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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: July 14, 2020

Re: Special Permit **PB #361, 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue**

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Community Development

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This memo contains an overview of the proposed project at 711-727 Massachusetts Avenue, the special permits being requested, and related comments.

### Summary of Proposal

Gas Light Building LLC is proposing renovation and rehabilitation of the historic Cambridge Gas Light Company building on the parcel 711 Massachusetts Avenue, with an addition behind and partially above the existing building. The proposed uses include ground-floor retail, office space, and a 37-room hotel. The renovated building plus addition will result in a total of 41,895 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) – which excludes areas exempt from GFA calculations either as-of-right or by special permit – and a total of six stories above grade.

The site is within the Central Square Overlay District, requiring review by the Central Square Advisory Committee, whose report is attached to this memo. The existing building is a contributing structure within the Central Square National Register District. The Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) staff has reviewed the application and provided some comments to CDD that are included in this memo.

### Requested Special Permits

The project is located in the Business B (BB) District within the Central Square Overlay District. The Applicant is seeking Special Permits allowed in the Central Square Overlay District for building height (Section 20.304.2) and FAR (20.304.3), to establish a Formula Business (20.304.5) and to modify limitations on bank frontage (20.304.5.3.b), and to waive parking and loading requirements (20.304.6). The Applicant also seeks an exemption of basement area from the calculation of GFA (Article 2.000). The application mentions exemption of rooftop spaces from the calculation of GFA as a finding to be made by the Planning Board, which would require a special permit per Section 20.304.3.6. The application mentions that the project will seek a variance from height and GFA limitations for the proposed rooftop spaces with two headhouses to allow hotel patrons access to the roof deck. Given the project's size, it is also subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20 and may be subject to the Incentive Zoning Requirements in Section 11.202 (which require contributions to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust). Applicable sections of the zoning are provided in an appendix. .

| Requested Special Permits  | Summarized Findings ( <i>detailed zoning text in appendix</i> )  |
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| <p>Central Square Overlay District: Standards for Issuance of Special Permits (Section 20.305)</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ encourage responsible and orderly development;</li> <li>○ strengthen the retail base to more completely serve the needs of the neighborhoods;</li> <li>○ preserve the Square’s cultural diversity;</li> <li>○ create active people oriented spaces;</li> <li>○ improve the physical, and visual environment;</li> <li>○ provide retail establishments that serve people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Building and site designs are consistent with “Urban Design Plan for Central Square” as outlined in the “Central Square Action Plan” and the “Central Square Development Guidelines” (see summary on following pages).</li> <li>• Building and site designs adequately screen the parking provided and are sensitive to the contributing buildings in the vicinity.</li> <li>• No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation (either now or within the past 5 years).</li> </ul> |
| <p>Central Square Overlay District: Building height up to 80 feet and combined residential and non-residential FAR up to 4.00 (Sections 20.304.2 &amp; 20.304.3)</p>   | <p><i>Central Square Overlay District findings set forth above</i></p>   |
| <p>Central Square Overlay District: Exemption of rooftop spaces from calculation of Gross Floor Area (GFA) in Central Square Overlay District (Section 20.304.3.6)</p> | <p>The rooftop spaces are located and designed to minimize impacts on neighboring uses, including but not limited to light trespass, noise or other nuisance, and may place further requirements or conditions on the design or operational aspects of rooftop space, including but not limited to hours of operation, range of activities permitted, signage and lighting fixtures, visual screening devices, sound mitigation, and other measures to ensure ongoing compliance with the findings.</p>  |

