



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION • COVER SHEET

In accordance with the requirements of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits for the premises indicated below.

Location of Premises: 178 Elm Street
Zoning District: Residence C-1
Applicant Name: Nelson Group, LLC
Applicant Address: 264 Salem Street, Medford MA 02155
Contact Information: (617) 492-4100 jrafferty@adamsrafferty.com (617) 492-3131
Telephone # Email Address Fax #

List all requested special permit(s) (with reference to zoning section numbers) below. *Note that the Applicant is responsible for seeking all necessary special permits for the project. A special permit cannot be granted if it is not specifically requested in the Application.*

5.28.2 Conversion of Nonresidential Structure to Residential Use
6.35.1 Reduction in Required Parking
6.108 Bicycle Parking Layout - Reduction in Primary Access Width
10.40 Special Permit

List all submitted materials (include document titles and volume numbers where applicable) below.

Survey, Site Plan, Existing and Proposed Floor Plans, Existing and Proposed Elevations, Photos

Signature of Applicant: _____

For the Planning Board, this application has been received by the Community Development Department (CDD) on the date specified below:

Date

Signature of CDD Staff

b. SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION – SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

Project Name: Address of Site: Applicant: Planning Board Project Number: (CDD)

Hearing Timeline (CDD)

Application Date: _____

Planning Board 1st Hearing Date: _____ *

(PUD Development Proposal, other special permit)

Planning Board Preliminary Determination: _____ *

(PUD Development Proposal)

Second Submission Date: _____ *

(PUD Final Development Plan)

Planning Board 2nd Hearing Date: _____ *

(PUD Final Development Plan)

Final Planning Board Action Date: _____ *

(PUD Final Development Plan, other special permit)

Deadline for Filing Decision: _____ *

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

Requested Relief: (include other boards and commissions)

- 5.28.2 Conversion to Residential Use
- 6.35.1 Reduction in Required Parking

Project Description

Brief Narrative: Applicant seeks to convert former club to a multi-family building containing six (6) dwelling units.

Project Size:

- Total GFA: 8,243 sf
- Non-residential uses GFA: N/A
- Site Area (acres and SF): 4,000 sf
- # of Parking Spaces: 0

Proposed Uses:

- # of Dwelling Units: 6
- Other Uses N/A
- Open Space (% of the site and SF) see attached plans

Proposed Dimensions:

- Height: 40'
- FAR: 2.06

Project Description

This is an application by Nelson Group, LLC pursuant to Section 5.28.2 of the Zoning Ordinance seeking to authorize the conversion of the 7,400 square foot former Institutional Club, the “Casa Do Benfica”, located at 178 Elm Street, into a multi-family residential building containing six (6) dwelling units. The lot is located in the Residence C-1 Zoning District.

Compliance with Section 5.28.28.1: Residential Conversion Criteria

(a) Provision of Parking. *Where it is proposed to add dwelling units above the limits established in the base zoning regulations, the Board shall evaluate the impact of increased numbers of dwelling units above that normally permitted in the district on the demand for on-street parking by residents and visitors to the proposed building, particularly in neighborhoods where off street parking is limited. In reaching a determination, the Board may require that the Applicant provide elements of a Parking Analysis as set forth in Section 6.35.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. Where a project is subject to additional criteria as specified in Section 5.28.28.2 below, a Parking Analysis shall be required to be included with the Special Permit Application.*

The building has been used as a “club house” for a fraternal organization for more than seventy years. The base zoning district (Resident C-1) allows for only two dwelling units on the lot, but the building’s size (7,400 sf) allows for six dwelling units pursuant to the formula set forth in Section 5.28. The impact on the surrounding on-street parking supply by a six unit multi-family dwelling will be less than the parking demand for the functions associated with the use of the property as a social club.

(b) Privacy Considerations. *Where significant variations from the normally required dimensional standards for the district are proposed, the Board shall evaluate the impact on residential neighbors of the new housing use and any other proposed use as it may affect privacy. The location and size of windows, screening elements, decks, entries, security and other lighting, and other aspects of the design, including the distribution of functions within the building, shall be reviewed in order to assure the maintenance of reasonable levels of privacy for abutters. In reviewing a proposed development plan, the Board shall consider, among other factors, the potential negative impacts of the new activity on abutters as a result of the location, orientation, and use of the structure(s) and its yards as proposed.*

Window locations have been carefully allocated to provided adequate privacy for adjacent properties while maintaining a consistent and aesthetically pleasing rhythm on

the facades. The proponent and design team will ensure a reasonable distribution of exterior lighting and security elements with a minimal impact on abutting properties as the design progresses.

