough presentation.

1 I realize that for people who are not the
2 petitioner, that means you're going to use some time come
3 Thursday of a certain month, but I think we have in this
4 case no choice.

5 But I will say that there will be no further
6 continuances, in my mind, absent extremely compelling
7 circumstances. We have to bring this case to a closure, as
8 you've suggested. So that should be part of the record, and
9 the petitioner in this case should be told, "No more
10 continuances."

11 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: May I also ask if there is a
12 way for the website shortly before a hearing is to be held
13 that the website would reflect that the petitioner has
14 requested a continuance? Because if I had known that, I
15 would have saved the last hour and 15 minutes. That would
16 have been nice.

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I apologize for that, but
18 that's just the way we do it. I don't think we --

19 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: Yeah.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- we never in the past.
21 All I can say is I'll have to leave it to the ISD to answer
22 that. But in the past, we don't -- often we don't know

1 until a day or two before the hearing, scheduled hearing,
2 that there's going to be a request for a continuance. So,
3 although a fair request, it's not a feasible request.

4 So all I can say is what I would suggest in the
5 future, you can call the Inspectional Services Department on
6 the Thursday afternoon of the scheduled hearing and ask, "Is
7 this case going forward?"

8 But there's always a risk that a case goes
9 forward, and as a result of questions from members of the
10 Board, the petitioner or the Board asks for a further
11 continuance.

12 Not likely, in my opinion -- and it's only my
13 opinion -- in this case, given the number of continuances
14 we've given.

15 But I can't give you an ironclad guarantee that
16 you would know in advance. The best I can do.

17 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: Well, thank you very much.
18 I would simply differentiate between times that a
19 continuance is granted when the petitioner is present and
20 the Board members ask questions and then grant a
21 continuance. I would want to be present for that. But when
22 it's known ahead of time, even 24 hours ahead of time, it

1 would be helpful to know.

2 So I will do what I've refrained from doing in the
3 past, which is, "Bothering the staff with, 'Is this going
4 forward?'" So that seems to be you're saying the only
5 solution to this situation.

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Right.

7 PATRICIA LEE FARRIS: And I guess I will now wait
8 to hear what date you reschedule this for. Thank you very
9 much for your time.

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Thank you. What's the
11 earliest date we can hear this case?

12 SISIA DAGLIAN: Sorry, correspondence in the file
13 indicates that there's a Planning Board hearing in
14 September. So I'm wondering if October 8 would be a safe
15 date.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I'm looking at the file.
17 All I see are things about the July or --

18 SISIA DAGLIAN: Isn't -- I thought there was an e-
19 mail in there.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The case is rescheduled
21 for July 23 meeting; that's tonight. But I don't have a new
22 request, I don't have a date suggested by the petitioner as

1 to when they want the case continued to.

2 SISIA DAGLIAN: Yeah. I just saw an e-mail in the
3 folder saying there was something going on with the Planning
4 Board with this in September. So --

5 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Let me make a suggestion:
6 Let's push this case farther out. The farther out, the less
7 likely it's going to be a problem in terms of the petitioner
8 needing more time. So rather than hearing the case in
9 October, why don't we hear it in November?

10 SISIA DAGLIAN: Okay. November 5?

11 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: November 5? Other members
12 of the Board, what is your views on this? November 5, are
13 you --

14 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: This is Brendan Sullivan. If
15 it's going to have to go before the Planning Board in
16 September, I think that giving them in the next month, which
17 would be October -- the second meeting in October -- would
18 be my inclination.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: But what are the
20 consequences of just going back two more weeks --

21 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: It --

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- for safety?

1 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: -- there is none.

2 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay. I'm going to --

3 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: So.

4 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- with all due respect, I
5 think I'm going to suggest --

6 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Yeah, that's fine.

7 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: November 5. November 5,
8 you said?

9 SISIA DAGLIAN: Yes.

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: November 5 date. Jim or
11 Janet or Slater? I don't know if Slater, you'll be present
12 for that meeting, but you have any thoughts, is the November
13 5 okay with you?

14 JANET GREEN: It's fine with me, Gus.

15 JIM MONTEVERDE: Yeah, this is Jim. November 5 is
16 fine.

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay. The Chair --

18 SLATER ANDERSON: I will say I don't plan to be
19 traveling.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- moves that we continue
21 this case as -- is it a case heard? I was not at the
22 original hearing, no.

1 SISIA DAGLIAN: I don't think so, no.

2 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: So it's a case not heard
3 until 7:00 p.m. on November 5, where the petitioner has
4 already signed a waiver of time for a decision, am I right?

5 SISIA DAGLIAN: No.

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay. Then the other
7 requirements are that the petitioner must post 14 days
8 before November 5 in accordance with the usual procedures,
9 so that there is proper notice given to the community at
10 large about the pendency of this case.

11 And lastly, to the extent the petitioner has new
12 or revised plans, specifications or the like, they must be
13 in our files no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Monday before
14 November 5.

15 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: All those --

16 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Brendan Sullivan, yes for the
17 continuance.

18 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Jim?

19 JIM MONTEVERDE: Jim Monteverde, yes.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Janet?

21 JANET GREEN: Janet Green, yes.

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Slater?

1 SLATER ANDERSON: Slater says yes. Gus, I make
2 one comment?

3 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Yes, go ahead.

4 SLATER ANDERSON: To Ms. Farris' request of, you
5 know, advance notice. I think the problem with that is
6 until you gavel the hearing into session, you know, there
7 cannot be any action taken on a case. So ISD telling them
8 that it's not going to go forward, I think, is a risky thing
9 to do.

10 Because until the hearing has come to formal
11 session, you know, and we take action on it, the person
12 could show up and proceed with the case. So I just -- I
13 think it's risky that -- I understand we've all gone, shown
14 up for hearings and they don't happen, but I just -- I
15 caution on it.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Your caution is well
17 stated. I don't know what we can do to avoid it. And
18 that's just the way the cookie crumbles in terms of our
19 zoning procedures.

20 SLATER ANDERSON: I agree with not continuing
21 indefinitely, though. And we are --

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I agree with that.

1 SLATER ANDERSON: Yeah. We're in unusual times,
2 so I definitely have some deference right now, but -- you
3 know -- our practice of not more than two with good reason I
4 think is sound.

5 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Well, again, I want to
6 make it as part of this public record that unless there's
7 extremely unusual or compelling circumstances, this case
8 will not be continued further beyond November 5. That's the
9 best we can do at this point.

10 Votes taken, yes. Case continued.

11 [All vote YES]

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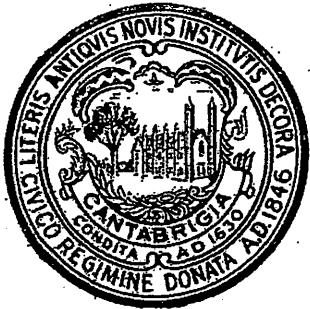
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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

July 9, 2020

To: The Board of Zoning Appeal

From: The Planning Board

RE: BZA cases to be heard on July 23, 2020.

The Planning Board have no comments on the cases listed on the BZA agenda.

Pacheco, Maria

From: Cj S <cschorer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 11:38 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Re: 544 Mass Avenue - BZA-017219-2019

Dear Maria,

I have posted the sign. I received the sign by mail and it is posted. I just want to make sure the sign is 8.5" x 11". Is this big enough or is the one you have at City Hall bigger? If so I will come by and get the bigger one.

As you requested, I would ask to please continue the hearing as we are still working on the Planning Board process before we return. I understand the next meeting might be in September. I understand and we will try to press the Planning process to make sure we are ready.

Thanks,

Cliff Schorer
Manager
Central Square Redevelopment, LLC
508-726-5445

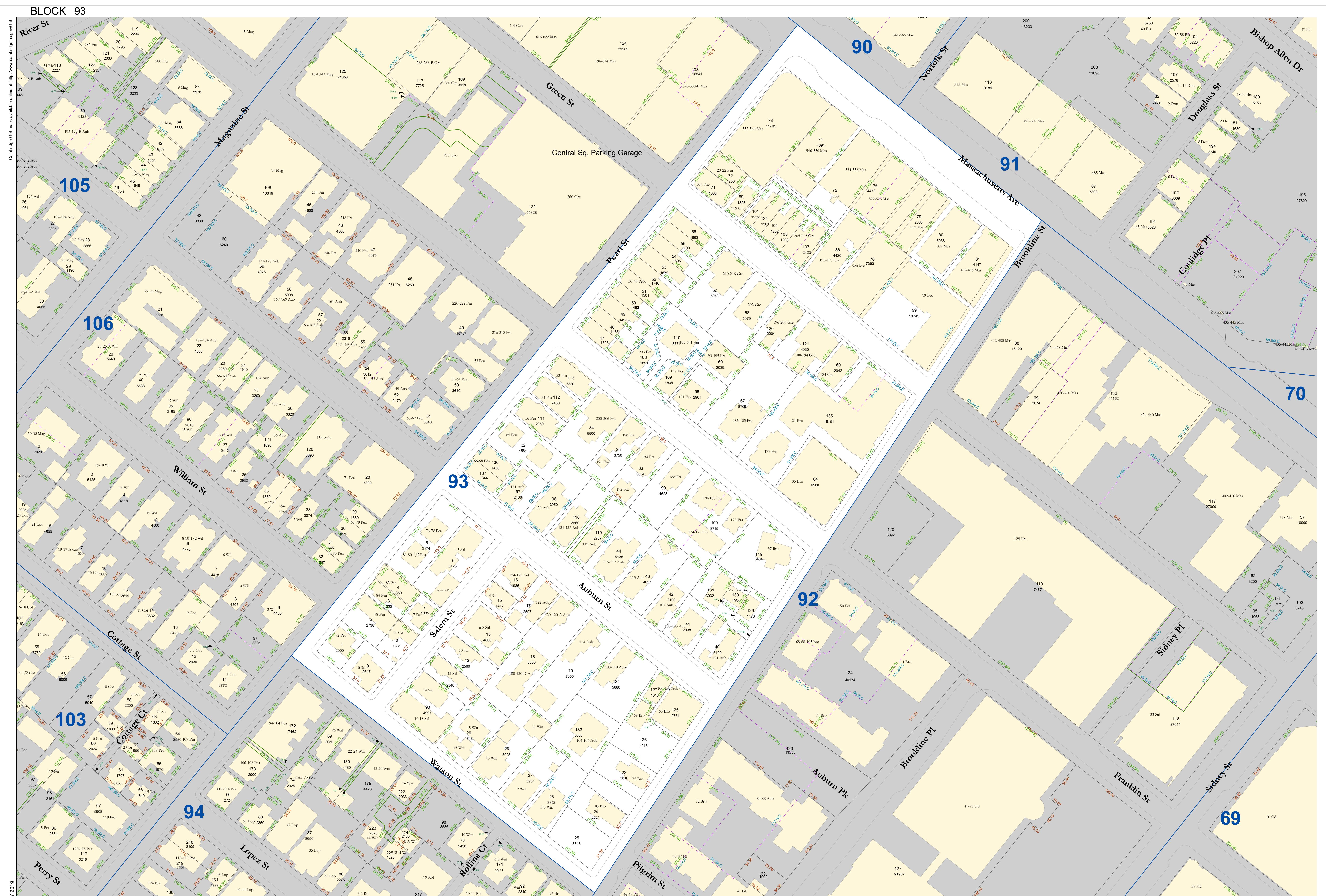
On Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 2:56 PM Pacheco, Maria <mpacheco@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Hi,

The above case is re-scheduled for our July 23, 2020 BZA hearing. New notices will be going out this Thursday 7/2/20. Please make sure to pick up your new **POSTING SIGN** at our front desk located at the Inspectional Services Department, 831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge on Tuesday 7/7/20 between 10-12 a.m. All boards need to be posted by Thursday 7/9/20.

Thanks,

Maria Pacheco



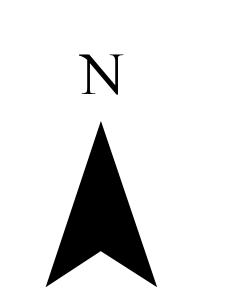
**City of Cambridge
Assessing Department**

795 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

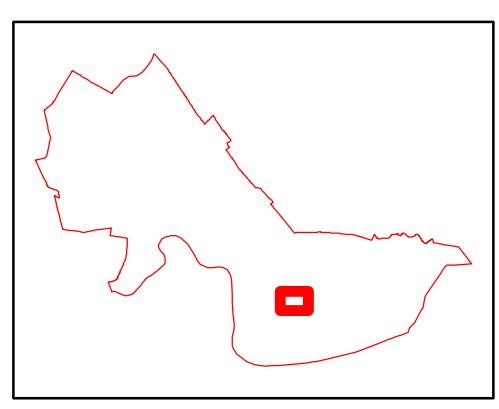
- Buildings
- Water
- Lot Line
- Sub-Parcel Line
- Block Line
- Easement
- City Boundary
- Railway

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 10 | Lot Number | 100 | Parcel size in Sq. Ft. |
| 93 | Block Number | 44.0LC | Land Court Dimension |
| 10 Cam | Street Number | 65.0 | Survey Dimensions |
| (125.0) | | Deed Dimension | |

DISCLAIMER:
All Real Property shown on this map was compiled from existing Assessor's Tax Maps dated 1920 to 2018 and maintained by the City Assessor's Office and the Department of Public Works. Subsequent changes were made using the City of Cambridge Geographic Information System (GIS). Parcels have not been created from survey, and map is suitable for assessing purposes only.
The City of Cambridge assumes no legal responsibility for information shown on this map.



0 20 40 80 Feet
1 inch = 49 feet



**Parcel Block Map
93**

Pacheco, Maria

From: James Zall <jzall@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:30 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: BZA-017219-2019 (544 Mass Ave): comments for 7/23 meeting

To the Board of Zoning Appeals:

This project aims to construct 29 small residential units in a space where zoning would normally allow only 20. This is a welcome development at a time when the City is trying to deal-- on multiple fronts -- with the effects of an extreme shortage of housing, especially affordable housing. Long-standing restrictive zoning rules and procedures have often made those efforts more difficult and expensive than they would otherwise be.

Although this project will not officially provide income-based affordable housing, its smaller unit size can help fill a desperate need for less-expensive apartments. It would offer an alternative to multiple single tenants sharing larger apartments needed by families with children.

