

**MEMORANDUM**

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2013**

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT  
REVIEW  
MICHAEL CANNIZZO, SENIOR ARCHITECT/ URBAN DESIGNER  
TYLER NOROD, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** 1480-1486 TREMONT STREET, MISSION HILL

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) authorize the Director to: (1) issue a Determination pursuant to Article 80, Section 80A-6 of the Boston Zoning Code (“Code”) for the 1480-1486 Tremont Street Project, located in Mission Hill (the “Proposed Project”); (2) issue a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 of the Code upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process for the Proposed Project; and (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction and a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan, along with any and all other agreements and documents that the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with Article 80B review of the Proposed Project.

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**LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Proposed Project site is approximately 37,647 square feet located at 1480-1486 Tremont Street in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Boston (the “Project Site”). The Project Site is located on the south side of Tremont Street across from the Tobin Community Center. The Project Site is bordered by Tremont Street to the north, Burney Street to the west, and Sewall Street to the east.

Properties and land uses surrounding the Project Site include a mix of residential and commercial uses along Tremont Street, as well as single-, two-, and multi-family residential buildings, institutional buildings, and open space (Mission Hill Playground/Sheehy Park).

The Project Site currently contains a single-story 6,800 square foot commercial brick and block building on the northwest portion of the Site. The building is occupied by Boston

Clutch Works, an automotive replacement parts distributor and retailer. The remaining portions of the Site are devoted to surface parking and paving.

The Site is run down and poorly lit at night. As a result, the neighborhood has expressed concern that the Project Site attracts undesirable activities after dark. Therefore, the current use and condition of the property is no longer compatible with the surrounding Mission Hill neighborhood and community.

### **PROJECT BACKGROUND; ARTICLE 80 REVIEW**

On April 24, 2006, the Aspen Group (the "Prior Proponent") submitted a Project Notification Form (PNF) to the BRA, in accordance with the Large Project Review requirements of Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code"). As described in the PNF, the Prior Proponent planned to demolish the existing building and construct a five-story building for the provision of sixty-six (66) units, approximately 2,000 square feet of first-floor commercial space, seventy-two (72) parking spaces and 3,459 square feet of green space (the "Previously Approved Project").

On July 20, 2006, the BRA voted to authorize the issuance of a Scoping Determination Waiving Further Review, which Scoping Determination was issued on July 27, 2006.

On March 22, 2007, the Prior Proponent filed a Notice of Project Change (the "First NPC"), pursuant to Section 80A-6 of the Code, for approval of a proposed modification from condominium units to rental housing. On April 24, 2007, the BRA voted to authorize the issuance of a determination under Section 80A-6 of the Code finding that the First NPC adequately described the potential impacts of the project and provided sufficient mitigation measures to minimize those impacts.

On June 4, 2013, Trellis Group, LLC (the "Proponent"), filed a Letter of Intent to file a second NPC (the "Second NPC"). The Second NPC was filed with the BRA on June 28, 2013. The public meeting was advertised in the Mission Hill Gazette.

The Previously Approved Project proposed the same number of residential units but provided twenty-one (21) additional parking spaces, twenty (20) of which were outside in the buildings rear. The Proposed Project calls for an increase of approximately 4,000 square feet of retail space along Tremont Street. In addition, the Proposed Project will now include 88 spaces for bicycle parking in comparison to only thirty-seven (37) spaces within the Previously Approved Project. The building's height, approximate square footage and FAR have largely remained the same between the two proposals.

A scoping session was held on July 17, 2013 with the city's public agencies at which the Proposed Project was reviewed and discussed. The Second NPC notice and the Second NPC were sent to the City's public agencies pursuant to Section 80A-2 of the Code. The

Proponent conducted one (1) public meeting for the community's review and comment on August 19, 2013 at the Tobin Community Center on Tremont Street in Mission Hill across the street from the Project Site. The Proponent has also met numerous times with residents of Mission Hill.

### **PROPOSED PROJECT**

The Proposed Project will demolish the existing structure on the Project Site and construct an approximately 75,000 square feet residential building with two ground floor retail spaces fronting Tremont Street. The Proposed Project will be a 5-story multi-family residential rental building containing sixty-six (66) units with parking on the first floor and residential units on floors 2 through 5, sixty (60) enclosed parking spaces and approximately 6,200 square feet of retail space. The proposal calls for revisions to the building's massing and design to achieve a better sense of scale and offer a more urban design to the neighborhood.