| Requested Special Permits  | Summarized Findings <i>(detailed zoning text in appendix)</i>   |
|--|---|
| Central Square Overlay District: Reduction of parking and loading requirement (Sections 20.304.6 & 6.35.1)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total development authorized on the site is reduced to 90% of the maximum permitted on the lot or a cash contribution is made to the Central Square Improvement Fund in an amount equal to fifty (50) percent of the cost of construction of the parking spaces not provided.</li> <li>• Subject lot is sufficiently small in size as to contribute to a development pattern of diverse, small scale, new structures and the retention of existing structures.</li> <li>• Exemption from parking and loading requirements will result in a building design that is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood.</li> <li>• <i>Other Central Square Overlay District findings set forth above</i></li> </ul>                    |
| Central Square Overlay District: Special Permit for Formula Business (Sections 20.304.5.4)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design reflects, amplifies and strengthens the established historical character of existing buildings and storefronts in Central Square.</li> <li>• The particulars of the building or storefront design is varied from the formula or standard design of the chain in order to reflect the unique character and conditions of Central Square generally or the specific location in particular.</li> <li>• Standard elements of the enterprise defining it as a Formula Business are modified to respect and provide unique expressions of Central Square history and traditions as well as innovation in physical design and marketing that will distinguish the Central Square location from other locations of the Formula Business.</li> </ul> |
| Central Square Overlay District: Bank frontage occupying more than 25 feet of building frontage facing Massachusetts Avenue or more than 30% of a lot's aggregate building frontage (Section 20.304.5.3.b) | <i>Central Square Overlay District findings set forth above</i>   |
| Special Permit for exemption of basement area in the calculation of Gross Floor Area (GFA)   | The uses occupying such exempted GFA support the character of the neighborhood or district in which the applicable lot is located.  |
| General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)  | Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43.  |

## Area Planning and Zoning

The site is located in the Business B (BB) District and the Central Square Overlay District. BB is a mixed-use district allowing a range of residential and commercial uses at a relatively high density (2.75 FAR non-residential / 3.00 FAR residential) and a maximum height of 80 feet. The BB base zoning designation is typical of Cambridge's higher-density central business districts.

The Central Square Overlay District modifies the BB base zoning in different ways, including some added restrictions and some greater flexibility. Many provisions of the Central Square Overlay District were put in place when the district was created, following a 1987 planning study. Other provisions were added during a zoning petition adopted in 2017, which followed the Kendall Square Central Square ("K2C2") Planning Study completed in 2013.

- **Height:** Exceeding a height of 55 feet requires a special permit from the Planning Board, and also requires upper-story step-backs that may be modified by special permit. This is to allow the Board to evaluate whether the proposal for additional height supports the urban design goals for Central Square.
- **Density:** To incentivize housing, the FAR can be increased to 4.0 for residential uses, and the Planning Board may allow mixed-use development at a total FAR of 4.0 by special permit provided non-residential uses are limited to the base zoning FAR of 2.75 and are not more than 50% of the total development. To incentivize more active use, exemptions from GFA and FAR limitations are allowed for ground-floor retail spaces of 1,500 square feet or less (as-of-right), residential balconies (as-of-right) and other rooftop spaces (by special permit). These provisions were part of the 2017 zoning amendment. A citywide zoning provision adopted in 2016 allows a GFA and FAR exemption of any basement-level space by special permit.
- **Use Restrictions:** The 2017 zoning amendment removed the "cap" on Fast Order Food Establishments that was previously in effect, but introduced new limitations. The linear building frontage occupied by banks is limited to 25 feet on Massachusetts Avenue or Main Street and 30% of total building frontage, with modifications allowed by special permit. A special permit is also required for a "Formula Business" (see definition in Criteria appendix), which incorporates design features that are consistent across at least 10 establishments in Massachusetts or at least 20 establishments anywhere. The intent of these provisions is to maintain the unique and diverse retail character of Central Square and limit the overall effect of "generic" storefronts.
- **Parking and Loading:** Minimum parking and loading (but not bicycle parking) requirements can be waived for existing buildings (as-of-right) and new buildings or additions (by special permit) as a way to support the urban design character of the area. For new buildings or additions, the waiver is contingent on a reduction to no more than 90% of the allowed development on the lot or a payment to a Central Square Improvement Fund for the parking spaces being waived.
- **Urban Design:** Special design standards are included to advance the planning goals for the area. An example is that the ground (first) story must be at or near grade, contain active uses, and have a minimum of 50% clear glass on the façade. Another important standard, included in the Planning Board's approval criteria, is to preserve key features of buildings that are contributing

to the Central Square National Register District. The standards in zoning are complemented by design guidelines, which are summarized in the appendix, and include encouraging strong retail frontage along Massachusetts Avenue and providing visual interest and pedestrian orientation in storefront design.