Some Cambridge residents who've been opposing zoning changes for affordable housing in their own neighborhoods have argued that lower-cost housing only belongs along major corridors or near public transportation. This project clearly meets those requirements they have sought to impose.

The present "not too small" zoning rule for apartments in Central Square is needlessly restrictive-- even cruel --in the face of the current housing shortage. I urge the Board to grant the modest zoning relief requested here and approve this variance.

Sincerely,

James Zall
203 Pemberton Street

Pacheco, Maria

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 6:06 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to BZA-017219-2019 544 Mass. Ave. from Cambridge. Residents Alliance

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lee Farris <Lee@LeeFarris.net>
Subject: Opposition to BZA-017219-2019 544 Mass. Ave. from Cambridge. Residents Alliance
Date: July 23, 2020 at 5:54:41 PM EDT
To: sogrady@cambridgema.gov

7-23-20

Dear BZA members,

The Cambridge Residents Alliance opposes BZA approval of Case 017219-2019.

The Cambridge Residents Alliance worked with others to pass the recent Central Sq. Restoration zoning which seeks to encourage housing in Central Sq. That zoning did not allow micro-units. The Cambridge Residents Alliance wants new housing to be aimed at longer-term residents who are more likely to be involved in the community, and therefore thinks that micro-units are a bad idea, because it is hard for people to live long-term in micro-units. We oppose the project being allowed to develop 29 micro-units.

The proposed development would also force yet another arts space, The Studio@550, that is used by hundreds of performers each week, to leave Central Sq. One of the goals of the Central Sq. re-zoning was to strengthen the Central Sq. Arts district. Since The Studio@550 would be displaced by this proposal, we ask that the BZA not approve the proposal.

Sincerely,

Lee Farris, President
269 Norfolk St. 02139
Cambridge Residents Alliance
Working for a Livable, Affordable and Diverse Cambridge

Pacheco, Maria

From: Cj S <cschorer@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 2, 2020 11:20 AM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Requested info: 544 Mass Avenue - BZA-017219-2019
Attachments: csac_200221_544 Mass Ave_Report (1).pdf

Dear Maria,

Thanks very much for the call today. Per your request, I have attached the letter from the Central Square Advisory Committee. It is noted that a copy was sent to you, but I have no confirmation, so hopefully this will make it.

Additionally, as mentioned we have had a long process, but we would like to request a continuance this week. It would be best to continue the hearing into early to mid January 2021 to allow suffici. I will update you on the Planning Board Process before the next meeting, and I am hopeful that we will be complete with that process by then.

All the best,

Cliff Schorer

508-726-5445



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI

Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

To: City of Cambridge Planning Board
City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: 2/21/20
Re: 544 Mass Ave

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on Wednesday, February 19, 2020 to review and comment on the Central Square Redevelopment LLC (c/o Cliff Schorer) (the “Applicant”) proposal to build 29 micro-unit apartments – where 20 units of any size are allowed by right – above existing ground-floor retail at 544 Mass Ave.

This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The Committee is appointed by the City Manager to undertake all large project reviews of variances and special permits for activities within the Central Square Overlay District (the “District”), and to monitor the progress of the Central Square Non-Zoning Recommendations of the 2013 K2C2 Study (the “Study”).

* * *

According to the Applicant, due to the high costs of construction, a literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in the loss of local retailers and an enlargement of the floorplate on each floor to allow for larger residential units. Additionally, per the Applicant, due to the substantial demand for inclusionary and market units at a smaller scale and lower price point, the addition of 29 micro-units could address this demand, relieve pressure on existing family-size units in the surrounding neighborhood, and alleviate the substantial financial hardship of preserving and renovating the existing building.

The Committee’s comments spoke to the complexity of the issues that impact this project, reiterating the need for a wide variety of housing options and the need to preserve and nurture cultural assets. A Committee member stated that, while the use of micro-size seems appropriate on this site, given the project’s constraints, there is still a substantial need for family-sized units. Another pointed out the unfortunate nature of pitting housing needs against the arts, however unintentional it may be. Both are critical needs in the District and require creative solutions.

Committee members in attendance were not opposed to the proposed project.

Additional Committee Questions/Comments

- ***Since the Dance Complex is not set back on the upper floors, could you approach this building in the same way? Is it possible to match the massing of the adjacent building?***
 - The current zoning ordinance does not allow it. Also, the current façade is weak and must be restructured in order to accommodate the additional weight.
- ***The property does not extend all the way to Green Street. How do you anticipate constructing on such a limited site?***
 - It's extremely challenging. As much as possible, it must be prepared off-site then assembled on site. In order to access the basement to work on the building's foundation, there must be an arrangement with Teddy's Shoes. The other issue is how to keep retail viable during this process (Teddy's Shoes and Five Spices House).



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

- **What's the expected price point for the micro-units?**

- The price points are based on \$47/sf which is the market average in the area. It ranges between \$1320-1800 a month, depending on unit size.

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Public Questions/Comment

There were 19 members of the public present.

Members of the public in attendance spoke in support of the existing tenants of the upper floors – Studio 550 and the Center for Marxist Education – who would likely be displaced. The Applicant made known the commitment to assist in finding suitable and appropriate locations for these tenants.

Public comment also spoke to the larger issue of a history in Central Square of the displacement of cultural assets, which is ironic for a place that has been designated as an “cultural district” by the State. How can we put a stop to this cycle? How can we protect the uses in buildings that are used for and by the arts community? “What can the City do to preserve its cultural assets, particularly when the arts are a major factor in creating the social and economic base that facilitate development”, one member of the public expressed.

On the topic of housing in Central Square, a member of the public expressed their lack of enthusiasm for the micro-units. At the time that the inclusionary percentage was increased, they explained, the City said there was a lack of 3bd units. Tenants said they would hold out on studio-size units in favor of the larger ones. In the rezoning of Central Square, many in the community specifically said that micro-units were not a desire. We wanted units that people could stay in for longer periods of time. These units are not providing the kind of housing that we really need.

Letters of support were also sent electronically. They have been attached to this report.

Committee Members Present

- Melissa Greene
- Esther Hanig
- Tahir Kapoor
- Robert Winters

Committee Members Absent

- Joel Altstein
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Michael Monestime

Project Team

- Cliff Schorer, *Central Square Redevelopment LLC*

submitted on behalf of the Committee,
Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner
Community Development Department

IDENTITY

Studio at 550 is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts organization residing at 550 Mass. Ave, in Central Sq on the 3rd floor. The Studio is comprised of one open space of approximately 1,000 sq ft equipped with dance marley floor, mirrors, a sound system, with various theatrical components. This creates a modular environment for rehearsals, classes, and performances across many disciplines (such as dance, music, theatre, photography, videography, and experimental art) to be practiced. Over 750+ artists have walked through Studio at 550's doors over the past 3.8 years it has existed under this organization. Previously the space was home to Boston Dance Company for 20 years, a ballet company which had it's own programming including its annual Nutcracker and various performances throughout the year, lead by former Boston Ballet dancer Jimmy Rearden.

USE

Currently, the Studio has provided platform for a multitude of various rehearsals, photoshoots, videoshoots, performances, events, and classes. Throughout the relatively short period of time of its existence, the Studio has harness so much creative activity within its walls. Not only cultivating the creativity of established artists, but also providing the spark to young and burgeoning artists as well. From providing space for the various documentaries focusing on software engineer Margaret Hamilton, to providing space for the Swissnex to present experimental music performance of Marcel Zeis Studio at 550 has provided necessary platform for the practice, learning, and presentation of arts for not only Central Square, but on an international scale as well.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTS

The Studio prides itself for having a central location that is part of the cultural hub that is Central Sq. Dance, in particular has deep roots here in Central Square and providing multiple dance in relative close proximity is necessary to sustain a community which requires a considerable amount of resources in order to operate. It is not by chance that Studio at 550 has the amenities that make dance "possible". As director I have dedicated my life as a dance artist who has been also practicing and studying media/projection art in parallel. Due to the considerable amount of resources required for dance, it's sometimes more difficult to integrate other arts disciplines due to lack of safe and appropriate amenities in spaces designed for other disciplines. It is with this premise that Studio provides one of the few spaces in Massachusetts outside of University where dance can exist to interact with other disciplines in practice, not only in performance.

TRANSPORTATION

Central Sq provides a unique and important location for Studio at 550. With artists coming from Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Arlington, Somerville, Lynn, Salem, Revere, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Brighton, Boston, and some out of state. Central Square is a transportation center which makes cultivating professional artistic relationships a reality. This is especially important due to the proximity to Dance Complex and formerly Green Street Studios. Dance happens when there are people in a studio space to work. It can't work in our backyards, or kitchens, or a painting studio. Dance requires multiple bodies at time who come from various locations to meet up, and spend a few hours to rehearse, take class, or perform.

METRICS

Studio at 550 has over 57 monthly members, 624 active contacts who rent out the space on the continuum, 18 ongoing weekly classes with over 360 students who come weekly. Over 24 performances per year happen here, and with a staff of 1 + 1 workstudy. I'm sincerely proud of all of what was created and possible within the last 3.8 years.

SOLUTIONS?

We are aware that the space where Studio at 550 currently resides is intended on developing micro unit apartments. And while we feel yes, housing is a benefit of this plan, displacing an arts organization which feeds the cultural vitality of not only Central Sq, but the greater Boston/Cambridge area would be a substantial detriment to the Central Square Cultural District which will ultimately diminish the value of the district considerably. After loosing many arts organizations over the years due to development, and within these last few months another dance organization Green Street Studios, it would be not only a shame, but a slap in the face for the Cultural District who have fewer and fewer arts organizations who help get the district its name. I'm here with an open mind to figure out ways in which we can work together as a community to create solutions for situations such as this.

Callie Chapman
Director
Studio@550

Dear Cambridge Council (via Callie at Studio at 550),

Over the last few years, Central Square (and the greater Cambridge area) has lost important arts communities & venues such as the EMF space, Green Street Studios, and TT the Bears to the "progress" of high end real estate development and raising rents. As a successfully self-employed musician living in Cambridgeport, I marvel and am disgusted by Central Square's Cultural District designation. What can those words mean to those who care about the vitality of the arts in Cambridge and see the city do nothing to support the arts communities that have contributed successfully to the Square to give it that designation? They are empty words and a convenient way for the city to capitalize on the culture that these arts groups have worked so hard to foster without any work from the city. Please do not let the Studio at 550 be another victim of the Cambridge Council's inability to step in to maintain the arts component of Central Square's Cultural District by stopping the proposal of the landlord of 544-550 Mass Ave. to redevelop the property into micro-unit residential apartments. Stop the previous cycle in Cambridge of taking advantage of thriving arts communities for the city's economic gain and support the arts communities that are still left in Central Square while we still have them.

Thank you,
Valerie Thompson

Studio at 550
550 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-863-2550
www.studioat550.org
callie@studioat550.org

January 8, 2020

To the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals:

We are writing to protest case# BZA-017219-2019, for a variance for the building addressed at 544 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge due to objections to the following:

The applicant, Cliff Schorer is requesting variance request on 3 ordinances: Lot area for each dwelling unit to be decreased from 300sf to 151ft; Number of dwelling units to be increased from 20 to 29; and Number of parking spaces to be decreased from .5/du to 0.

Citing item B of supporting statement where applicant writes, "*There is no change to the access and egress and no additional parking or traffic impact anticipated. This is perfectly located above public transportation and has been a failure as office and assembly space on the upper floors leading to deterioration.*". We object to, especially the last part of the argument noting that Studio at 550 is a very active arts organization who serves nearly 300 artists per week providing much needed rehearsal, class, and performance space which contributes to the cultural identity of Central Square. Since the transfer of ownership of the building Studio at 550 has paid our \$2300/month rent on time every month, contradicting the argument that the business is a "failure" as an assembly space. Studio at 550 provides not just space to artists but also much needed programs and community engagement efforts which not only engage artists, but also neighbors to Central Sq, the greater Boston arts scene, and artists and audiences from throughout New England and beyond.

Studio at 550 has operated in the 3rd floor space since 2016, and while we agree that the building has fallen into disrepair, a more fitting solution to the development of the space would be to make efforts to include an already existing arts space into the plan for development of the building.

Citing item E of the applicant's supporting statement where he argues that the conversion of zoning from retail/office to retail/residential would be "in the spirit of recent Zoning changes to the CSQ Overlay" we would argue the following: There has been some considerable effort in establishing an Arts Overlay District within Central Sq, with Councillor Mallon chairing Mayor McGovern's Arts Task Force in efforts to support existing artists to strengthen Central Square as an Arts and Cultural District. There has been considerable work in advocacy with the newly established Central Square Business Improvement District in the same vein. Converting existing artist space to residential space would directly contradict these efforts blindly knocking out a much needed resource for the community which the City and other agencies are fighting so hard to retain.

From the perspective of leasee of the 3rd floor of 550 Massachusetts Ave., Callie Chapman, Director of Studio at 550:

A) I never was in correspondence with the current landlord (Cliff Schorer) at all before this request was filed. No effort was made on his part to even engage in conversation prior to his application and posting for request of variance..

B) I showed up at 550 Mass Ave. and there was a notice posted on the building only 7 days before the hearing. Even though one of the property owners (Jim) was in the building 1 day before to check on a leak in the ceiling, he never mentioned it while he met with me.

C) The property owner is citing a "hardship" as the reason he is requesting a variance. Whereas due to financial circumstances surrounding his purchase of the building are interesting there is nothing dire to prevent compliance with existing ordinances.

All requests for variance due to the overarching objective to transform existing arts/assembly space into rental apartment units would detrimentally change in the essential character of the neighborhood. Citing multiple efforts by community members, associations, individual businesses, individual artists, arts organizations, City councilors, mayors, and citizens of Cambridge to keep the arts in Central Sq in particular, this project will contradict these efforts and strip one more arts organization from the district. Contributing to the ongoing deterioration of stability for the arts in Cambridge.

