



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER
*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

BETH RUBENSTEIN
*Deputy Director for
Community Development*

To: Robert Healy, City Manager

RS

Date: March 25, 1998

From: Susan Schlesinger, Asst. City Manager, CDD

Re: Council Order #041 Amended Order, dated 3/2/98

**REPORT ON THE JUST A START DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AT 2525
MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

By this memorandum I am transmitting information provided by Just A Start Corporation (JAS) regarding the specific characteristics of the proposed development at 2525 Massachusetts Avenue. Also attached is a zoning code analysis prepared by JAS.

As you know, on Tuesday, March 24, 1998 the City held a meeting at the Burns Apartments on Churchill Avenue. We heard from neighbors and members of the community about their concerns and issues regarding the proposed development. The City and JAS are committed to working with the neighbors to try and seek mutually satisfactory solutions to the issues raised at the meeting.

There is however a critical timing issue related to the acquisition of the property. JAS has a Purchase & Sale Agreement that expires Monday, March 30, 1998. To date, the seller has refused to extend the agreement. If no extension is granted, the City needs to make an immediate decision whether or not to provide the financing that will allow JAS to purchase the property and develop affordable housing on this site. CDD staff are also looking at additional public subsidies needed and their availability, if the density of the project were reduced.

JAS has consulted with the appropriate City departments regarding traffic issues raised by the proposed development. JAS will contract with a qualified firm by March 27, 1998 to perform a traffic study and will then work with a neighborhood committee to determine a comprehensive scope.

Attachments

City Hall Annex
57 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Voice: 617 349-4600
Fax: 617 349-4669
TTY: 617 349-4621

JAS**JUST A START CORPORATION**

P.O. Box 410310 • 432 Columbia Street #12 • Cambridge, MA 02141-0003

Telephone: 617-494-0444 • Fax: 617-494-8348

Riverside/Cambridgeport HIP • 217 Western Ave. 02139

Telephone: 617-497-1110

Just A Start House • 16 Butler Drive • Somerville, MA 02145

Telephone: 617-776-8353

2525 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**Detail Report
March 20, 1998****Design:**

Proposed building is an "L" shaped, three story wood frame building designed to be compatible with the neighborhood in scale and character. The design acknowledges the clear view of the building from the east for the driver or pedestrian as Mass Avenue curves near the linear park. The design enhances pedestrian amenities along the Avenue

by providing a walk-up ATM

by providing a bus shelter, if approved by the MBTA

by continuing the park green space along the recessed front of the building.

Finish of the exterior facade – masonry, wood, colors, landscape materials etc. – is not known at this time and is subject to design consultation with the Planning Board, Community Development Department staff and neighbors.

Density:

Required/Allowed: 28 allowed given lot size

Proposed: 20 units and one ATM (approximately 30% less than allowed)

FAR:

Required/Allowed: 26,150 allowed under base zoning

Proposed: approximately 20,000 residential and 200 ATM
(approximately 30% less than allowed)
Garage of 6,150 sq feet is not included in the FAR calculation

Setbacks/open space/height:

Proposal meets all zoning requirements

Zoning analysis is available

Building is 3 stories (plus roof) at highest point and one story along Churchill and along rear as it meets abutting property.

Trash/Recycling:

There is no "bad" side of the building. The garbage and recycling will be kept in the basement and will be brought out by maintenance staff for pickup on designated day. Will be put near the driveway entrance on Church Street for pickup.

Bikes:

Will be kept in basement bike room (additional bike rack may be added on Mass Ave.)

ATM:

The banking facility will be changed from an automobile oriented banking facility to a walk-up ATM. BankBoston will retain a long term lease on the ATM.

Curb Cuts:

Existing:	3	Two on Churchill (40') and one on Mass Ave. (24')
Proposed:	2	Both on Churchill
		one for garage (24') and one for handicap space (12')
		(measurements are approximate, will be confirmed by survey)

We will be eliminating the curb cut on Mass. Avenue and the curb cut on Churchill Street closest to the Mass/Churchill intersection. We will be adding a curb cut on Churchill Street further from the intersection to accommodate one handicap parking space. This new handicap space is close to the residential abutter and serves as an additional space between that house and this building. We will be reusing one of the existing curb cuts on Churchill for the garage.

Street Parking:

There is currently no marked parking on Massachusetts Avenue in front of the park or this site; but there is room for three cars to park in front of the park. With the closing of the curb cut on Mass Ave. and by shortening the length of the current bus stop posting, 2-3 short term metered parking spaces can be added to Mass Avenue to accommodate the ATM.

Household

Size	Income
one person	\$ 25,200
two person	\$ 28,800
three person	\$ 32,400
four person	\$ 36,000
five person	\$ 38,880
six person	\$ 41,760

Handicap Accessibility:

As required by law, the front entry to the building will be fully handicap accessible and in addition there will be one fully accessible unit. All first floor units will be constructed so that mobility accommodations can be made more readily than in traditional construction. In addition, the entrance to the building closest to Churchill Street will be handicap accessible in order to accommodate movement of a wheelchair from the handicap space into the building.

Environmental:

Like almost every site on North Mass Avenue, this site had an auto/gas history. In the 1930s, before use as a diner, the site had some sort of auto facility on it. There appears to be a buried oil tank on the site which will be removed as part of the development along with any oil contaminated soils.

Bus Stop:

The bus stop shelter is currently on our land and not on the sidewalk. This will have to be relocated during construction and we need to have discussions with MBTA staff about how to permanently accommodate this in the design plan.