The goals of the Central Square Overlay District include preservation and enhancement of the unique functional environment and visual character of Central Square, mitigation of the functional impacts of new development on adjacent residential neighborhoods, and maintenance of the present diversity of development and open space patterns and building scales and ages. The Central Square portion of the Kendall Square Central Square or “K2C2” Planning Study complemented the goals of the original Central Square Overlay District zoning with the goals of promoting public spaces to build community, diversity in retail, non-profit and cultural institutions, increased housing and residential diversity, connecting people to the square, and encouraging sustainable development choices. The stated goal of the 2017 “Central Square Restoration Zoning Petition” was to restore the historic status of Central Square as a commercial hub and strengthen its identity as a cultural district, with specific objectives to increase the potential for housing, expand the local retail footprint, enliven side streets, and activate the streetscape.

## **Comments on Proposal**

### *Consistency with Planning and Zoning*

As it exists, the lot is currently non-conforming with regard to parking and loading requirements. The site is entirely within the Central Square National Register District and the building is a designated contributing building. The Applicant has reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC), who have concluded that the project does not require a formal hearing by the Commission. CHC staff have advised CDD that the proposed restoration and addition, in concept, are not concerning from the standpoint of the building’s contributing status. However, CHC staff have communicated to the applicant and to CDD’s urban design staff that they have some concerns regarding the design treatment of the proposed addition. These are discussed further in the Urban Design section.

Planning Board review is required as the proposed addition will exceed the allowed as-of-right building height of 55 feet and increase the total FAR to 3.97 in the Central Square Overlay District. The addition is proposed to be 80 feet in height and meets the step-back requirements from the street line with the exception of two proposed rooftop access headhouses that exceed the height limit. Because headhouses with access to usable space are considered “occupiable area,” they are included in the calculation of height and GFA for the building. The project is therefore seeking variances to waive limitations for those spaces.

The Gross Floor Area of the existing building is 26,877 square feet, with three stories above grade and one story below grade, and is primarily used for office (including the Bank of America space) except for about 2,881 square feet of ground-level retail. The new addition will include 30,574 square feet of GFA, with a hotel lobby at the ground story, about 4,388 square feet of additional office on the second and third stories, and 37 hotel rooms on the fourth, fifth, and sixth stories. With the configuration of existing GFA, the total proposed GFA is 41,895 square feet, which does not include 3,066 square feet of retail space (in three separate storefronts) in the first story (exempted as-of-right) and 5,849 square feet of

office and hotel support space in the basement (seeking special permit approval), and an amount of occupiable area on the rooftops and within access headhouses that is not clearly recorded in the application. The Planning Board may grant special permits to exempt “open-air spaces on the roofs of buildings, such as roof gardens, terraces, walk ways, including open or enclosed egresses, covered staircases, mechanical head-houses, or observation spaces” from GFA limitations. If all exemptions are granted, the resulting project will be approximately 56% residential and 34% non-residential, with hotel uses categorized as residential and about 10% of GFA in stair/elevator spaces that are difficult to distinguish because they are shared somewhat by office and hotel uses.

The project proposes to retain the long-term lease to Bank of America in the first floor of the building, with approximately 68 feet of frontage on Massachusetts Avenue, which exceeds the allowed 25 feet under current zoning. In addition, the bank exceeds 30% of the lot's aggregate building frontage facing Massachusetts Avenue and Temple Street as it is located at the corner of the building, and has been deemed a “Formula Business” due to its standardized signage and other design elements. The Board may grant special permits to exceed the frontage limitations in the Central Square Overlay District if it is found to be consistent with the urban design objectives, and may approve a Formula Business if the design is found to support the unique and historic qualities of Central Square.

