



Kenmore Dead Spot May See New Life

by Ashlee Fairey
Courant News Writer

The old Waterman Funeral Home at 493 Commonwealth Avenue recently came on the market, heralding the revival of a lifeless building in Kenmore Square.

“It could be a lively development, but unfortunately it got caught in the economic turmoil,” and has been sitting without an

intended purpose for six years, said Pam Beale, president of the Kenmore Square Association.

The four-story, approximately 20,000-square-foot building, built in 1899, was long used as an independent funeral home. In the new millennium, however, “They just didn’t have as many funerals, and it was an enormous facility,” Beale said.

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Community Will Benefit From Abbey Group Plan



The site of The Abbey Group’s proposed project

by Ashlee Fairey
Courant News Writer

Developers wanting to build a 16-story mixed-use development at 1282 Boylston Street are providing several community benefits, winning the support of neighborhood groups.

The 337,000-square-foot building,

developed by The Abbey Group, would offer ground-floor retail space, three floors of office space, a 295-space underground parking lot, and 210 residential units ranging from studios to three-bedrooms, according to plans filed with the city last week. Of those units, 21 would be affordable housing.

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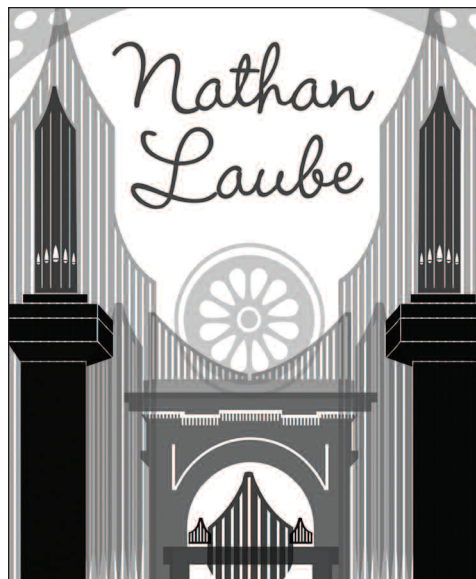
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Waterman

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It was sold in 2005 to Kimco Realty Corporation, a real estate investment trust that owns and manages shopping centers across the country. The company's vision was to convert the funeral home into high-end condos.

Plans were foiled about three years into the project, however, when it became apparent that parking could not be constructed in the basement, according to Beale.

After the project was abandoned, the owners received several unsolicited offers, though the property was not formally on the market, said Jason Weissman, principal and founder of Boston Realty

Advisors.

But two weeks ago, the property was exclusively listed with Boston Realty Advisors and is being aggressively marketed. There is no asking price; three rounds of offers will be fielded.

"We put together a very in-depth marketing program to expose the property to potential purchasers," Weissman said. "It's unbelievable the amount of activity. We have hundreds of registered people who have requested information through the website. (The property) is highly coveted."

Local institutions and condo developers have expressed interest, Weissman said, with some envisioning an entirely residential project and others proposing ground-floor retail.

"I think people would like to see it become residential, because it's a residential block," Beale said.

FENWAY TO DOS

Tuesday, July 19. East Fens police and community meeting. Morville House, 100 Norway Street. 6 pm.

Wednesday, July 20. West Fens police and community meeting. Landmark Center, District 4 Office, second floor, 410 Park Drive. 5 pm.

Thursday, July 21. Office hour with state Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz or

a member of her staff. Espresso Royale, 44 Gainsborough Street. 9-10 am.

Tuesday, July 26. Board of Appeal hearing. YMCA of Greater Boston Inc. seeks a GCOD at the YMCA, 316 Huntington Avenue, to relocate existing sewer lines and to renovate building. Boston City Hall, Room 801. 10:30 am.



Church of St. John Evangelist

Wednesday, July 20. Tom Duprey and Jared Sims perform Jean Rivier's "Concerto for Trumpet and Saxophones" and jazz originals. 5:30 pm. Free. 227-5242.

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Ongoing. Tours of the Mother Church. View the original structure and the extension. Tuesday, 12 to 4 pm; Wednesday, 1 to 4 pm; Thursday-Saturday, 12 to 5 pm; Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm. Free. 450-3244.

King's Chapel

Tuesday, July 19. The Tunefoolery ensemble performs. 12:15 pm. \$3 suggested donation. 227-2155.

Tuesday, July 21. Heinrich Christensen performs "Bach and More" on the C.B. Fisk organ. 12:15 pm. Free. 227-2155.

Ongoing. Tours, including the Bell &

Bones Tour, except during worship and special services. Monday-Saturday, 10 am-4 pm; and Sunday, 1:30-4 pm. Free. 227-2155.