With objection to the variances requested,

Signed:

Eric	Bornstein	(617) 417-4961	Artist, Arts Educator, Performer
Aislinn	Brophy	(561) 504-9288	Freelance Theatre Artist & Arts Administrator
Margaux	Skalecki		Director of Theater Arte Being Seen Being Heard
Jack	Tan	(857) 207-7907	Student/Dancer
Irene	Hsi	(510) 304-3877	Choreographer/Renter
Ellen	Godena	(617) 407-2333	Movement Educator/Choreographer
David	Karger	(617) 767-6527	
Katherine	Gagnon	(413) 424-6665	Dancer, Ensemble Inédit
Dayenne	Walters	(617) 894-6885	Member of Dance Community since 1998
Emily	Beattie	(617) 256-8789	Choreographer and Dancer
Carl	Alleyne	(617) 905-0512	Dance Instructor
Anna	Patterson	(781) 439-7601	Arts admin/dancer/choreographer Dance teacher , choreographer and director artistic Papsy Naay Leer Dance Company
Papa	Sy	(631) 805-7172	
Arthur	Duffy	(617) 671-6576	
Meghan	McLyman	(617) 320-4764	Dance Professor at Salem State University
Jason	Weeks	(617) 349-4383	Executive Director/Cambridge Arts Council
Benjamin	Cuba	(508) 736-3871	Dance Accompanist/Studio@550,The Dance Complex
Anastasia	Yendiki	(734) 222-0907	Dance instructor, Flamenco Boston
Erin	Scarry	(857) 600-1714	Independent Performing Artist
Callie	Chapman	(617)863-2550	Director, Studio at 550, Choreographer and Multi-Media Artist
Ivan	Korn	(781)640-7648	Musician

Lilia Roberts 617 331 7729 - DANCER
Pauline Bowden 617-429-4656 dancer
Richard Thibodeau 617 953 9103 dancer
Malick Ngom 646 934 3041
Cassandra Charles 857-318-5546
Joe Buego 617 686 4146 dancer, ensemble Inédit

| THE DanceComplex |

536 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

February 18, 2020

To: Central Square Advisory Committee
Cc: Callie Chapman, Director, Studio 550; Michael Monestime, Executive Director, Central Square Business Improvement District; Jason Weeks, Executive Director, Cambridge Arts; Vice Mayor Alana Mallon, City of Cambridge (chair of Mayor's Arts Task Force); Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, City of Cambridge

To Our Friends of the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I am writing today to express concern for more development that would infringe on at least two arts institutions in Central Square, a state-designated Cultural District: Studio 550 at 550 Mass Ave, and our own The Dance Complex.

There has been great effort and articulation heeding us as a city to be aware of how our specific arts ecology is eroding in the Square. In recent discussions, including those of the 10th months study the Mayor's Arts Task Force undertook, the closure of Green Street Studios, the EMF artists' studios, great and sound statements are made that we can't allow more of our arts businesses and community to be forced out.

I bring these thoughts to the discussion on February 19th, as Central Square Development proposes plans to develop the buildings where Studio 550 is housed, and adjacent to our property. We would welcome in-depth discussion with the developers on their plans, and would also welcome a guiding hand from the City that would encourage these and any developers to work with us in the arts community. If the goal is to retain the unique-ness of Central Square as a vibrant and dynamic center of art and culture – and developers are using this as a selling point to their tenants – then we have the opportunity to stop the erosion of long standing contributors to that vibrancy and dynamism we as arts institutions bring.

I appreciate the many discussions that have occurred since the Green Street closure- the ones we have been included in and, likely, countless other ones that have occurred. I know there is great sentiment to support the arts. It is time for us as citizens to act upon the wishes of what we want Central Square to be, what we want it to sustain. And we count on our city government, including its arts council, to find ways to encourage all who have a stake here to work together toward our goals.

Aside from being introduced to the developers proposing the build-up of 550 Mass Ave, we have not been engaged by the developers in any discussions regarding their plans, seeking our input. We would hope that any developer would be seeking to sustain the arts organization on site or find ways to support it in transition; and as a neighboring business alone we should be consulted; that we are a nonprofit and arts organization should make the consult even more necessary.

New development should contribute to the place keeping of our community and in this specific case, to the sustenance of the cultural and arts community. It should not be allowed to dismantle it. We are Cambridge, and we know better. Happy to be part of further discussions.

Sincerely,



Peter DiMuro

Executive Artistic Director

 617.547.9363

 /DanceComplex

 /TheDanceComplex

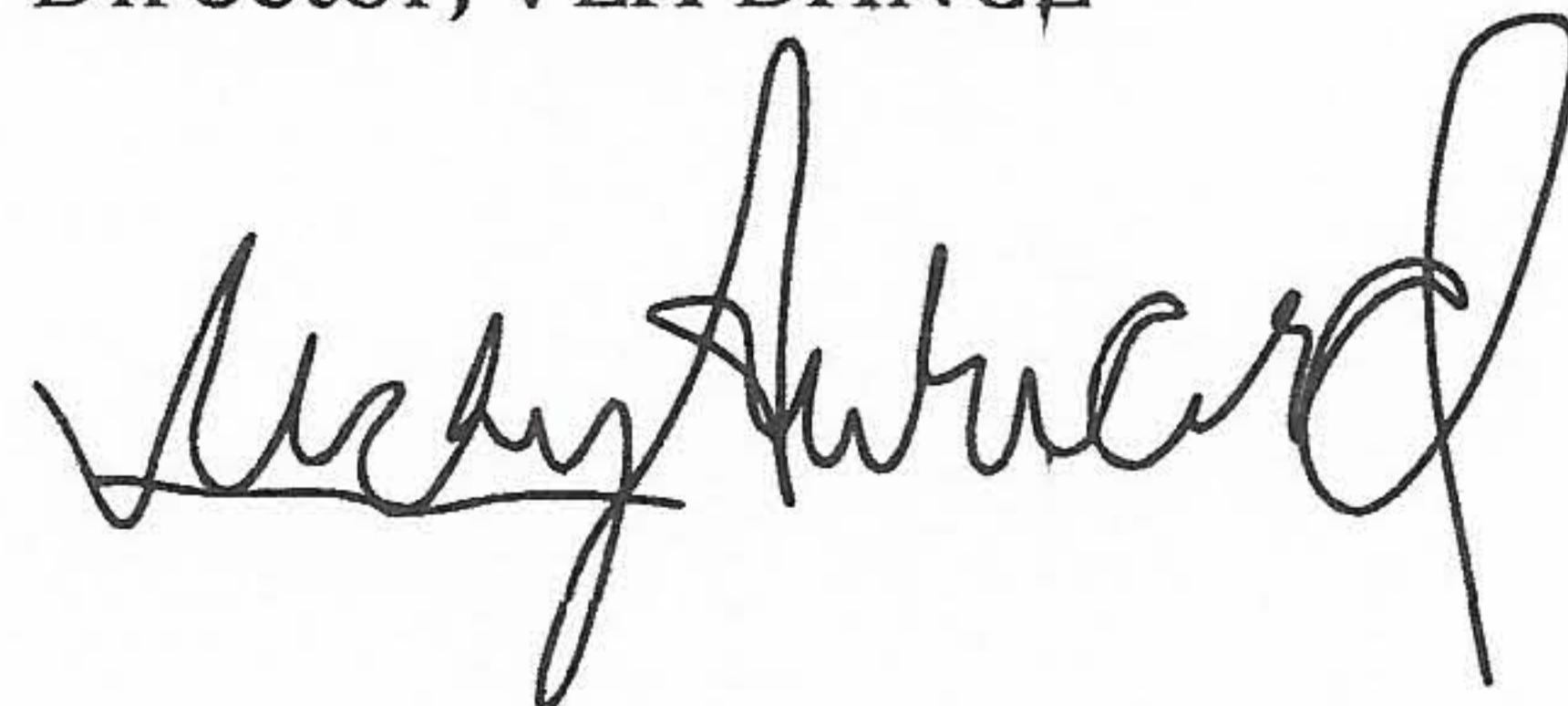
 /DanceComplex

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing in regards to Studio at 550.

I am a professional dance artist who got their start working with organizations such as Studio at 550. When I first graduated from college and moved back home to the Cambridge area, I did a work-study program led by Callie Chapman at Studio at 550. In exchange for strengthening my administrative skills via work at Studio at 550 I received studio space for rehearsals. These rehearsals served as a stepping ground for my new dance company (2 years later) VLA DANCE. Without organizations like Studio at 550 so many artists, dancers, musicians, and community members would not have access to structures that support their first steps in creating on a larger scale. Studio at 550 is integral to Cambridge and Boston arts scene. Without Studio at 550 the performing arts community would only have one accessible dance studio in Central Square, Cambridge and that is not a sustainable structure. Thus we also need Studio at 550 to continue on because it provides options and more space. Studio at 550 serves people of all kind – not just professional dancers, although the support for professional dancers is currently unparalleled in this city. Recently I met a woman who holds SOCA dance classes at Studio at 550 and she told me that her main clientele are people who work in the corporate sector (based in both Cambridge and Boston) who want to dance to balance out their work life schedule. This serves as a wonderful example as to how the arts support a livable community. No one wants to live somewhere where there are no arts. Central Square is the art capital of Cambridge. I grew up in the suburbs of Boston and traveled 30-minutes on the weekends to come take dance classes in Central Square, Cambridge. People travel to Central Square for the arts; it's one of the most beautiful and authentic places in Massachusetts. Studio at 550 contributes to that landscape and it would be an incredibly horrendous mistake to get rid of this wonderful organization.

Thank you for your time,
Victoria Lynn Awkward
Director, VLA DANCE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Lynn Awkward".

Subject: Studio @ 550
From: Eric Bornstein <behindthemask1@gmail.com>
Date: 2/18/2020, 10:57 PM
To: Callie Chapman <callie@studioat550.org>

Letter of support for the Studio at 550

To Whom It May Concern,

I lived in Central for over 20 years from 1981. I still go onto Central regularly for dance classes and other arts programming. This is where the young artist I was evolved into a career professional artist who has contributed to the cultural life of Cambridge and beyond for almost 40 years as a Fulbright Scholar, IRNE award winner, and designer for institutions like Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, Underground Railway Theater, and many others. Central Square was essential not just for me but to generations of artists who are daily nurtured and inspired by the dance schools and other artist spaces. So many arts orgs have closed over the past 30+ years. Our cultural centers have become gentrified and sterilized. There are fewer places for young artists to thrive and for professional artists to work and teach. Artists need urban cultural centers like Central to create their necessary work. Callie has been an ardent and tireless advocate of the arts as well as a brilliant artist herself. Her Studio at 550 is the kind of institution that makes Central a desirable destination for dance students and professionals. After the loss of the Green Street Studios, I would think that those who are caretakers of the Central legacy would protect this vital institution. Please support Callie's effort to preserve the Studio at 550.

Thank you,

Eric Bornstein

To the Central Square Advisory Committee:

I'm writing in support of keeping Studio at 550 in Central Square, ideally in its current building.

I live in North Cambridge, work at a tech company in Kendall Square, and have been taking flamenco classes for the past five years; these classes just moved to Studio at 550 after the Green Street Studios closure this past fall.

The recent Mayor's Arts Task Force Report noted the importance of having artist space within a 5-minute "pedestrian walkshed" of the Central T stop for accessibility. Accepting the loss of Studio at 550 would mean losing 900 square feet of artist space that is very much within this pedestrian walkshed.

This space has been used for dance for decades. While The Dance Complex is wonderful, it cannot absorb everyone who has been displaced from Green Street Studios and may be displaced from Studio at 550.

Employers locate in Cambridge because this is a desirable place to live for the talented, creative, passionate people they want to hire and retain. Cambridge's creative economy connects its residents to one another, enriching the lives and opportunities of all people, particularly those in marginalized groups.

If we treat this as an externality which can be taken for granted, it will disappear. This city's innovation economy will become even more unequal, and eventually hollow out.

Cambridge is a vital and growing city in need of more housing, in no small part because of why Central Square was named a Cultural District. Let's find a way to have residential, retail, and artist space here.

Sincerely,
Barb Strom

February 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a Boston based dancer my whole life. As a life long resident, it is especially apparent to me that art spaces, particularly dance spaces are disappearing at a rapid rate. Studio at 550 is one of the few affordable dance spaces within the Boston/Cambridge area. It is incredibly important for dance makers, particularly those who are not established yet (I am 31 and just honing in on my professional career) to have affordable spaces to rent.

Studio at 550 has housed rehearsals for my small dance company, I have participated in performances in the space, and they support the arts community in Cambridge/Boston in a myriad of ways. They offer a residency program for companies that provides free rental space and mentor-ship.

In a city that is becoming every increasing difficult to live in due to cost, it is paramount that we support our cities artists and those who make Cambridge an interesting place to live. Artists need spaces in which to practice. The dance community just lost Green St Studios, one of the only other affordable performance/rental spaces. Don't let Boston/Cambridge loose one of our last creative spaces in support of affordable housing. We need your help to keep the creativity in our city.

Best,
Adriane Brayton

12 Adelaide St.
Boston, MA

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of Studio at 550 in Central Square to try to ensure that the studio is not displaced by development in the building. Although I understand the need for housing in Cambridge, Studio 550 is a venue that provides critical rehearsal and teaching space for dance artists from Cambridge and beyond.

With the loss of Green Street Studio in the Square, the arts community can't afford to lose another space. Central Square has been a magnet for artists since the 1970s because of affordable rehearsal, teaching and performance space. In addition to bringing working artists to the neighborhood, these spaces attract students, audience members and others who come to the square for classes and rehearsals but also eat at the restaurants, shop at stores and generally bring a lively, engaged and positive energy to Central Square.

Please make certain that this important space continues to be a resource to Cambridge and the wider community.

Respectfully,
Amy Zell Ellsworth
Board Member, New England Foundation for the Arts

January 9, 2020

Dear City of Cambridge,

My name is Benjamin Cuba, and I am active, working musician in the Somerville and Cambridge arts community. This letter is in response to the potential and possible closing or rezoning of Studio @550 and other business at the 550 Massachusetts Ave. address. Studio @550 and other businesses and units should not be closed in this process.

Studio @550 provides a useful and exciting space for rehearsals, residencies, and performances for creative, intelligent artists in the Boston dance community. A lot of purposeful and engaging work has been crafted and presented in such a space. Studio @550 has showcased and harnessed the talent from the dancers, choreographers, musicians, and artists across this city, and continues to support projects from experts and novices alike. It is more than merely a studio, but rather a keystone community center where patrons and lovers of the arts can admire and learn from each other.