No alterations are proposed to the existing building frontage on Massachusetts Avenue as the addition is proposed in the rear. For an existing building, the Planning Board often considers whether the proposed frontage is consistent with the design and structure of the building, especially if reducing the frontage would necessitate changes that are detrimental to the existing façade. Alterations proposed to the existing storefront glazing at ground floor level are limited to the frontage of the retail spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and to the fire control room along Temple Street, with no change to the amount of existing glazing. It is unclear from the Application whether the existing and/or proposed ground floor glazing provides at least of 50% clear glass on the façade. No alterations are proposed for the signage or storefront area for the Bank of America space, and dividing the rest of the frontage into smaller retail spaces is encouraged by the zoning for the area. Because the changes are minimal, the main question for the Board will be whether preserving the existing frontage is the best approach to support the planning goals of promoting the unique character of the district.

The uses within the existing building are not required to provide parking as-of-right. For the new addition, the required number of parking spaces (both maximum and minimum) would be 9 spaces for the hotel use and 3 spaces for the office use, and one loading bay would be required for the hotel. The project is not proposing any off-street parking or loading bays, and is seeking a waiver of the parking and loading requirements for the new portions of the building with special permit approval. Given that the project exceeds 90% of allowed development on the site, it will be required to make a cash contribution to the Central Square Improvement Fund, which will be calculated per the requirements of Section 20.304.6.3(b)(i). The contribution has not been applied in Central Square thus far, but comparable contributions in Harvard Square have been calculated at \$48,250 per waived parking space.

The proposed 8 long-term bicycle parking spaces in the first and second floors of the new addition meet the zoning requirements for number and location of spaces. Because required long-term spaces are intended primarily to serve employees, staff suggests considering additional long-term spaces that might be desired by longer-stay hotel guests. In order to meet the requirement for short-term bicycle

parking spaces, the project proposes to make a contribution to the City's Bicycle Parking Fund to provide six bicycle parking spaces, which is the minimum zoning requirement.

While this proposal is seeking various special permits, each of the special permits was established for the purpose of supporting development outcomes consistent with the planning goals for Central Square. In concept, this proposal reflects the type of development anticipated by the Central Square zoning by preserving and restoring a significant building, adding incremental mixed-use development, creating small-scale storefronts, and enhancing the pedestrian-oriented character of the site. The main considerations are whether the design supports the urban design objectives for Central Square and whether site-specific impacts are mitigated.

### *Urban Design*

Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge's 1912 Cambridge Gas Light Co. Building is arguably the most distinguished commercial building in the Central Square District. Its elegant facades and details, high quality materials and craftsmanship, and generous pedestrian scale frontage contribute significantly to Central Square's eclectic character. As with any building of its importance, the effect on Cambridge's public realm of changes or additions to the building should be carefully considered. The applicant met with CDD and the CHC staff during the course of design and responded well to suggestions regarding the design.

The City's "Central Square Development Guidelines" (1987) and "Central Square Design Guidelines" (2013) stress the importance of preserving and enhancing the district's character. The Central Square Development Guidelines stress the importance of the pedestrian experience and recommend enhancing visual interest and accessibility by providing transparency, human scale, rich detail, and sidewalk level entrances. The preservation effort of the existing building responds positively to these recommendations. The applicant does an admirable job of restoring the building façade and its exterior fixtures, maintaining its existing arched façade bays, transparent glazing, and elegant masonry and metalwork details. The restoration of the existing storefronts on Massachusetts Avenue, the improvements to the accessibility of the retail spaces, and the addition of a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly hotel entrance on the Temple Street side help to further this goal. While the linear footage of ground level façade occupied by the bank exceeds zoning's maximum of 25', it is no more than the bank currently occupies.