Regulatory:

The development needs a Planning Board Special Permit because the proposal is in excess of 12 units. Site is also in Northern Mass Avenue Overlay District requiring design consultation and particular design requirements which have been met. (*Detailed zoning analysis is available*). Application will be made through the BZA for a Comprehensive Permit or through the Planning Board for a Special Permit. Hearing date has not been set but will probably be in April or May. In addition, the curb cut required for the handicap space will require approval by the City Council.

On Site Parking:

Required/Allowed: One space per residential unit and none for the ATM = 20 spaces.

Proposed: 21 - Twenty in the basement garage and one handicap on grade on Churchill.

Traffic:

Currently, outbound traffic enters the site through the Mass Avenue curb cut. Inbound traffic enters the site by turning at the Churchill stoplight and entering through the first Church curb cut. Both inbound and outbound traffic will now enter the site through the lighted intersection of Mass Avenue and Churchill Street.

Currently there is a "No Right Turn" sign as you leave the northern corner of the site on Churchill. This sign will continue to be in place if neighbors desire it.

A traffic study is being commission to determine what, if any, changes in vehicle trips might be experienced on Churchill Street with 20 residential units versus the current use.

Unit Type:

Proposed - 9 two bedroom, 5 one bedroom and 6 three bedroom. Average unit sizes are 550 sq. ft. for a one bedroom, 950 for a two bedroom and 1250 for a three bedroom.

Affordability:

A number of financing and other recorded mechanisms will ensure long term affordability of the units for 50 to 99 years. The precise legal mechanisms have not been developed for this site but will model those in use in many developments throughout Cambridge.

Approximately half of the units will be leased to households with rent subsidies and half will be rented to households without rent subsidies. All households will be working people with income limits shown below. Rents for the subsidized units will be set at the maximum allowable under CHA regulations. Rents for the non-subsidized units will be approximately \$575 for a 1 bedroom, \$700 for a 2-bedroom and \$800 for a 3-bedroom not including tenant paid utilities.

ZONING ANALYSIS 2525 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

1 -Mar-98

Existing Lot Area in Bus. A-2: 13,779 s.f.

Existing Lot Area in Res. C-3: 1,306 s.f.

Total Lot Area: 15,085 s.f.

Art 5

Required

Proposed

Maximum Allowable
F.A.R.:

Bus. A-2 Lot Area X Bus. A-2 F.A.R.
+ Res. C-3 Lot Area X Res. C-3 F.A.R.
or $13,779 \times 1.75 + 1,306 \times 3.0$
28,031.25

20,081 s.f.

Minimum Lot Area:

Bus. A-2 : None
Res. C-3: 5,000

15,085 s.f. (Existing to Remain)

Minimum Lot Area/
Dwelling Unit
or Maximum Number
of Dwelling Units:

Bus. A-2 Lot Area/ Bus. A-2
Min. Lot Area per D.U. +
Res. C-3 Lot Area/ Res. C-3
Min. Lot Area per D.U. or
 $13,779 / 600 + 1306/300$
27 dwelling units

20 Dwelling Units

Minimum Lot Width:

Bus. A-2: None
Res. C-3: 50'

147.6' (Existing to Remain)

Minimum Yards:Front:

@ Mass. Ave.

Bus. A-2: 5'
Res. C-3: N/A

5'

@ Churchill Ave.

Bus. A-2: 5'
Res. C-3: N/A (No Portion of the
Proposed Building Sits Within This
Zone Along Churchill Ave.)

5'

South Side:
(@ Clarendon St.
Park)

Bus. A-2: 10'
Res. C-3: N/A

10'

East Side:

Bus. A-2: 10'
Res. C-3: N/A (No portion of the
Proposed Building Sits Within This
Zone)

10'

Max. Building Height:

Bus. A-2: 45' (Refer to Footnote
'K' Section 5.33, Paragraph 2)
Res. C-3: 120'
*In accordance with NoMassAve design guidelines
cornice height of main building is 31 feet and steps
down to 13 feet at Churchill and near neighbor to rear*

45'

Min. Open Space:

Bus. A-2: None
Res. C-3: 10% or 130.6 s.f.

1,974 s.f.

City of Cambridge Zoning Code Analysis (Continued)

	Required	Proposed
<u>Art 6</u> <u>Number of Parking</u> <u>Spaces</u>	Bus. A-2: 1/Dwelling Unit or 20 Res. C-3: 1/Dwelling Unit or 20	20 21 (Including One Van Accessible Handicapped Parking Space.
<u>Art. 11 Section 11.100</u> <u>Massachusetts Avenue</u> <u>Overlay District</u>		
<u>Sect. 11.104.1</u> <u>Max. Building Height:</u>	60'	45'
<u>Sect. 11.105:</u>	Proposed Building Provides Expansion of Existing Public Sidewalk and/or New Green Space Along Principal Street Facade as per this Section.	
<u>Sect. 11.106:</u>	The Ground (First) Floor Facing the Principal Arterial Street (Massachusetts Ave.), and a Public Park (At Massachusetts Ave. and Clarendon St.) will be Devoted to Residential use only as per this Section. The ground (first) floor level is no more than 4'-6" above the mean grade of the adjacent public sidewalk and public park at the property line.	
<u>Sect. 11.107:</u>	Proposed Building Provides Between 25% and 75% Clear Glass on Facades Facing Massachusetts and Churchill Avenues and the Public Park at the Corner of Massachusetts and Clarendon Avenues. The Principal Building Entrance is on Mass. Ave. as per this Section.	



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307



8.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 30, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 18, regarding a report on the Just-A-Start development proposal at 2525 Massachusetts Avenue, received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Susan Schlesinger.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment

Consent Agenda #8

Relative to a reprot on
the Just-A-Start development
proposal at 2525 Massachusetts
Avenue.

IneCity Council March 30, 1998

PLACED ON FILE