Furthermore, this rezoning situation has not been executed with much clarity or consideration to the working parties involved.

Central Square should not lose another creative space. Cambridge can achieve a more vibrant artistic community. Please reconsider your efforts to close an already functioning and successful creative space.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Benjamin Cuba

Dear Board of Zoning Appeals City of Cambridge,

My name is Carl Alleyne and I am a dance instructor and performing artist teaching in the city of Cambridge. I teach at Studio 550, and I and my students love it there! The studio has a great owner in Callie Chapman and a fantastic community.

I am writing in support of Callie Chapman of Studio 550. I've known Callie for a number of years and have rented studio space for a number of years. Studio at 550 is active and has a great community, and is one of the pillars when it comes to dance in Cambridge. Musicians and other artists also go to this location to enhance their craft. I even had the TV show "Chronicle" come and interview me, and we did the interview at the Studio at 550.

This is a very dire time right now, as a lot of artists are displaced and do not have homes to continue to enhance community and culture through the arts.

Converting existing arts space to residential space would put a big dent in our community. I ask that this letter be considered.

Sincerely,

Carl Alleyne
Dance Instructor/ Performing Artist

January 9, 2020

To: The Board of Zoning Appeals
City of Cambridge

From: the undersigned dancers

We are writing about the Variance Request submitted by Clifford Schorer. If his variance is granted, Studio 550 will be impacted, possibly removed. Studio 550 is an important resource for the dance community in Cambridge and several of the surrounding cities and towns. It provides rehearsal space for dancers and musicians and performance space for various events. The dance community in Central Square has already been very hard hit by the closure of Green Street Studios to development. Central Square prides itself on being a center for the arts. Don't let Studio 550 be yet another loss for the local dance community.

Sincerely,

Allison Ross
Vicky Steinberg
Sue Lerner
Julie Leavitt
Joanie Block
Karen Klein

Dear CDD and staff:

I want to register my horror that the city would even consider taking over one of the LAST public art spaces in Central Sq. I know how hard it has been to keep the Dance Complex from being taken over and Callie Chapman has put in her own resources to provide a place to make art – It is not only unfair unjust and unnecessary but

a contradiction to the promises the city manager and staff has made to make Central sq. a registered artistic center.

I know there are alternatives for building micro-units so please keep the studio open for me and all the other artists in Cambridge .

Sincerely
Alice Heller
22 Corporal Burns Rd

Joseph, Wendell

From: Flightorvisibility Music <flightorvisibilitymusic@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2020 7:39 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Statement read at committee meeting

Hello Mr. Joseph,

Thanks for asking me to send you the statement I read at your committee meeting.

Here's the statement:

Hi, my name is Rafael Natan, I am a local performance artist and I am also the events coordinator at Make Shift Boston. I was a Cambridge resident last year but was priced out.

Today I am here in Solidarity with Studio at 550. Like Make Shift, Studio 550 is one of the few spaces in the greater city where any artist can rent space affordably to realize their vision. I remember going to one particularly memorable event at Studio 550 where musicians and dancers were encouraged to develop an improvised story performance together. This event completely changed the way I perform and teach and it is of utmost importance that we as citizens of the Greater Boston area continue to hold space for these kinds of community events.

In my 9 years in Boston, I have seen at least 12 different community spaces like Studio 550 shut down, that rate being greater than 1 per year. Rents for such spaces are going up and we honestly can't afford to lose any more of these spaces.

Additionally, I've seen an influx of new luxury housing units, often remaining vacant for years while market rate of the neighborhood catches up to the rate of the new developments. Meanwhile our homeless population is growing and the income metric to consider a unit "affordable" is significantly higher than the annual income made by anyone i know in the extended artist community.

The landlord of 550 mass ave mentioned \$30,000 a year as a metric for affordability. As a full-time artist, I make about \$5,000 a year and I'm one of the lucky ones, one of the few people who does not have student debt. If I did, I would not be able to live in Boston at all.

So my question is how are we going to continue to hold space for working artists and how are we going to insure that new housing projects actually cater to those who need housing the most?

Sincerely,

--
Rafael Natan
Oboist, Violinist, Singer, Songwriter, Educator
pronouns: They/Them/Theirs

IG: @flightorvisibility

New single: [Always](#)

Joseph, Wendell

From: Studio at 550 <callie@studioat550.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 12:07 AM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Subject: Fwd: support letter

Dear Central Square Advisory Committee,

I write this letter as a performing artist who moved to Cambridge 10 years ago because of the work and professional development opportunities this city offered. While I no longer live in Cambridge due to rising rents, it has continued to be the home of my artistic practice thanks to places like Studio550, The Dance Complex and Green Street Studios, which have been the equivalents of offices or workshops for me and so many other artists who need the resource of space to develop their work. It is due to this practice, in these places, that I am able to teach and enrich the lives of people in the community at places like the Cambridge Public Library, Cambridge Citywide Senior Center and Cambridge Friends School, and create and perform work in countless venues and public places around the Boston area.

As arts organizations and businesses such as Out of the Blue Gallery, EMF, Green Street Studios and others have been forced to close due to egregious rents and what seems to be the prioritizing of income versus healthy, robust communities by both property owners and the city, I am deeply concerned that these places of work, creation and leisure are not being protected. Once a beacon of productivity, hope and innovation in the arts, Cambridge is becoming a place of gentrified, class homogeny.

I urge you to actually demonstrate your proclamation of Central Square being a "Cultural District" by saving our spaces for arts and culture for all residents and visitors alike. Insist that developers and property owners respect Cambridge's long standing commitment to supporting people of all walks of life. Help them to realize that taking away spaces for arts and culture takes away jobs, opportunities for personal and communal growth and the character that helps to make Cambridge the special city that it is.

I am happy to discuss this further and help advocate for Studio 550 and other spaces. I can be reached at kara@karafili.com should you like to connect.

Thank you for reading and for your work on this matter,

Kara Fili

--
Educator / Artist / Administrator
MFA Interdisciplinary Arts; Concentration in Performance Creation
www.karafili.com
978 - 500 - 1079
She / Her / Hers

"It Goes Like This...Stories of Movement"
a multi-modal evening of storytelling at The Dance Complex
March 27, 2020
<https://storiesofmovement20.eventbrite.com>
IGLT fundraising page: gf.me/u/xf3ct5

@ItGoesLikeThis_Events

#itgoeslikethis2020

FB Event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/156699349082500/>

Joseph, Wendell

From: Olive Rappoli <orappoli@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 6:31 PM
To: Joseph, Wendell
Cc: sjoseph@cambridge.gov
Subject: 550 Massachusetts Ave

Hello Wendell,

My name is Olive, I attended the Central Square Advisory Committee meeting on February 19th regarding the proposed development at 544-550 Massachusetts Avenue. I'd like to say first off, thank you for facilitating the meeting, I found it very informative! I am a shy soul and this was the first meeting of its kind that I have attended, but I felt very much compelled to be present to support the case for preserving the arts scene in Central Square.

I have been coming to Central Square for dance, music and art for the last 7+ years. I am a dance student with Flamenco Boston, which holds its classes at Studio@550, and prior to its closing I also took classes at Green Street Studios. I have lived and worked in the Boston/Cambridge area my entire life, and Central Square has one of the most vibrant personalities of all the neighborhoods that I have come to know. All of the squares in Cambridge have restaurants, bars and storefronts, but Central Square has so much more than that. The high concentration of artists, music venues, dance studios and socials has provided a home for the arts community that is extremely unique. To have so many businesses and organizations dedicated to the arts clustered together and accessible to the public is truly special and important to the strength of the community, and is not something that can be easily rebuilt once dispersed. As a hub for the arts community, these spaces also draw consumers for other businesses in Central Square.

The loss of Green Street Studios was a difficult one, and it would be a shame to see the same happen to Studio@550. I could go on for many pages describing what dancing means to me personally, and can only imagine how devastated other members of the dance community were, who rely on these spaces for their livelihood, physical and mental health, and recreation. It is so important to preserve places like these that bring together people of all races, ages and backgrounds. So many diverse artists were displaced with the closure of GSS, and many have found new home at Studio@550. Spaces like Studio@550 need to remain open not only for the existing community but also to inspire and foster future artists and allow unique cultural neighborhoods like Central Square to thrive.

Thank you so much for your time, and best of luck on your new position!

Best Regards,
Olive Rappoli



City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA.
(617) 349-6100

2020 NOV -2 AM 11:53
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Board of Zoning Appeal Waiver Form

*The Board of Zoning Appeal
831 Mass Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139*

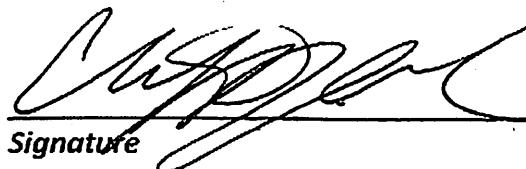
RE: Case # BZA -017219-2017.

Address: 544 Mass Ave

Owner, Petitioner, or Representative: Clifford Schrader
(Print Name)

hereby waives the required time limits for holding a public hearing as required by
Section 9 or Section 15 of the Zoning Act of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A. The Owner, Petitioner, or
Representative further hereby waives the Petitioner's and/or Owner's right to a
Decision by the Board of Zoning Appeal on the above referenced case within the time
period as required by Section 9 or Section 15 of the Zoning Act of the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, and/or Section 6409 of the
federal Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, codified as 47 U.S.C.
§1455(a), or any other relevant state or federal regulation or law.

Date: 11/2/20


Signature

1

* * * * *

2 (7:28 p.m.)

3 Sitting Members: Constantine Alexander, Brendan Sullivan,
4 Andrea A. Hickey, Jim Monteverde, Matina
5 and Jason Marshall

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay, the Chair will now
7 call Case Number 544 Massachusetts Avenue, Number 017219.

8 Anyone here wishing to be heard on this matter? Apparently
9 not.

10 We are in receipt of a letter, which I will read
11 into the record requesting a continuance. This letter is
12 from the petitioner, Cliff Schorer, S-c-h-o-r-e-r. He --
13 I'm going to just summarize his letter. He would like to
14 request a continuance to continue the hearing into early to
15 mid-January, to allow sufficient -- and the words got cut
16 off.

17 So anyway, the proposal is to continue this case
18 until -- what's the second one in January?

19 SISIA DAGLIAN: The twenty-eighth.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Twenty-eighth? Before I
21 propose a motion, I want to make a statement. And this --
22 I'm speaking for myself and this does not represent the

1 views of the Board, and perhaps my comments are not
2 appropriate at this point.

3 I don't understand why a petition -- that we have
4 this petition before us. This is not a zoning case. We've
5 had -- this will be the fourth continuance we've given.
6 This case started in January 9, 2020, so if we continue the
7 case it will have gone for a year.

8 The reason I say this is not a zoning case is that
9 in no way is the petitioner in my judgment -- and it is a
10 personal judgment -- entitled to zoning relief. The
11 standards for a variance are dramatically different from
12 what you're proposing.

13 You don't meet the requirements for substantial
14 hardship. You certainly don't meet the requirements for
15 soil conditions and the like.

16 What needs to be done here, with regard to the
17 project -- and by the way, I'm not opposed to the project,
18 per se -- but what needs to be done is the city has to
19 create an overlay district for Micro Studio Apartments.

20 And that will say where in the city they can be
21 built and where not. It can lay down ground rules for how
22 big or how small the apartments can be, and whether there's

1 any parking requirements or anything else that seems
2 material to the drafters of this.

3 And that way we'll have a framework for the city.
4 Now, if we were to -- if, if I underscore "if" we were
5 to grant the zoning relief that's being sought come January
6 after one year, how do we handle other cases involving micro
7 studio apartment buildings? If we grant the relief here, we
8 have to grant it there!

9 I just think this case is just misconceived and
10 should not be before our Board. And I've said my peace, and
11 I'll now make a motion to continue this case until 7:00 p.m.
12 on January [28?] --

13 SISIA DAGLIAN: Yes.

14 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- January 28, subject to
15 the following conditions, and these conditions are known
16 very well to the petitioner, since he's continued this case,
17 as I said, three more -- three times previously.

18 One, that the petitioner has to sign a waiver of
19 time for decision, and he did so with regard to the earlier
20 continuances. So that's been satisfied.

21 Two, a posting sign has to be erected and
22 maintained for the fourteen days prior to January 28, as

1 required by our ordinance. I would note that no sign up
2 there right now for tonight's hearing.

3 And lastly, that to the extent that there are new
4 plans, revised plans, dimensional forms and the like, all of
5 which must be in our files no later than 5:00 p.m. on the
6 Monday before January 28. That's the motion.

7 Brendan?

8 BRENDA SULLIVAN: Brendan Sullivan. Reluctantly,
9 I will continue to vote to continue this thing one more
10 time. I really was almost of the mind of not wanting this
11 to continue, because it has started back in January 9, it
12 has gone until February. It has also been heard in July,
13 and now tonight in November.

14 It appears that the petitioner is not ready for
15 this proposal to come before us, and that there are
16 conflicting circumstances here in what he wants to do at
17 this particular location, and I don't think he has really a
18 good faith effort to try and resolve that, and that --
19 again, this thing goes back 11 months. And I would not vote
20 -- I would not -- I was prepared not to vote to continue
21 this matter.

22 However, in deference, I will vote to continue

1 this matter until January 28 for one more time, and if it is
2 not heard on that particular night, then I would make the
3 motion to deny the petition before us. So yes to the
4 continuance.

5 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Andrea and Jim?

6 JIM MONTEVERDE: And Jim Monteverde, yes to the
7 continuance?

8 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Andrea?

9 ANDREA HICKEY: Yes, Andrea Hickey, I endorse Mr.
10 Sullivan's sentiments, and it seems this case has been
11 kicking around for long enough. So I agree that we give
12 them one last time to be ready to proceed. So yes, in favor
13 of the continuance.

14 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay. Matina?

15 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: No, this will be --

16 JASON MARSHALL: Actually, it's me, Mr. Chairman.

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Oh, that's right. I'm
18 sorry. Go ahead. You continue.