The "Central Square Development Guidelines" (1987) recommend that new construction be compatible with and sensitive to existing historic structures. "The Central Square Design Guidelines" (2013) recommend that, consistent with the Department of Interior's "Guidelines for the Rehabilitating Historic Buildings," additions to existing historic buildings be architecturally distinguished from them. Cambridge Historical Commission staff have advised CDD that, as a matter of principle, additions to historic buildings should be recessive, and especially so when the historic building is as significant as the Cambridge Gas and Light Building. Staff appreciates the Applicant's willingness to work collaboratively on the design but remains concerned that the appearance of the proposed addition seems to dominate the existing building.

Conceptually, the addition consists of two elements:

- A rectilinear volume at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors, expressed as a “steel frame” with recessed fenestration. Bright bronze angled panels surround the fenestration and seem to amplify the bulk of the addition.
- A supportive structure, glazed and clad with metal panels, consisting of a narrow six-floor-tall addition attached to the rear of the existing building, and the new 4<sup>th</sup> floor units on top of the existing building.

Together, these two elements constitute a six-floor-tall mass that ascends the rear of the existing building and appears to cantilever over it.

CHC and CDD staff offer the following suggestions to avoid visually overwhelming the existing building:

- In accord with the “Central Square Development Guidelines” recommendation that color be appropriate to the historic character of the Square, consider “lightening up the box” by using a color and finish for the large angled panels at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors that are more in keeping with the existing building.
- Reducing the potential for visual competition between the new 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor element and the existing building, both of which currently read as unified rectilinear masses. Consider deemphasizing the color of the sunshades to reduce the strong horizontal banding on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor facades.
- Create a sense of delineation between the new 6 floor vertical element at the rear of the building and both the existing building and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor addition above it. This would help distinguish the new addition from the historic building and strengthen the sense that the new 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor element “floats” independently above the existing building.

Staff looks forward to seeing architectural details, joint and curtainwall mullion patterns and profiles, and other relevant details as the project moves forward.

In accord with the spirit of Cambridge’s Draft “Outdoor Lighting Ordinance”, consideration could be given to eliminating the exterior downlighting indicated in the “reveals” at the top of the façade, and the downlighting on the underside of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor if it can be seen from street level.

### *Sustainability*

The proposed project (project) is subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Section 22.20, which was recently amended in December 2019, requires projects with 25,000-50,000 S.F. GFA to be designed to meet the USGBC LEED Certification, Silver level. Projects over 50,000 S.F. GFA are required to be designed to meet the LEED Gold level.

The Zoning also requires a “Net Zero Narrative” report explaining the measures being taken to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by improving energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy sources. This narrative must explain how the project would reduce energy use and/or maximize savings and efficiency through its current design and operation, and outline a technical pathway that indicates specific strategies or modifications that could be made to the design to achieve future net zero emissions. In this regard, special consideration is given to major energy-influencing factors (e.g., building envelope, HVAC, domestic hot water, lighting, and on- and off-site renewable energy systems).



The proposed project is currently on track to meet the minimum Green Building Requirements. Staff encourages the applicant to look beyond the minimum requirements to pursue the highest level of energy-efficient design as possible. The following are staff highlights, review comments and suggestions:

- According to the Green Building submission, the project is currently proposed to achieve a LEED Gold standard under LEED v4 New Construction and Major Renovation, with 62 “Yes” credit points, and 0 points designated as “possible”. The project is also targeting a 29% improvement (12 points) in energy cost savings over the baseline building performance standard, and also pursuing Enhanced Commissioning Credit, which is a requirement under the recently amended zoning. Envelope commissioning is also pursued, which is encouraged by staff.
- The proposed façade has a low window to wall ratio of 26% and the average u-value of .18 for the vertical façade presumably including the glazing and opaque surfaces. The u value for the new windows is not provided. New windows with higher glazing performance should be considered.
- Staff recognizes that the project’s path to zero carbon is constrained due to many factors including the commitment for preservation of the existing building envelope and the limited size of the new addition. For example, the roof area is relatively small to provide adequate solar ready area for photovoltaic panels. Also, the use of air-to-water electric heat pumps for heating domestic hot water may not be economically viable for hotel uses where the demand for hot water is high. Also due to space limitation in the existing and new addition, the proposed design could reasonably use electric heat pumps for heating and cooling but heating domestic water would be more challenging at this time.
- Staff also appreciate the applicant’s study of on-site renewable energy potential. The limited roof space would allow a roof area of 1,085 S.F. to generate about 14kW of solar photovoltaic capacity, which has the potential to provide 2.2% of the proposed design’s annual building energy use according to the analysis provided. The applicant is making the commitment to purchase off-site clean power, renewable energy certificates (REC’s) and to offset about 97.8% of the building’s annual energy use for 5 years. Staff would hope that after the five-year period suggested by the applicant other attempts be made to address heating the domestic hot water by exploring further upgrades or newer technology in commercial electric air-to water heat pumps to handle the hotel’s domestic hot water use.
- The project’s proposed design advances the use of energy recovery ventilation (ERV) systems for reducing energy consumption. Staff recommends pursuing a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) mechanical system with electric heat pump, as modeled in the Low Carbon Design scenario.
- It is not specified in the submission whether the project will seek certification under the LEED program. If the project is registered with the USGBC and seeking LEED certification, the applicant is requested to provide a USGBC registration number.
- Also, requested is a confirmation as to whether the intent is to pursue LEED Silver or Gold. The Executive Summary in the Zero Carbon Building Assessment sets a LEED v4 Silver certifiable as a goal while the Narrative for LEED Credits in the Sustainability Narrative indicates Gold.
- The design team is encouraged to explore attaining additional (2) credit points for High Priority Site credit in the Location & Transportation category. The project site is in Central Square, a site with development constraints as an infill project, in a business improvement district, and in a

locally designated historic district. The team is also encouraged to pursue LEED's Integrative Design credit.

- Staff also recommends pursuing the additional 2 points in Innovation credits. - Innovation credits related to the building design have to be identified as Innovation credit, Pilot credit, or Exemplary Performance credit by final application stage. Staff's recommendation is to focus on social equity and/or demonstrating through educational programs that preservation of existing buildings rather than demolition is a sustainable practice to reduce embodied carbon emissions.

Staff will continue to work with the Applicant through design review to ensure final compliance. The project will be subject to staff review at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages to certify that it remains in compliance with the Green Building Requirements.

### **Continuing Review**

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends as conditions for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- Provide a revised cover sheet to record the area of all rooftop spaces and describe in the narrative how the impacts on neighboring uses will be minimized as per Section 20.304.3.6.
- Provide calculations of the percentage of clear window glazing on the existing and proposed façade at the ground story.
- Review of all exterior materials, alterations and details with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission.
- A materials mock-up of all exterior wall assemblies for review before the purchase of materials.
- Review of exterior lighting.
- Review of potential additional street trees.
- Consider providing a greater number of long-term bicycle parking spaces.
- Review of rooftop mechanical equipment, and materials and details of any necessary visual/acoustical screening.



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**To:** City of Cambridge Planning Board  
**From:** Central Square Advisory Committee  
**Date:** 9/18/2019  
**Re:** Cambridge Gas & Light Building – 727 Mass Ave

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The Central Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on September 18, 2019 to review and comment on the Gas Light Building LLC and Chevron Partners (the “Applicant”) proposal for a 37-room boutique hotel at 727 Mass Ave. This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions outlined in 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”).

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The Applicant purchased the Cambridge Gas and Light Building over two (2) years ago with the intention of renovating the building. The proposal calls for a substantial renovation and rehabilitation of the historic building and construction of a new hotel addition behind and above the existing building. According to the Applicant, the recently adopted Central Square Restoration Zoning Petition has really been helpful in making this project a reality, specifically with regards to rooftop uses, exemption of retail under 1500 sq.ft., and parking waivers.