Old South Church

Ongoing. Jazz Worship service featuring live music from the Willie Sordillo Trio. Thursdays at 6 pm. Free. 536-1970.

Ongoing. "Venice at Copley Square." Tour and lecture on the structure and design of the church's Ruskinian Italian Gothic sanctuary. Sundays at 9:45 am and 12:15 pm, Thursdays at 6:45 pm. Free. 536-1970.

Vilna Shul

Ongoing. The Reconnect to the Tapestry exhibit and a culturally focused tour with new facts and stories about the people and history of the north slope of Beacon Hill and the Vilna Shul. Hourly tours on Wednesday-Friday, 11 am to 5 pm; Sunday, 1 to 5 pm; and by appointment. Free. 523-2324.

Abbey Group

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"They are building their affordable units on-site. That's important to us," said Dharmena Downey, executive director of the Fenway Community Development Corporation (CDC). Off-site affordable housing "is starting to mean outside of the Fenway, and we just lost nearly 10 percent of our affordable housing, which has pretty dire consequences for low-income people."

Developers will also pay \$135,000 in linkage fees, as required by the city, which will go toward additional affordable housing and job creation within the neighborhood.

Offering a benefit not dictated by the city, The Abbey Group responded to the CDC's request for community meeting space. The area would be attached to a ground-floor eatery, and available to neighborhood groups and residents on either a reservation or first-come, first-served basis.

"(It) speaks to their willingness to support the needs of people in the community," Downey said.

The site, previously a McDonalds drive-through, is being used as a 169-space parking lot.

"It's a good start," Fenway Civic Association President Bill Richardson said of the project. "It's promising that something will be developed there, that it will cease to be a parking lot."

The Abbey Group is a familiar name with the Fenway community, having developed Landmark Center and the Landmark Square apartment building on Peterborough Street.

"We've had a good rapport with them as developers," said Fenway resident Ed Burke. "They came up with a good, solid plan and did a nice job."

This project joins several other developments recently built along Boylston Street, including Steve Samuels' 1330 Boylston Street and Trilogy mixed-use buildings.

Construction could begin as early as April 2012 and is expected to last about two years.

Wiring

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workmanship," said Jerry Frank, president of the Union Park Neighborhood Association.

"We do not know who did the taping; it's not a repair method that the city or our contractor would ever use," said Matt Mayrl, DPW chief of staff, adding that contractor work is monitored.

Mayrl said it is possible the poles have been taped for a while, because the city relies on citizens to file these types of reports. Mayrl added that the covers are prone to theft because they are made of valuable metals, like aluminum. The covers should be secured with two screws.

"We take missing pole doors very seri-

ously ... as they are a potential stray voltage situation," Mayrl said.

A streetlight of this type could have voltage of 120, 277 or 480 volts, said Jeff Sargent, a senior electrical specialist at the National Fire Protection Association. The voltage of household outlets and plugs range from 110 to 220 volts, and voltages less than 1,000 are unlikely to cause severe injury, according to the International Association of Fire Fighters. Sargent added the wires in the streetlight are likely insulated.

Additionally, Sargent said not properly covering the wiring exposes them to the elements, which could result in operational difficulties.

After being informed of the situation by *The Boston Courant*, DPW vowed to fix the problem poles.

MGH

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"When we have more MGH staff, that actually helps local businesses, because there are more people and more activity in the area for restaurants and hotels," Elrick said. "We're a good neighbor, or we like to think of ourselves as one. I think the more people that are here, the better it is for the local economy."

MGH has historically generated customers for many Cambridge Street businesses, employees say.

"Almost all my regulars are from the hospital, and on average, 50 percent of my customers are from the hospital, especially for lunch," said Beacon Hill Tavern bartender Samantha Ciarocco, gesturing at tables with MGH employees to her right and left.

Patients also often wander into the bar, located across the street from MGH.

"They say, 'I've had the worst day talking to the doctor. Can I please have a Bud Light?' And the next time they're in Boston they come to say hi, even when they're not in the hospital," Ciarocco said.

The Federal restaurant also benefits from its proximity to the hospital.

"We see a lot of MGH customers. It's usually deliveries for doctors and nurses, but occasionally we get patients," said employee Victor Diaz.

Boston Flowers gets about six delivery calls to the hospital each week, and Simmons Liquors sells wine and liquor to visiting families and employees coming off the late shift.

With the opening of the Lunder Building, "I think we'll get a little bit more business," said Simmons Liquors Manager Ron Buisette.