19 JASON MARSHALL: So I'm new to this case, but I
20 just -- I think you made a really important point, Mr.
21 Chairman, and this does seem to present a larger policy
22 issue around Micro units that, you know, really the BZA

1 doesn't appear to be the proper form for those kinds of
2 policy changes. And, you know, we're obviously constrained
3 by the requirements of the Massachusetts General Laws and
4 our zoning ordinance.

5 But I'm inclined to support the continuance, and
6 so, I would vote to do that.

7 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Thank you. And as I've
8 indicated before, with a great deal of reluctance I am
9 supporting the continuance one more time.

10 With that, the case is continued until 7:00 p.m.
11 on January 28.

12 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Twentieth.

13 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Twentieth? I thought --

14 SISIA DAGLIAN: 28.

15 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: What?

16 SISIA DAGLIAN: 28.

17 BILL ARDINGER: 28.

18 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Oh, 28, sorry.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Thanks. Okay. Case is
20 over -- for now. Moving on.

21

22



City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Mass Avenue, Cambridge, MA.
(617) 349-6100

BZA

POSTING NOTICE – PICK UP SHEET

The undersigned picked up the notice board for the Board of Zoning Appeals Hearing.

Name: Jim Galics Date: 1/11/21

(Print)

Address: 544 Mass Ave

Case No. BZA-017219-2019

Hearing Date: 1/28/21

Thank you,
BZA Members

1

* * * * *

2 (8:24 p.m.)

3 Sitting Members: Constantine Alexander, Brendan Sullivan,
4 Jim Monteverde, Laura Wernick and Janet
5 Green

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The Chair will now call

7 Case Number 017219 -- 544 Massachusetts Avenue. Anyone here
8 wishing to be heard on this matter?

9 SISIA DAGLIAN: He has to unmute?

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Sorry?

11 SISIA DAGLIAN: There we go.

12 CLIFF SHORE: Hello?

13 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Hello.

14 CLIFF SHORE: Yes, this is Cliff Shore. How are
15 you. I also have you on Zoom, but unfortunately, I think
16 I'm going to have to use audio here, because it's not
17 connecting via Zoom.

18 SISIA DAGLIAN: Okay.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay, if we -- as I
20 understand this case, you wish to continue this case, is
21 that correct?

22 CLIFF SHORE: Yes. If I may, I would like to

1 thank the Chairman and the Board for hearing us again.

2 And I did read some ex-parte comments from the
3 transcripts of the last meeting, which I didn't attend,
4 where I had asked for a continuance. And I just would like
5 to address those briefly. I know that we'll be back, as I
6 mentioned --

7 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: No, sir, I don't want to
8 get into a discussion of the case.

9 CLIFF SHORE: Okay.

10 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: That causes problems for
11 us. It makes this a case heard. We've got to find five --
12 the same five people present, and since we're not going to
13 make any decisions tonight anyway --

14 CLIFF SHORE: Okay.

15 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- I suggest you save
16 those comments for the next time you appear before us. I
17 would say to you, though, that I don't think our Board
18 should be hearing this case until after you run through the
19 zoning process. And I believe that you're planning to do
20 that, and you have started that as well. Am I correct?

21 CLIFF SHORE: Yes. Yes, you are correct. And I -
22 - shall I update you on that process or is that not

1 relevant?

2 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: That's okay. Particularly
3 it's the timing; how long you think before you'll be through
4 the process.

5 CLIFF SHORE: Okay. So we -- one of the major
6 issues was the tenancies in the building, and we have -- as
7 you recall -- a large number of the dance community attended
8 our first meeting to object to our plans.

9 We have subsequently worked with the dance
10 community in the building for six months and have resolved
11 that issue. We have paid the tenancy to relocate. We've
12 helped them relocate, and therefore now we are stepping
13 before the Planning Board. We will need until April, we
14 believe, to conclude that effort, and then we would like to
15 return to you. And if April 22 or 8 is available, we would
16 be happy to do that.

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: April 22 is three months.
18 That's fine. We know all five members can make it. We know
19 Andrea is not on. We only have four, so --

20 SISIA DAGLIAN: It's unheard, so it doesn't
21 matter. It hasn't been heard, so it --

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: What?

1 SISIA DAGLIAN: It hasn't been heard, so --

2 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I know. So we don't have
3 to worry about who's going to be here. So I'll make a
4 motion. The Chair moves that we continue this case as a
5 case not heard until 7:00 p.m. on April 22, subject to the
6 following conditions:

7 The first has already been satisfied; a waiver of
8 time for decision, and you've done that in connection with
9 past continuances.

10 JAMES WILLIAMSON: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman?

11 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Yes.

12 JAMES WILLIAMSON: I just -- this is James
13 Williamson again, and -- because I, you know, went out of my
14 way to be here for this case and didn't understand that it
15 was going to be continued and notified parties of interest.
16 Can you explain -- can someone explain how many continuances
17 can there be?

18 Because it begins to be -- you know, kind of
19 disruptive because we don't find out until 48 -- it doesn't
20 get posted until, like, 48 hours ago that the continued case
21 -- some people may have been alerted, other people may not
22 have been. So I just -- first of all, I'd like to

1 understand how many continuances can there be?

2 And also, not only the Planning Board but there's
3 material in the application having to do with the Historical
4 Commission, and if Cliff could speak to the status of -- his
5 understanding of where things stand with the Historical
6 Commission, that would I think would be appreciated.

7 And finally, Cliff did mention the issue of the
8 tenants. And I was aware of the negotiated settlement with
9 Studio 550. There is still possibly an outstanding issue
10 with the other tenant of interest, the Center for Marxist
11 Education.

12 And did he have anything to add since he spoke
13 about the other tenant, if he had anything to add on where
14 things stand with let's call it the Center?

15 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Okay. I'll try to answer
16 your question -- at least tell me your question. As to how
17 many continuances? It's completely discretionary on the
18 part of the Board. We have a rule of thumb but it's a rule
19 of thumb that if we feel that no more two.

20 But that's in situations where we're -- we start
21 to believe we're being strung along, and there's no good
22 reason for further continuance.

1 We will go over that rule of thumb or two for this
2 petition. But there are ample reasons why it's appropriate
3 and necessary. I think the only thing, my comment would be
4 the petitioner originally for the zoning relief is
5 premature, unfortunately. But that's how we -- you learn
6 from life.

7 I think you need -- personally -- I think
8 personally you need planning relief for starters. There may
9 be -- you may need to have an amendment to the zoning laws,
10 to get the relief you're seeking.

11 Because you're talking about creating micro
12 housing, which -- and if we grant it here, I'm again
13 speaking off the record -- what's to stop someone from
14 another part of the city wanting to do it?

15 And what are the rules and requirements? How big
16 can the apartment be? How small must it be? Should I have
17 parking? Probably not, but those -- we need an Overlay
18 District. This creates an Overlay District for micro studio
19 apartments. And that needs planning.

20 Because if you come before us without that, I
21 think the chances of getting the zoning relief you're
22 seeking are not very good. That's a personal opinion, not

1 an official opinion of the Board. That's the best I can do
2 for you. But I think -- I think this process has started
3 all the wrong way, and we're in the middle of it, and we've
4 got to proceed to the end.

5 And hopefully in three months, all these issues
6 can get resolved. If not, we may have to continue it
7 further, assuming the petitioner wants to continue to do
8 that.

9 But I think our patience -- my view is -- our
10 patience with regard to this case is ample. It's an
11 interesting and important issue. And we've got to get it
12 done right.

13 Does that answer your question?

14 CLIFF SHORE: Well yeah, that's helpful. And the
15 Historical Commission and the status of the other tenant in
16 the building?

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The Historical Commission
18 is -- from our point of view, only from the zoning point of
19 view -- is very helpful to us. It is not required. We've
20 granted zoning relief, for example, in situations that go
21 contrary to what the Historical Commission would like to see
22 done. Not often we do that, but it has been done. We have

1 the right to do it. And it'll depend upon the facts and
2 circumstances when the case comes before us.

3 As for the issue with the tenants, that's not a
4 zoning issue.

5 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Right, I get it, except that
6 Cliff did speak to it, and it was mentioned in the letter
7 that's in the file. And it is -- it's of interest. For
8 example, perhaps some of that's been resolved, and people
9 don't need to be -- you know, engaged anymore if there's
10 been -- you know, to the extent there may be a satisfactory
11 resolution.

12 But also, my understanding from looking at the
13 case file with the Historical Commission is not that it's
14 necessarily what's going to happen before you as whether or
15 not there's -- this is I'm just asking Cliff while he's
16 here, and because of what's in the case file that's sort of
17 ambiguous -- is it Cliff's understanding that it will come
18 under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission because
19 they list different categories of, "demolition" - partial
20 demolition, significant interior demolition?

21 So it would be useful to know from Cliff if he
22 knows whether it's his understanding that there will have to

1 be some, or if there maybe already has been review by the
2 staff, or whether it may yet be determined that it has to go
3 before the Historical Commission as some form of--quote,
4 unquote-- "demolition.

5 And of course I'd appreciate it if he has anything
6 to say, if the Chair would allow, about the other important
7 tenant who's been involved since the beginning.

8 CLIFF SHORE: If I may, Mr. Chairman, I can
9 address those pretty quickly. The Center for Marxist
10 Education, we have created after the first meeting and we
11 learned about their sensitivities, we've created a basement
12 meeting space for them with library that they will continue
13 to have access to.

14 We've also reduced their present rent to a
15 peppercorn as it were, until, you know, COVID is over.

16 JAMES WILLIAMSON: \$700, I think.

17 CLIFF SHORE: No, no, no, it went down.

18 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Oh, even more.

19 CLIFF SHORE: \$400.

20 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Oh.

21 CLIFF SHORE: And basically, we are accommodating
22 them until COVID is over, because they can't hold their

1 meetings. So yes, we have -- and we are in extended
2 conversations with them. We will accommodate them with a
3 new --

4 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Sounds good.

5 CLIFF SHORE: -- community meeting space. And
6 James, you have my mobile number, so you're welcome to call
7 me any time you'd like to address the HDC, or the Historic
8 District folks.

9 We did meet with them first, and they have
10 endorsed the plan the way that we proposed it, and part of
11 our hardship here, not related to zoning relief hardship,
12 which I can speak to at the next meeting, but part of our
13 hardship here is that we're dealing with a very frail
14 building that is not particularly historically significant.
15 It's built in 1906 and it's basically in need of complete
16 redo.

17 But yes, that has been addressed.

18 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I'd actually --

19 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Well, thank you, very much.

20 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- want to continue this
21 case.

22 JAMES WILLIAMSON: And I -- and this came up

1 quick. I mean, I would only notice this today because of
2 the way, and I think it would be great if the staff for the
3 BZA could somehow -- there could be an arrangement where
4 continued cases, the public have a chance to learn about
5 them, about when they're going to be heard a little sooner
6 than just 48 hours before they happen.

7 Because I didn't really -- I didn't know about
8 this until I happened to look and just --

9 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: We gave 48 hours.

10 JAMES WILLIAMSON: -- and just saw it there and
11 then checked the agenda and saw that you were on the agenda
12 for tonight.

13 So anyway, that -- it's just a suggestion maybe, a
14 change in how that's managed by the staff if that's -- it
15 seemed like it might be a doable thing. It would certainly
16 be helpful to the public and thanks. And I appreciate,
17 Cliff, what you were saying about your arrangement with the
18 Center.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The use of 14 days' notice
20 to the public, I don't think it's a matter of statute, I
21 think it's a matter of our rules. It's the rules we've had
22 for at least 20 years, and no one's had a problem with that.

1 JAMES WILLIAMSON: No, no, it might be noticed in
2 the paper Gus --

3 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Say it again?

4 JAMES WILLIAMSON: -- you know, not everybody
5 checks legal notices religiously, I certainly don't -- but
6 it's also -- and there may be a posting on the side of the
7 building which, you know, if you don't happen to go by --

8 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: That's another issue.

9 JAMES WILLIAMSON: But it's the online posting
10 that I'm interested in, that you don't see it on the
11 calendar for the city for the Board of Zoning Appeal until
12 two days before it's actually been scheduled.

13 And I just think that -- maybe that could be
14 matched, that could be -- you know, managed so that it
15 matches the 14-day notice that you're talking about.

16 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: All right.

17 JAMES WILLIAMSON: That's a consideration for pro-
18 bono publica.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: We'll take that under
20 consideration.

21 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: So noted.

22 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: And by the way --

1 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Anyway, thank you.

2 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- with the posting sign,
3 there's been problems in the past with whether the sign has
4 been properly posted. It has to be on the property that's
5 the subject of the case; not down the street, not adjacent,
6 it's got to be on the building -- on the doorway, a window...
7 but it's got to be -- it's got to be visible, and it's got
8 to be -- well, there are the requirements but your building
9 -- this building that's initially here will meet those.

10 So that's there. That's how it works. Post --
11 and you have 14 -- people have, who walk by will see it for
12 14 days, they'll read about it in the newspapers, in The
13 Cambridge Chronicle, what have you, that this case is coming
14 up with a date. So it's not 48 hours.

15 JAMES WILLIAMSON: No, no. I'm talking about the
16 online. I -- Gus, I get what you're saying and I appreciate
17 that. As far as I know, they complied with those notice
18 requirements.

19 What I'm talking about is for people who don't
20 happen to be walking by the building, the main way you can
21 find out about these things -- specifically the continued
22 cases, for some reason are not posted online.

1 The online calendar, which especially now with COVID
2 and everything else, which is our -- you know, we always
3 reach for that as our justification for every argument, but
4 -- the online posting for the city calendar and the BZA
5 calendar for continued cases specifically does not happen
6 until 48 hours before the date of the hearing. And that's
7 what I'm talking about.

8 And it seems like that's something that could be
9 improved or adjusted so that it matches the things that
10 you're describing --

11 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I get it.

12 JAMES WILLIAMSON: -- which I think are adequate.

13 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Let me raise the --

14 JAMES WILLIAMSON: It's just -- you know, it's
15 just one additional -- it's just the online calendar listing
16 of the continued cases.

17 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Fair enough.

18 JAMES WILLIAMSON: But anyway, thank you for --

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I will raise it --

20 JAMES WILLIAMSON: -- hearing me.

21 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- I will raise this with
22 the staff of the Inspectional Services Department that we go

1 on -- that when we have a continued case, put the posting of
2 the date for the continued case to be heard will be 14 days,
3 that the signage has got to be done.