Committee members who were present spoke in favor of the Applicant’s proposal, particularly the effort to honor the building’s existing design. Specific questions/comments are as follows:

- ***Have you done any shadow and shade studies?***
  - The new addition will cast some shadows onto the public realm and surrounding buildings, but the bulk of that is already being cast by the existing building.
- ***Why not take up the whole third floor for hotel functions?***
  - It made sense to extend that function from the second floor to the third floor. With the office space on the third floor, it may create opportunities for collaborative uses between the office and hotel uses.
- ***Temple Street is a very narrow street. How would that work for snow removal with the proposed changes?***
  - We are continuing those conversations with the City. Once the hotel begins operations, we will have to figure out the best way to manage this space.
- ***What made you decide to do a hotel and not just housing?***
  - Chevron Partners developed a small hotel management brand here in Boston. Our intention is to develop and manage the hotel itself.
- ***Are these extended stay hotel rooms? Are there kitchenettes?***
  - Our intended client base, our target group, does see it as a benefit to have a kitchenette in the hotel room. The hotel market here is shifting in that direction. Our perspective is to keep this building, and we do not have residential buildings in our portfolio.
- ***Are you expecting the convenience store to stay?***
  - We will discuss this with them, but we don’t know for sure.

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- **Regarding ground-floor retail, I'm assuming you'd be working with the Central Square Business Association on this point? My initial reaction is that we don't need another café in the Square.**
  - There's been some interest on the part of the owner to figure out what opportunities there are in Central Square for retail uses that support what already exists in the Square.
- **Regarding the architectural expression, I do like your approach. Thinking about similar projects in the area, some have quite a bit of detail in their additions. I'll be interested to see how those details are articulated and what the final materials will be on the building. I like the way the proportions are basically the same. In terms of the type panel system will be used here, would it be more of a matte finish or a more glossy, shiny finish?**
  - We are exploring both options right now in combination with the glass. It's a question of the extent to which we mimic the existing building or not.

**Committee Members Present**

- Joel Altstein
- Esther Hanig
- Melissa Greene
- Christopher Sol Gully
- Robert Winters

**Committee Members Absent**

- Tahir Kapoor
- Michael Monestime

**Project Team**

- Julian Bluemle, *Chevron Partners*
- Ozge Diler Himes, *Finegold Alexander Architects*
- Tony Hsiao, *Finegold Alexander Architects*
- Sean Manning, *VHB, Inc.*
- Thomas Murray, *Casali Group, Inc.*
- Sarah Like Rhatigan, *Trilogy Law LLC*

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**Public Questions/Comment**

- **Everybody seems to agree that there is a need for more affordable housing, so I'm not excited about a hotel. I am concerned about the impact to the adjacent building, but that remains to be seen.**
- **I'm concerned about the people who live in the CHA building at 5 Temple Street. How much higher and closer is the proposed addition to the existing building? If people in that building have concerns about this proposal, how could that be expressed?**
  - A community meeting has been scheduled for October 17, 2019 at the Citywide Senior Center.



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- ***Is the alley currently being used for parking/loading? If so, how will that change with this proposal?***
  - With this proposal, we are adding a loading zone to Temple Street. It would not exclusively service this project its supporting uses but service other businesses in the area as well.
- ***What are the approximate rates for this boutique hotel?***
  - We don't know currently. Boston is an expensive market for hotels and our intention is not to be at the high end.
- ***I'm very familiar with this area and I do have a concern with what this change in scale is going to bring to this piece of Central Square, which is quieter, more hospitable, more comfortable. This project is nicely done work, but I'm not comfortable with it at this point being in Central Square.***

submitted on behalf of the Committee,

**Wendell Joseph, Neighborhood Planner**  
Community Development Department