(c) Reduction in Private Open Space. *Where it is proposed to reduce the amount of onsite Private Open Space below that required in the applicable district, the Board shall evaluate the proposal in light of the following:*

(1) The extent to which screening and buffering from neighbors will be accomplished

A fence along the left portion of the property will effectively screen the window wells proposed as part of the basement unit design.

(2) The quality and viability of the proposed open spaces as they are designed

The proposed rear yard revitalizes the existing outdoor space. This space will be screened from the abutting properties with a 6' fence and will serve as an amenity for the building's residents. The existing impervious areas at the front of the building will be replaced with light wells & landscaped screening.

(3) The tradeoff in benefits and negative impacts of the loss of green space in order to provide the required amount of parking, including consideration of the feasibility of alternate parking arrangements that might produce additional green area, such as placing some or all parking within the structure

On-site parking is not feasible because the open space is not accessible from the street by vehicle.

(4) The availability of common recreational spaces within the building to compensate for the loss of usable outdoor open space

There is no common recreational space within the building, however, the rear yard will provide an opportunity for passive recreation.

(d) Community Outreach. *The Planning Board shall consider what reasonable efforts have been made to address concerns raised by abutters and neighbors to the project site. An applicant seeking a special permit under this Section 5.28.2 shall solicit input from affected neighbors before submitting a special permit application. The application shall include a report on all outreach conducted and meetings held, shall describe the issues raised by community members, and shall describe how the proposal responds to those issues.*

The applicant has met individually with several abutters and neighbors to inform them of the project and solicit their feedback. In addition, the applicant hosted an Early Community Engagement Meeting on Wednesday, January 24. A Report of that meeting is included with this application.

Compliance with Section 6.35.1: Reduction of Required Parking

A special permit shall be granted only if the Board determines and cites evidence in its decision that the lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood, or that such lesser amount of parking will provide positive environmental or other benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood, including specifically, among other benefits, assisting in the provision of affordable housing units. In making such a determination the Board shall also consider whether or not less off street parking is reasonable in light of the following:

(1) The availability of surplus off street parking in the vicinity of the use being served and/or the proximity of an MBTA transit station.

The premises is located within a 10 minute walking distance of Central and Kendall Squares and has a "walk score" of 97 by walkscore.com. The property is also located within close proximity to MBTA bus lines on Cambridge Street and Broadway.

(2) The availability of public or commercial parking facilities in the vicinity of the use being served provided the requirements of Section 6.23 are satisfied.

There is a commercial parking lot within six blocks of the premises at One Kendall Square.

(3) Shared use of off street parking spaces serving other uses having peak user demands at different times, provided that no more than seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum parking requirements for each use shall be satisfied with such shared spaces and that the requirements of Subsection 6.23 are satisfied. Example: Office and Theatre uses with peak user demands at different times. Office requires a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) spaces and the theatre requires a minimum of one hundred (100). Seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum requirement is seventy-five (75) (75% of 100). Therefore seventy-five (75) spaces can be shared but twenty-five (25) (100-25) would still be required, making the total amount or required parking for both uses (150 + 25) one hundred and seventy-five (175).

No off street parking facilities are proposed to be shared as a result of this application.

(4) Age or other occupancy restrictions which are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage; and

The proximity to public transportation and convenient amenities including a pharmacy, grocery store, restaurants, and a movie theater are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage.

(5) Impact of the parking requirement on the physical environment of the affected lot or the adjacent lots including reduction in green space, destruction of significant existing trees and other vegetation, destruction of existing dwelling units, significant negative impact on the historic resources on the lot, impairment of the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, or loss of pedestrian amenities along public ways.

It would be necessary to demolish the existing building in order to provide onsite parking on the lot.

(6) The provision of required parking for developments containing affordable housing units, and especially for developments employing the increased FAR and Dwelling unit density provisions of Section 11.200, will increase the cost of the development, will require variance relief from other zoning requirements applicable to the development because of limitations of space on the lot, or will significantly diminish the environmental quality for all residents of the development.