4 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Thank you very much. That
5 would be extremely helpful.

6 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: I'll pursue it. I can't
7 say I can guarantee it, but I'll pursue that with the --

8 JAMES WILLIAMSON: I've got it.

9 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: -- Inspectional Services
10 Department.

11 JAMES WILLIAMSON: Got it. Thank you.

12 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Okay. On the motion to
13 continue?

14 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Oh, yeah, we have the
15 motion -- I make the motion --

16 BRENDAN SULLIVAN: Brendan Sullivan, yes to
17 continue.

18 JANET GREEN: Janet Green, yes to continuance.

19 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Janet. Jim?

20 JIM MONTEVERDE: Jim Monteverde, yes to continue.

21 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: And?

22 LAURA WERNICK: Laura Wernick --

1 JIM MONTEVERDE: Laura.

2 LAURA WERNICK: -- yes to continue.

3 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: The case is -- and I vote
4 yes as well.

5 [All vote YES]

6 The case is continued until 8 -- I'm sorry, 7:00
7 p.m. on April 22.

8 CLIFF SHORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: Thank you!

10 JAMES WILLIAMSON: And thanks for indulging my
11 questions.

12 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER: That's fine. That's what
13 we're here -- what we get paid the big money for, to sit
14 here and do this. All right, thank you very much and thank
15 my fellow Board members for sitting through this case, all
16 the cases. Goodnight.

17 COLLECTIVE: Goodnight, bye-bye.

18 [08:26 p.m. End of Proceedings]

19

20

21

22

Pacheco, Maria

From: Cj S <cschorer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 10:10 PM
To: Pacheco, Maria
Subject: Re: 544 Mass Avenue

Dear Maria,

Thank you for checking in. As after a long delay this past week we received the report from Swaathi Joseph and her staff asking us for a number of additional supporting documents for our Planning application, we will indeed need to ask for another continuance. We expect to provide all of the requested documents to Planning by Monday after meetings with the architects, and then we will be heard at their pleasure.

I would like to ask for a continuance until July, and hopefully the matter will be settled before Planning by then.

As we will not attend, unless this request for continuance is refused, or my presence is requested, I would appreciate it if the board reserves judgement and comment until we are able to actually present the decision of the Planning Board, and the facts on the matter. I am sorry we must ask for this continuance, due to the lengthy delays and Covid which has added nearly 12 months to this application.

We look forward to presenting our narrow request to the BZA when the Planning Board has made its decision.

Sincerely,

Cliff Schorer
508-726-5445

On Wed, Apr 14, 2021 at 9:28 AM Pacheco, Maria <mpacheco@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Hi,

As you know the above mentioned property is coming back next week to the BZA April 22nd and the last time we spoke you had said that you may be requesting another continuance. Please, let me know and if you are requesting a further continuance please, email me a continuance letter.

Maria

544 Mass Ave
543-550 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

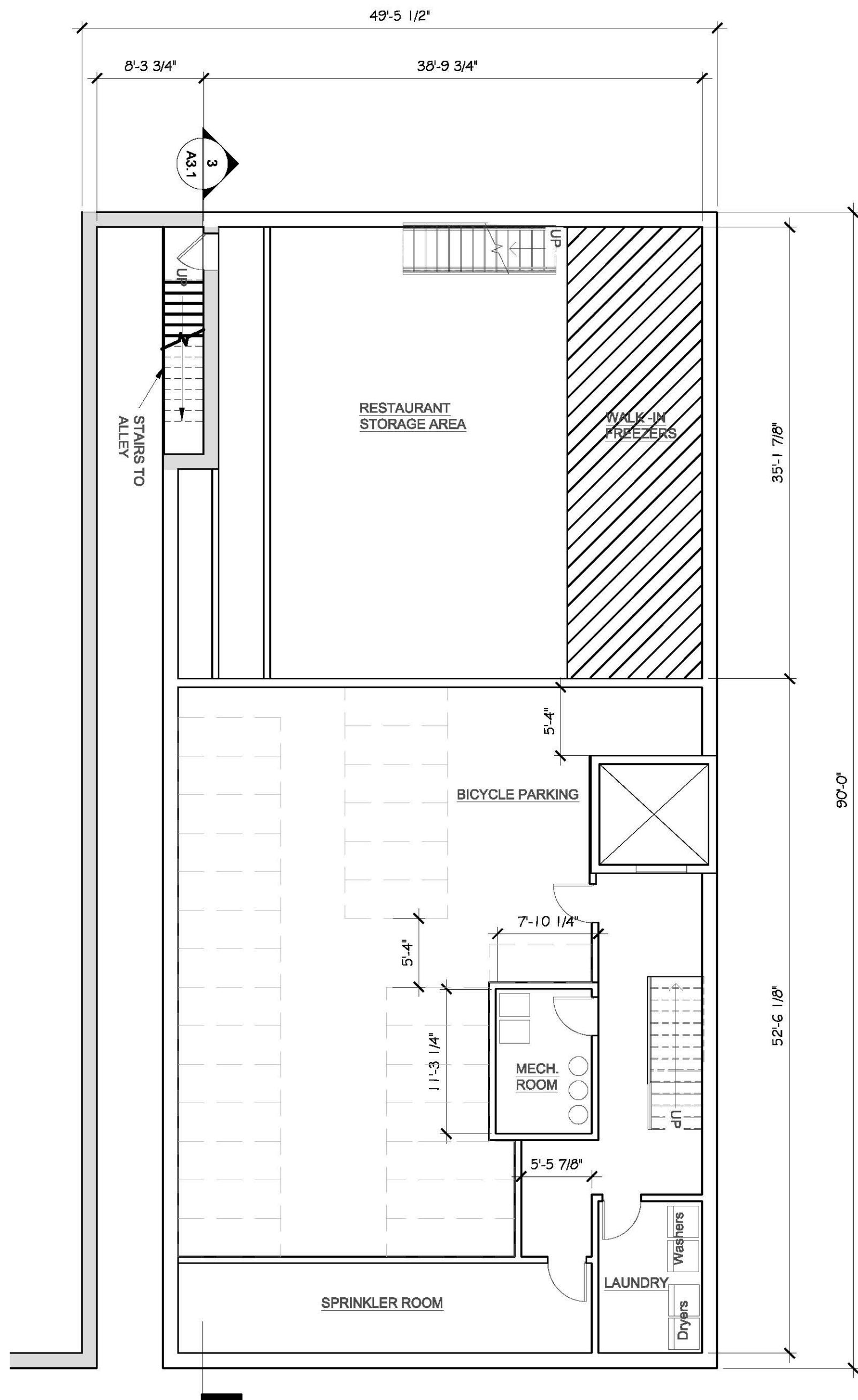
CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC
Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617 661-6566 TEL
617 661-6622 FAX
Incorporated 1960

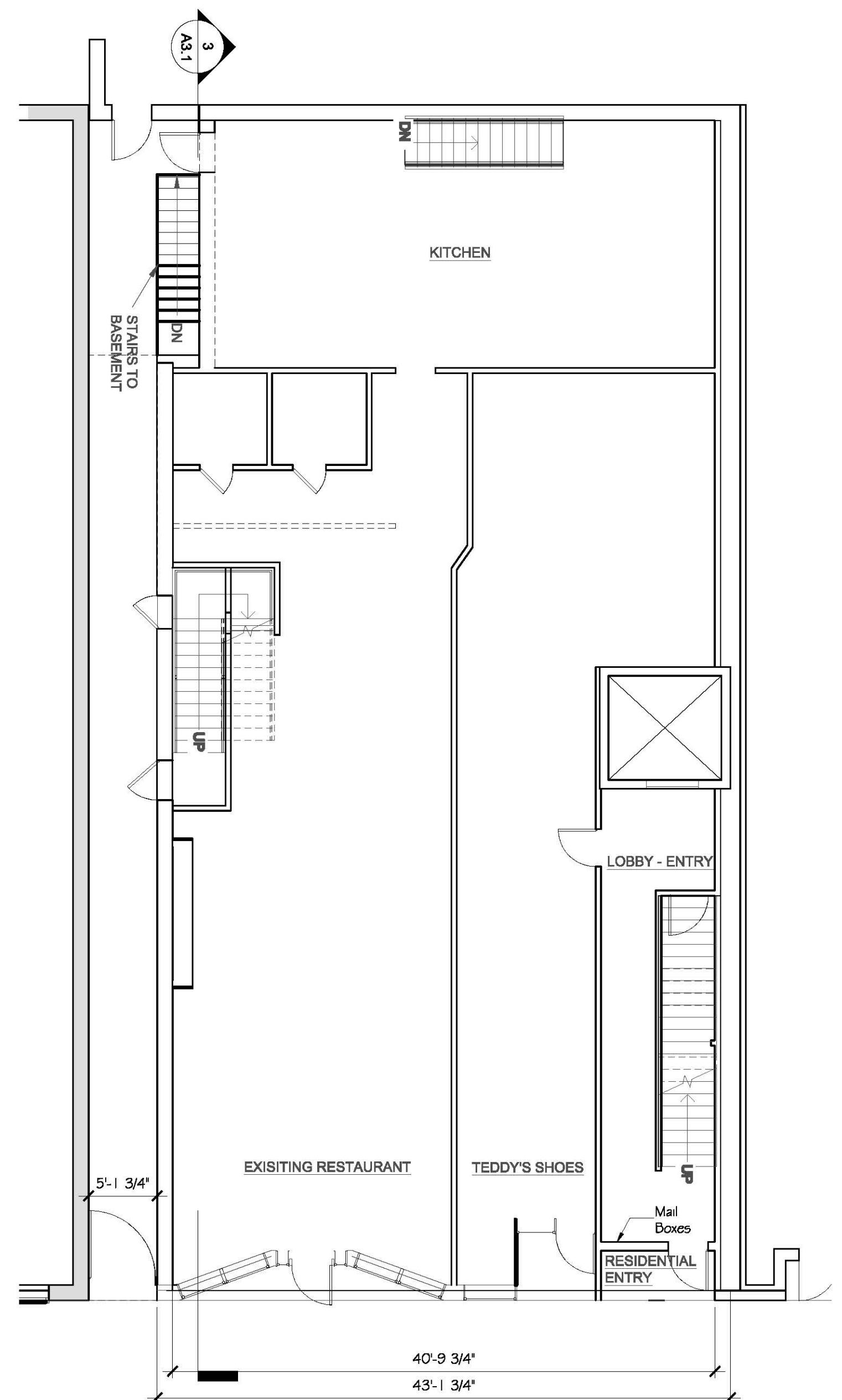
drawing title:
**BASEMENT, 1st,
2nd & 3rd FLR PLANS**

scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
date: 9/19/2019
drawn by: KG
project #: 1703

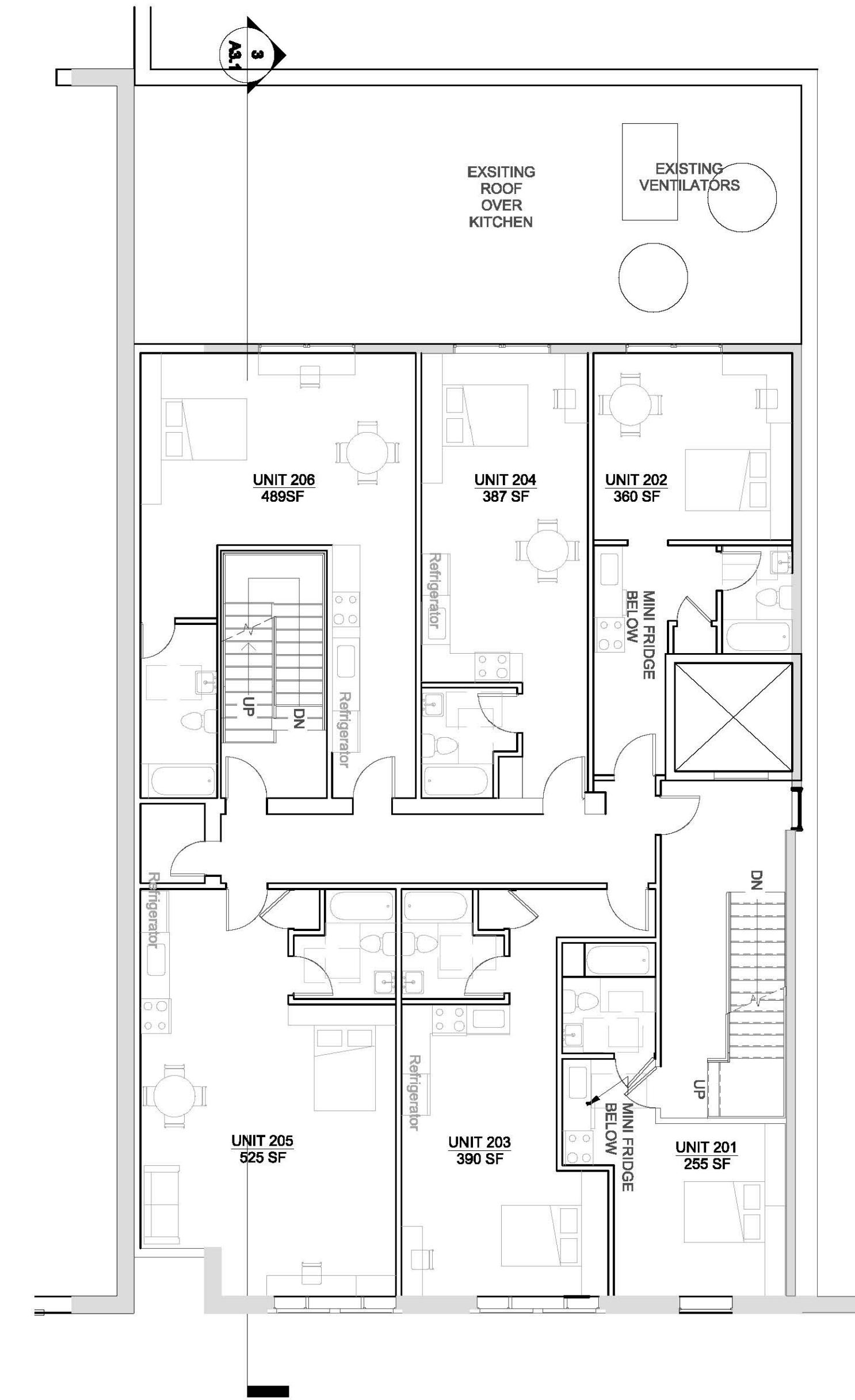
A1.1



BASEMENT PLAN



1ST FLOOR PLAN



2ND FLOOR PLAN (3rd Flr)