The Proposed Project is estimated to cost approximately \$15.5 million. Construction is anticipated to commence in the fourth quarter of 2013 with an expected completion date within the first quarter of 2015.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Of the sixty-six (66) residential units within the Proposed Project, one unit will be created as affordable housing as agreed to as part of the Previously Approved Project. The one (1) studio unit will be available to households earning at or below seventy percent (70%) of the Area Median Income ("Affordable Unit"). The Proponent will enter into an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction ("ARHA") with the BRA for the Affordable Unit. The ARHA must be executed along with, or prior to, issuance of the Certification of Compliance. The Proponent will submit an Affirmative Marketing Plan ("Plan") to the Boston Fair Housing Commission and the BRA, which shall be approved along with the execution of the ARHA. Preference for the Affordable Unit will be given to applicants who meet the following criteria, weighed in the order below:

- (1) Boston resident;
- (2) Household size (a minimum of one [1] person per bedroom); and

The Affordable Unit will not be marketed prior to the submission and approval of the Plan. A deed restriction will be placed on the Affordable Unit to maintain affordability for a total period of fifty (50) years (this includes thirty (30) years with an option to extend for an additional period of (20) years. The household income of any subsequent purchaser of the Affordable Unit during this fifty (50) year period may not exceed the maximum income established of 70% AMI.

## **ZONING**

The Proposed Project is located within the Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict of the Mission Hill Neighborhood District. Because the Proposed Project is in compliance with the provisions of the local zoning code, the Proposed Project is considered “as-of-right” and requires no variances.

## **PUBLIC BENEFITS**

The Proposed Project will result in a number of public benefits for the Mission Hill community, as well as for the City of Boston. These benefits include:

- The creation of much needed residential housing;
- Creating a more walkable, pedestrian friendly site and area through improved street frontage along Tremont Street;
- Improve neighborhood safety by eliminating questionable and illegal activities, that property currently attracts, particularly at night;
- Developing a project that is consistent with community planning and zoning objectives;
- Providing additional tax revenue to the City of Boston;
- The creation of construction-related employment opportunities;
- The creation of retail-related and building management employment opportunities; and
- The Proponent has come to an agreement with the local community for putting rental/occupancy restrictions in place for undergraduates.

## **PROJECT TEAM**

The Proponent is a Boston based developer focused on creating mixed-use buildings through the preservation and reuse of historic properties or through the construction of new, context sensitive buildings. The principals of the Trellis Group, LLC have been working in the Mission Hill neighborhood for thirteen years. They have restored a number of the neighborhood’s historic structures, and have constructed several new infill projects as well. As a company, Trellis Group, LLC is committed to implementing

the principles of New Urbanism, which promote the creation and preservation of walkable, human scaled places that enhance local economies, improve public health, and build stronger communities. The Proponent has hired Hacin & Associates, Inc. to lead the Proposed Project’s design and is represented by Shadrawy & Rabinovitz as the Proponent’s legal counsel. The remaining team members include the Principle Group as development consultants, Brown Richardson + Rowe as landscape architects, Soden Sustainability Consulting for LEED services, Mitchell L. Fischman Consulting, LLC as permitting consultants, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc. as transportation consultants and The Strategy Group as the team’s outreach consultant.

Trellis Group, LLC has formed a new single purpose entity known as 1480-1486 Tremont Street, LLC that will hold title to the project and be the entity that enters into the Article 80 agreements with the BRA.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approvals have been requested of the BRA for the issuance of a Determination pursuant to Section 80A-6 of the Code, and for the issuance of a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process.

BRA staff believes that the Second NPC meets the criteria for the issuance of a Determination pursuant to Section 80A-6 of the Code finding that the Second NPC adequately describes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and provides sufficient mitigation measures to minimize those impacts. It is therefore recommended that the BRA authorize the Director to (1) issue a Determination pursuant to Article 80, Section 80A-6 of the Code for the Proposed Project; (2) issue a Certification of Compliance under Section 80B-6 for the Proposed Project upon successful completion of the Article 80 review process; (3) execute and deliver a Cooperation Agreement, an Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction and a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan in connection with the Proposed Project.

Appropriate votes follow:

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Determination under Section 80A-6 of the Boston Zoning Code, which finds that the Notice of Project Change submitted by Trellis Group, LLC adequately describes the potential impacts of the Proposed Project and provides sufficient mitigation measures to minimize those impacts (, subject to continuing design review by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”); and

**FURTHER**

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Compliance for the Proposed Project, upon the successful completion of all Article 80 processes; and

**FURTHER**

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute a Cooperation Agreement, a Boston Residents Construction Employment Plan and Affordable Rental Housing Agreement and Restriction along with any and all other agreements and documents which the Director deems appropriate and necessary in connection with the Proposed Project all upon terms and conditions determined to be in the best interests of the Authority