No affordable dwelling units are proposed.

6.108 Modified Bicycle Parking Requirements

6.108.1 *Any requirement set forth in this Section 6.100 may be modified upon the granting of a special permit by the Planning Board. Given that community standards for bicycle use and bicycle parking have evolved and may continue to evolve in the future, the intent of this provision is to provide a mechanism for the review and approval of alternative technologies and methods for providing bicycle parking that may provide equal or greater benefits to bicycle users but may not conform to the exact requirements set forth in this Section.*

6.108.2 *Bicycle Parking Plan Requirements. When seeking a special permit pursuant to this Section 6.108, the Applicant shall provide a Bicycle Parking Plan as part of the Special Permit Application. Such plan shall include the proposed quantities and locations of bicycle parking facilities as well as exact details and specifications of the design and layout of proposed Bicycle Parking Spaces. The Bicycle Parking Plan shall include a narrative listing the requirements that are proposed to be modified and explaining how the Bicycle Parking Plan would benefit from such modifications. The Bicycle Parking Plan may also include quantitative analyses of expected bicycle usage for the proposed land uses.*

Included as a part of this application is a proposed site plan depicting the location of bicycle parking spaces in the rear portion of the lot. Those spaces are accessed via a walkway along the right side of the building. Per 6.106.1.a, the primary access route to bicycle parking spaces must be at least five (5) feet in width. The proposed walkway is four feet, four inches (4'4") and represents the full width of the opening between the building and the abutting property.

6.108.3 Findings and Approval. *Upon granting a special permit to modify any requirements of this Section 6.100, the Planning Board shall make a general determination that the proposal is consistent with the purpose of this Section 6.100 and that the Bicycle Parking Plan proposes a quantity, design and arrangement of bicycle parking that will serve bicycle users in a way that is sufficiently comparable, given the circumstances of the specific project, to the bicycle parking that would be required under the regulations of this Section 6.100. The Planning Board shall also make specific determinations applicable to the modifications being sought as set forth below:*

a. Where an alternative design or layout of Bicycle Parking Spaces is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that such design or layout shall be durable and convenient for the users whom it is intended to serve. Where new technologies are proposed, the Board may require that the Applicant demonstrate such technologies for review by City staff.

The proposed path will allow for the most direct, easy access to bicycle parking spaces.

b. Where modifications to the location or quantity of bicycle parking is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that the Bicycle Parking Plan will satisfactorily serve the needs of all expected users, based on quantitative and/or qualitative evidence provided by the Applicant. Such a modification may be appropriate for a campus master plan or other large development site within which bicycle parking is planned comprehensively across an area instead of on a specific site-by-site basis.

N/A

Compliance with Section 10.40: Special Permit Criteria

Granting the Special Permit requested for 114 Inman Street would not be a detriment to the public interest because:

Requirements of the Ordinance can or will be met for the following reason:

Section 5.28.2 authorizes the Planning Board to grant a Special Permit to convert non residential structures to a residential use. The proposed conversion of this institutional club use to a six unit multi-family is in compliance with the number of dwelling units allowed under Section 5.28.22.

Traffic generated or pattern of access or egress would not cause congestion hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character or the following reasons:

Traffic patterns of access and egress would be unchanged. Moreover, the intensity of the use will be more compatible with the existing residential neighborhood as a six unit multi-family dwelling than it was as an active club use.

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:

The existing adjacent uses are all residential and will not be adversely affected by a six unit multi-family dwelling.

Nuisance of hazard would not be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupants of the proposed use or the citizens of the City for the following reasons:

The building will be renovated in accordance with all safety, health and building code requirements.

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:

The conversion of the building from a non-conforming institutional use to a six unit dwelling is consistent with the provisions of Section 5.28.2.

Compliance with Section 10.47.4: Multifamily Dwelling Criteria

Criteria for approval of Townhouses and Multifamily Dwellings. In reviewing applications for townhouse developments and multifamily dwelling, the special permit granting authority shall consider and address the following site plan criteria as applicable:

(1) Key features of the natural landscape should be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal should be minimized and other natural features of the site, such as slopes, should be maintained.

This application seeks to convert an existing club to a multifamily building containing six (6) dwelling units. The proposal incorporates modest changes to the façade to support such a conversion. There will be no changes to the natural landscape as a result.