A

B

C

D

1

2

3

4

5

Key Plan

544 Mass Ave
642-650 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

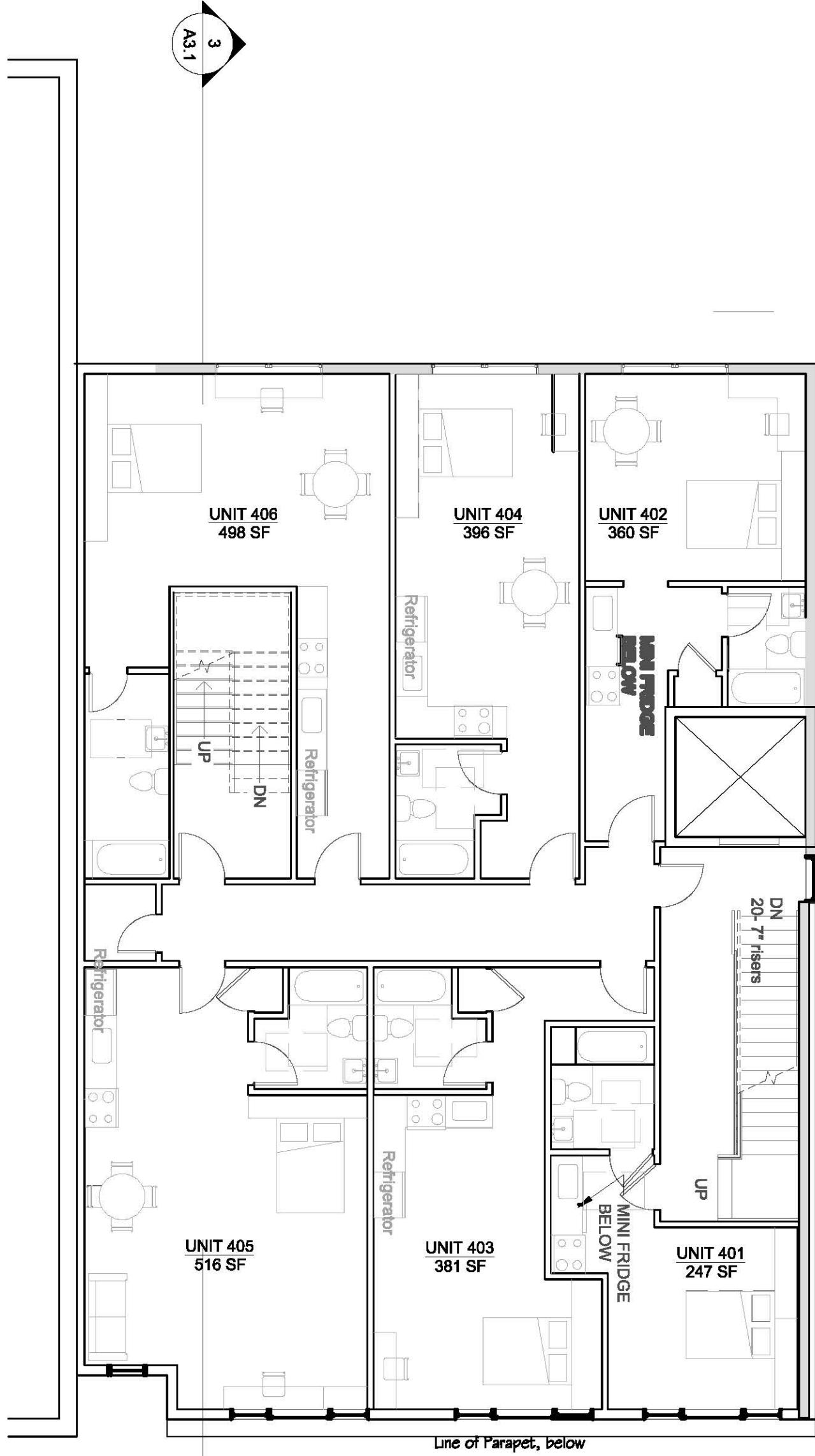
CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
 Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
 Cambridge, MA 02140
 617 661-6566 TEL
 617 661-6822 FAX
 Incorporated 1980

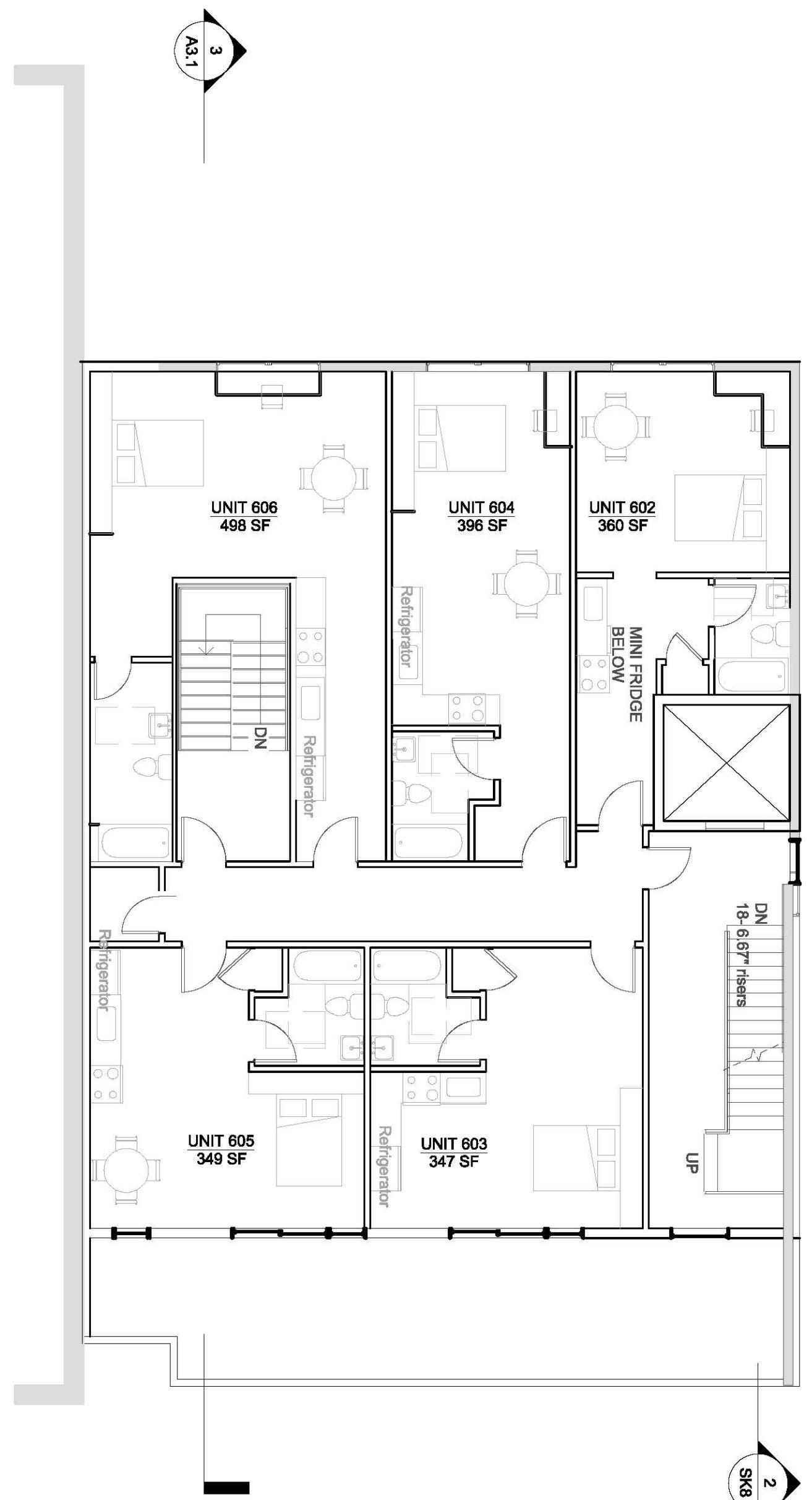
drawing title:
**4th, 5th, 6th &
 ROOF FLR PLANS**

scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"
 date: 9/19/2019
 drawn by: KG
 project #: 1703

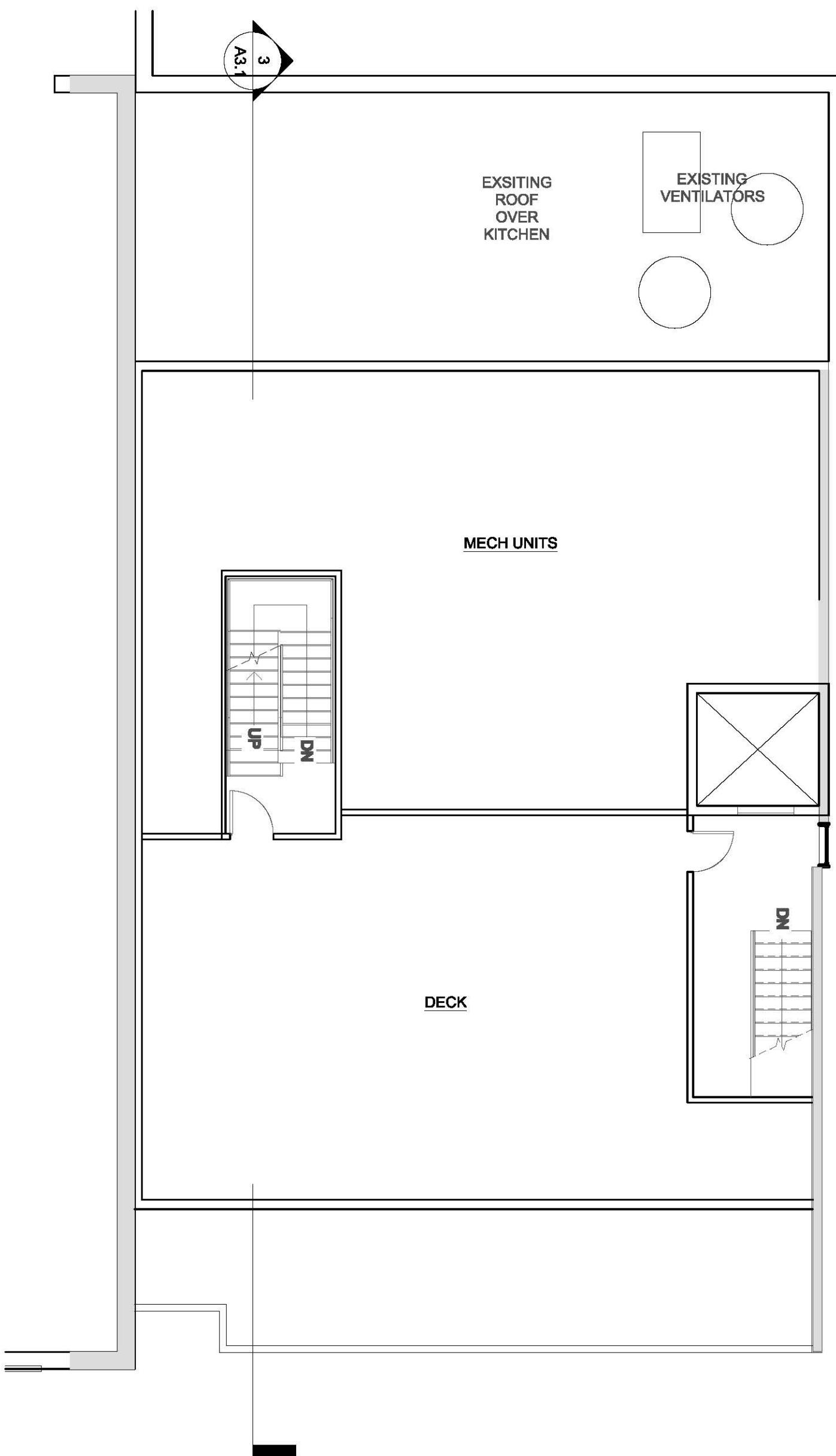
A1.2



4TH & 5TH FLOOR PLAN



6TH FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN

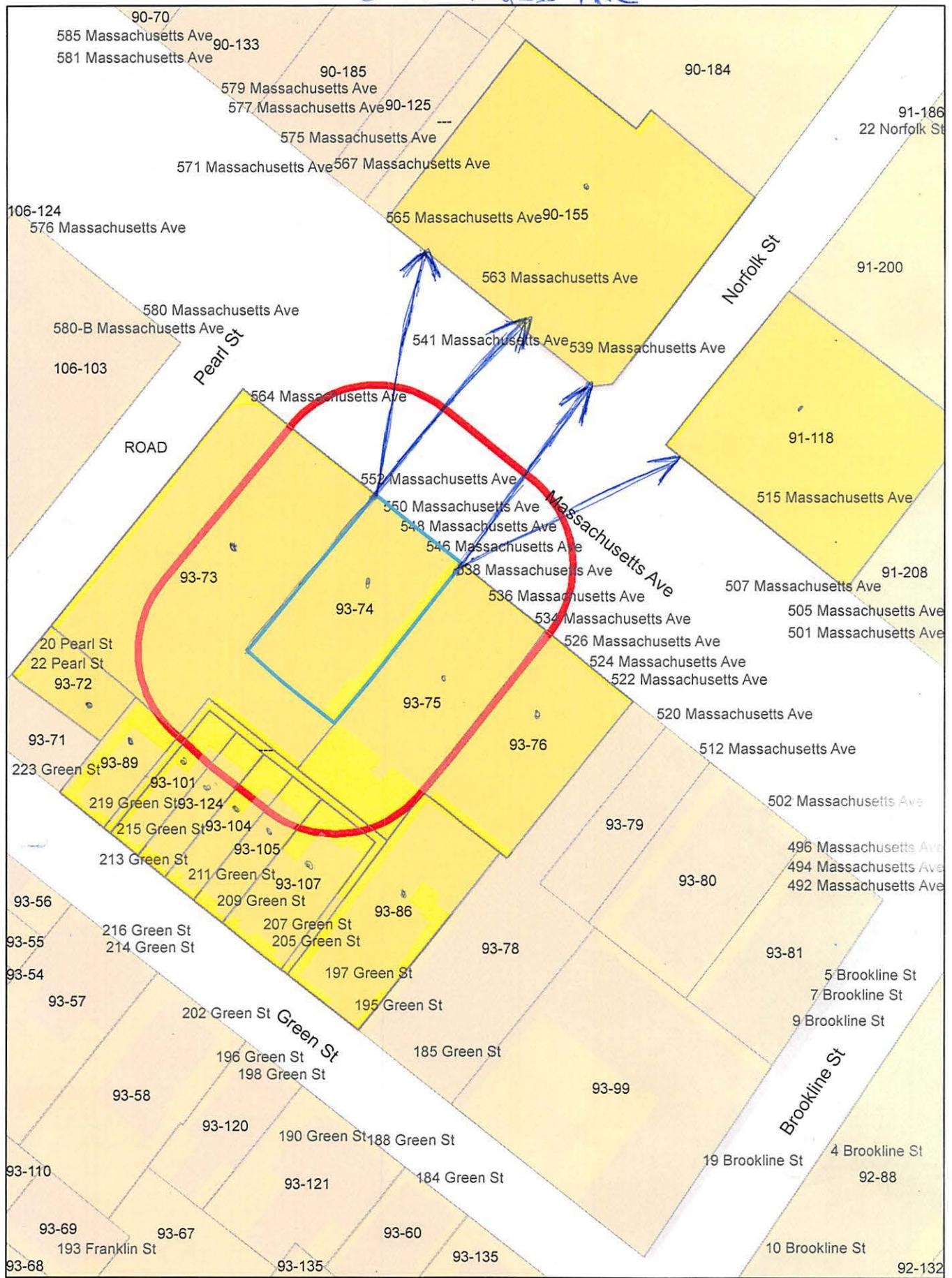
A

B

C

D

544 Mass Ave



544 Mass Ave

93-73
CARU RETAIL LLC.
614 MASSACHUSETTS AVE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