(2) New buildings should be related sensitively to the existing built environment. The location, orientation and massing of structures in the development should avoid overwhelming the existing buildings in the vicinity of the development. Visual and functional disruptions should be avoided.

No new buildings are contemplated as a result of this application.

(3) The location, arrangement, and landscaping of open space should provide some visual benefits to abutters and passersby as well as functional benefits to occupants of the development.

As the existing building is not being demolished, the location of existing open space will not be changed. New plantings along the face of the building, including rhododendron and hydrangea will provide visual interest and greenery along Elm Street.

(4) Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.

No vehicular parking areas are proposed.

(5) Parking area landscaping should minimize the intrusion of onsite parking so that it does not substantially detract from the use and enjoyment of either the proposed development or neighboring properties.

No onsite parking is proposed.

(6) Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.

Trash bins will be sited in the fenced-in rear yard, with easy access to the curb from the walkway to the right of the building.

Early Community Engagement Summary

Nelson Group, LLC hosted an Early Community Engagement Meeting at 178 Elm Street on Wednesday, January 24 at 7:00pm. A proposed invitation list was submitted to the Community Development Department in December for review and comment. Two weeks prior to the meeting, invitations were sent to the approved list. Invitations were sent to property owners along Elm Street and Columbia Street.

Present at the Community Meeting were representatives of the applicant, the project architect, Khalsa Design, and local land use consultants. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Jai Singh Khalsa. The development team outlined the specific nature of the application to the attendees and shared copies of the proposed plans for a six unit multifamily building. Attendants included neighborhood residents Paul Raymond, Jeff Davis, Jose Aula, Richard Bonanno and Doug Reville.

At the conclusion of the presentation, questions and comments were solicited from those in attendance. The comments were favorable, with questions focused largely on façade changes and the duration of the existing tenant's operation.

DIMENSIONAL FORM

Project Address: 178 Elm Street

Application Date:

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	4,000 sf +/-	5,000 sf	4,000 sf +/-	
Lot Width (ft)	35.4'	50'	35.4'	
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)	7,400 sf	3,000 sf	9,142 sf	
Residential Base	0	3,000 sf	9,142 sf	
Non-Residential Base	7,400 sf	3,000 sf	0	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Total Floor Area Ratio	1.85	.75	2.28	
Residential Base	0	.75	2.28	
Non-Residential Base	1.85	.75	2.28	
Inclusionary Housing Bonus	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Total Dwelling Units	0	6*	6	
Base Units	0	6*	6	
Inclusionary Bonus Units	0	0	0	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	n/a	1,500 sf	666.66 sf	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	n/a	1,500 sf	666.66 sf	
Building Height(s) (ft)	40'	35'	40'	
Front Yard Setback (ft)	6' +/-	21.25'	6' +/-	
Side Yard Setback (ft)	1'+/-	7'6"	1'+/-	
Side Yard Setback (ft)	4.5'+/-	7'6"	4.5'+/-	
Rear Yard Setback (ft)	24'+/-	20'	24'+/-	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	22.51%	30%	30%	
Private Open Space	22.51%	30%	30%	
Permeable Open Space	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Other Open Space (Specify)	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	0	6	0	
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	6	6	
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	0	0	
Loading Bays	n/a	n/a	n/a	

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

*per 5.28, 1 dwelling unit shall be allowed for every 1,100 sf of existing gross floor area

OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Project Address: 178 Elm

Application Date:

This form is to be completed by the property owner, signed, and submitted with the Special Permit Application:

I hereby authorize the following Applicant: Nelson Group, LLC
at the following address: 264 Salem Street, Medford MA
to apply for a special permit for: Residential Conversion
on premises located at: 178 Elm Street
for which the record title stands in the name of: CASA BENFICA, LLC
whose address is: 264 Salem Street, Medford MA

by a deed duly recorded in the:

Registry of Deeds of County: Middlesex Book: 70074 Page: 587
OR Registry District of the Land Court, Certificate No.: Book: Page:

Signature of Land Owner (If authorized Trustee, Officer or Agent, so identify)

To be completed by Notary Public:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of MIDDLESEX

The above named Nelson Oliveria personally appeared before me,
on the month, day and year Oct 13, 2017 and made oath that the above statement is true.

Notary: Catherine M. Williams

My Commission expires: 11/3/2017