93-89
CHESHATSANG, DHIKI P., &
CHESHATSANG, LOBSANG N.
48 PIERSON ST
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

Petitioner
CENTRAL SQ. REDEVELOPMENT LLC
C/O CLIFFORD SCHORER
10 TURNPIKE ROAD
SOUTHBOROUGH, MA 01772

93-105-104
RAYCE REALTY LLC
228 WESTERN AVE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-74
CENTRAL SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT, LLC
10 TURNPIKE RD
SOUTHBOROUGH, MA 01772

93-76
522-526 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, LLC
C/O MOULTON ORIENTAL FURNITURE
68 MOULTON ST., 3RD FL
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

91-118
PARTEEN, LLC
C/O MINTZ LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS, GLOVSKY
ONE FINANCIAL CTR
ATTN : ALLAN CAGGIANO, ESQ
BOSTON, MA 02111

90-155
NAGGAR REALTY LLC.
C/O 545-565 MASS AVE LLC
585 MASSACHUSETTS AVE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-72
RAMEY, JEAN ANN,
TRUSTEE OF CRESCENT REALTY TRUST
SYNAPSE ENERGY ECONOMICS, INC
ATTN: JEANANN RAMEY
485 MASS AVE STE #2
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139-4041

93-107
CASCAP REALTY, INC
231 SOMERVILLE AVENUE
SOMERVILLE, MA 02143

93-101
YOZWIAK, NATHAN L. & JASMINE M. HANIFI
215 GREEN ST., #A
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-75
THE NEW DANCE COMPLEX, INC.
C/O RICHARD GETZ ASSOC. AGENT
22 HILLIARD ST. STE106
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

93-101
GAJOS, KRZYSZTOF Z.
215 GREEN ST. UNITB
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-124
GREENWALD, DANIEL & MARISA S. GOLD
213 GREEN ST #2
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-75
THE NEW DANCE COMPLEX, INC.
C/O LIZ SMITH
536 MASSACHUSETTS AVE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

93-86
PARSON-GREEN LLC
1247A COMMONWEALTH AVE
BOSTON, MA 02134

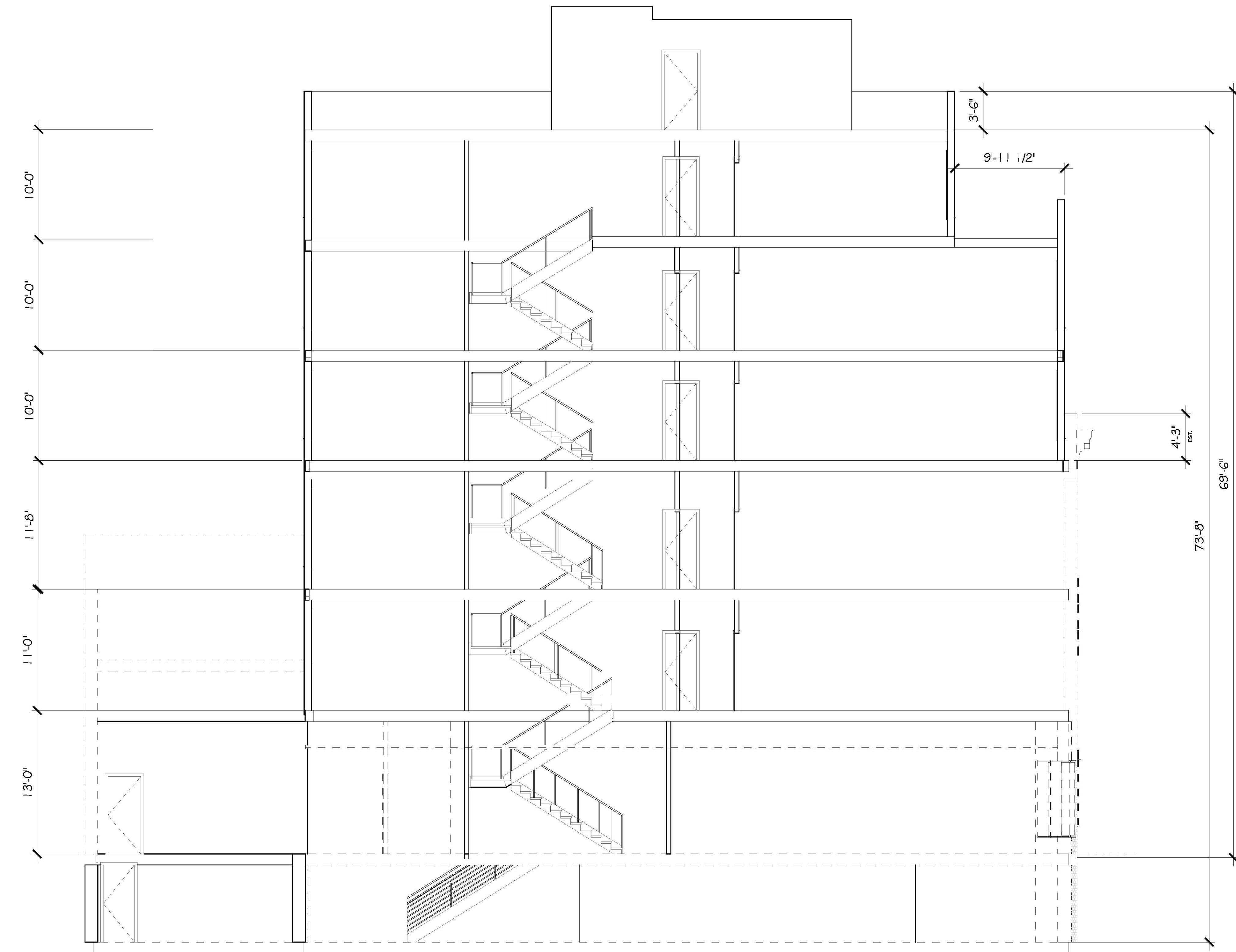
93-86
CABRAL, KYLE PROPERTY MANAGER/REALTOR
ALL BRIGHT REAL ESTATE
1247A COMMONWEALTH AVE
ALLSTON, MA 02134

93-86
OLIVIA LLC,
93 FISHER AVE
BROOKLINE, MA 02445

93-86
CABRAL, KYLE PROPERTY MANAGER/REALTOR
ALL BRIGHT REAL ESTATE
1247A COMMONWEALTH AVE
ALLSTON , MA 02134

93-86
FEUERMAN, JEFFREY M. & JEFFREY A. KESNER
TRUSTEE 195-197 GREEN STREET TRUST
1247A COMMONWEALTH AVE
ALLSTON, MA 02134

93-124
GOULET, DARIN P. TARA B. REDEPENNING
213 GREEN ST #1
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139



SECTION 3

drawing title:
SECTION

A3.1

scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"
date: 9/19/2019
drawn by: KG
project #: 1703

drawing no:

544 Mass Ave
642-650 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.
Architects Landscape Architects Urban Designers Planners

1904 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-661-6564 TEL
617-661-6822 FAX
Incorporated 1980

Key Plan

544 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

542-550 Massachusetts, Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

OWNER

Cliff Schorer

xx xxx xxx

xxt, MA xxx

ARCHITECT

CARR, LYNCH AND SANDELL, INC.

1904 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

SURVEY

BOSTON SURVEY, INC.

C4 Shipway Place

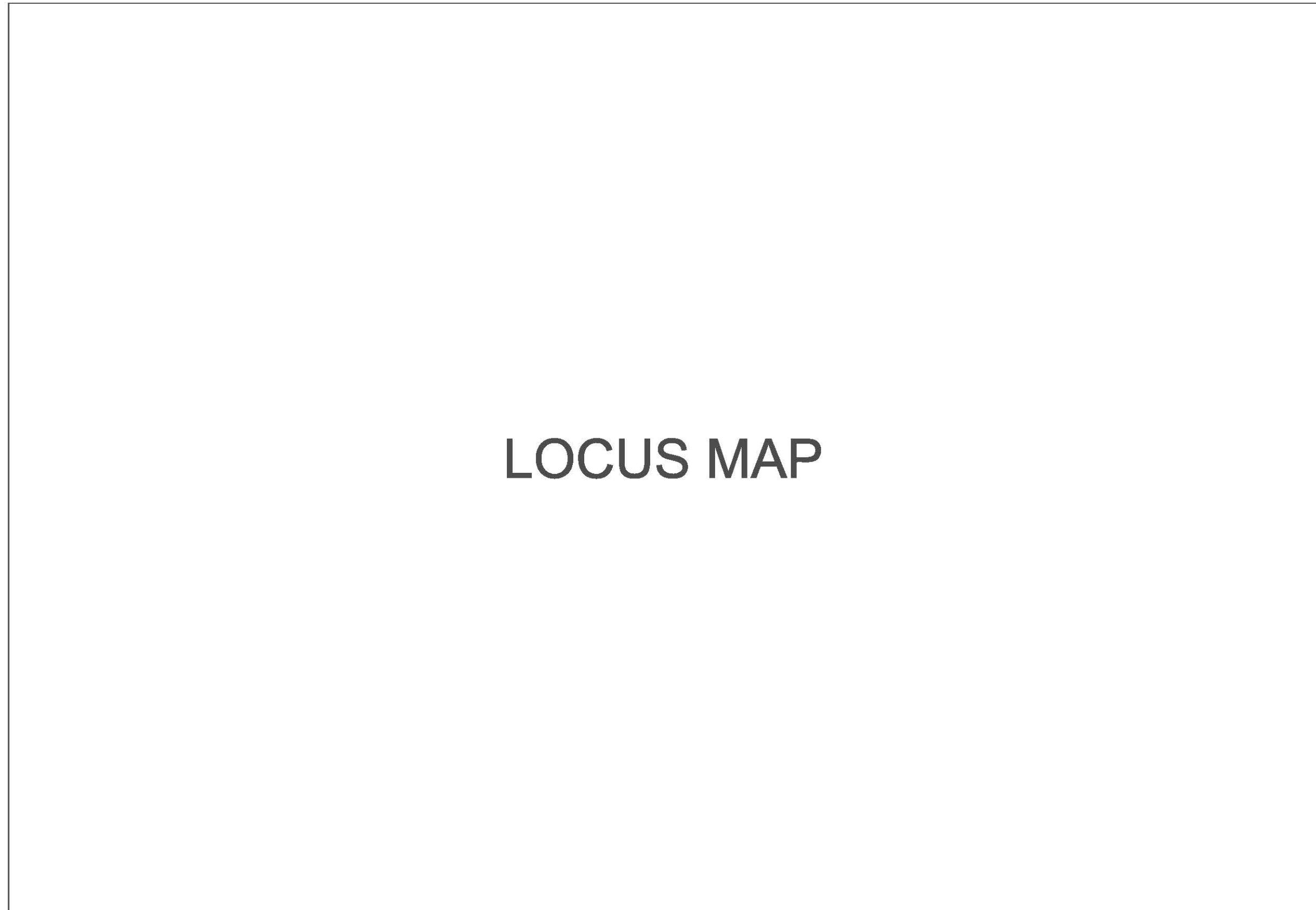
Charlestown, MA 02129

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

LeMESSURIER

1380 Soldiers Field Rd

Boston, MA 02135



LOCUS MAP

DRAWING INDEX

COVER SHEET

A1.1	BASEMENT, SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR PLANS
A1.2	FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH AND ROOF FLOOR PLANS
A2.1	EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS
A3.1	SECTIONS

ZONING:

	<u>Ord. Req.</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
District:		BB / CSQ Overlay	
Total Grss Flr Area:	22,833 gsf	7,879 gsf	17,436 gsf
Lot Area:		4,391 sf ±	No change
Ratio of Gross Floor Area to Lot Area:	3.97	.56	2.75 / 3.0 (4.0 S.P.)
Width:		50ft	No change
Setbacks:			
Front:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Left Side:	0'-0"	5' & 8'	0' & 8'
Right Side:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Rear:	0'-0"	No change	No change
Max Height:	55'-0"- (80'-0" SP)	TBD	69'-6"
Size of Building:			
Height:			69'-6"
Length:		92'-0"	No change
Width:		44' & 41'	49' & 41'
No. Dwelling Units:		N/A	29
No. Parking Spaces:			
No. Loading Areas:			

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019