

CHARLESTOWN BATALION ARMORY DRAFT RFP DESCRIPTION & DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The building is a large, Georgian revival masonry structure built in 1907, featuring architectural details such as a partial gable slate roof and decorative cast stone and lentils. The Armory, which fills an entire block on Bunker Hill Street between Auburn and Baldwin Streets, provided drill space for four local military companies, including the 192nd Infantry Regiment, the oldest combat regiment in the United States army. The land area of the site is approximately 47,567 square feet with approximately 38,400 square feet of space contained in the building. The building has different levels ranging from one to three at various locations, as well as a sub-basement level.

In 1968, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Armory Commission deeded the Armory to the Trustees of the Boston Public Library (BPL). The BPL used the Armory as a book depository, most recently housing the Jordan Collection, the largest collection of children's books in the world. In 2010, The Trustees of the BPL, after rehousing the Jordan Collection in West Roxbury, deeded the Armory to the City of Boston and surplused it to the care and custody of the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), Public Facilities Commission.

The site is located in the Bunker Hill / West Middlesex Canal area of Charlestown, between Auburn and Baldwin Streets, one block from a neighborhood park and less than one half mile from the Sullivan Square orange line MBTA stop. Whole Foods is currently renovating a former community grocery store serving as the anchor in a small shopping center located approximately 2/3 of a mile from this site. The Whole Foods expects to open in the fall of 2013. The shopping center also currently houses a U.S. Post Office, bank, CVS Pharmacy, hardware store and chain restaurants.

Bunker Hill Community College and its Community College orange line MBTA stop are located just beyond the shopping center. The Armory sits directly on an MBTA bus route with a bus stop in front of the building.

SURVEY AND TITLE OF PROPERTY

DND commissioned a survey of the property in the fall of 2012. The survey and a title search revealed that the original assembling of the property involved three separate land takings by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. When the Commonwealth deeded the property to the BPL, the property deeded did not account for two of the takings. As a result, two land strips exist on borders of the property that are still technically owned by the Commonwealth. DND is offering only the property currently owned by DND, but not the two strips still owned by the Commonwealth. DND is engaged in a parallel process to acquire these parcels but makes no representations about its ability to complete that acquisition.

While DND has conducted a title examination of the property, DND makes no warranty or representation as its accuracy and recommends that developers conduct their own title examinations.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

PROPERTY CONDITION. DND is offering the property in this RFP in “as is” condition. All utilities, infrastructure and site improvements and access improvements will be the responsibility of the developer. DND does not represent that there are any existing utilities at the sites and it is the responsibility of the developer to improve the site conditions. The developer is responsible for testing and remediating any hazardous or contaminated environmental conditions that may exist.

HISTORIC ELEMENTS Developers must agree to redevelop the site in a manner that is contextual with the neighborhood and historic significance of the property. The name “Charlestown Battalion Armory” must be maintained, along with any historically significant signage or plaques contained in the building. In addition, the community has expressed a desire for the incorporation of an exhibit or memorial in the building to attest to the significance of the military companies and individuals once occupying this space and their role in the United States of America, as well as the Charlestown community.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES: A developer must address each of the following considerations as articulated by the community, in a development concept narrative, construction description narrative and design documents submitted:

USES

- Preferred use is residential, preferably homeownership. Limited commercial uses for a part of the property are acceptable provided that the proposed uses have limited noise and traffic impacts
- The proposed development should include a reasonable number of family-sized units of three or more bedrooms in the residential unit mix.
- The proposed development should be market rate with no public subsidies. Affordable units should be limited to the requirements of the Inclusionary Development Policy
- The proposed development should provide sufficient onsite parking for all residents, with a preference for two spaces per residential unit

DESIGN

- The design should seek to preserve the structural integrity, decorative historic elements, basic roofline and footprint of the Armory.
- Any new construction elements or exterior changes to the existing building should be contextual with the existing neighborhood in terms of height, scale, massing, construction materials and visual appearance.
- The design should minimize any increase in traffic, particularly as it impacts direct abutters.

- The design must also address the treatment of retaining walls on certain borders of the site.
- The design should not include any excavation activities that could undermine the structural integrity of the foundations of abutting properties
- The design must address any drainage issues that it creates that impact abutters
- The design should provide adequate buffering for the abutters including well-designed green space where appropriate.

CONSTRUCTION

- The construction plan must demonstrate how it will mitigate construction impacts on abutters during the construction period and the developer must have the capacity to complete the development quickly and efficiently to minimize disruption to abutters.
- The construction plan should be cognizant of the building's former military use and be able to address potential environmental hazards present, including but not limited to, asbestos in the boiler room, lead paint in various areas, and above ground oil tanks located in an exterior vault.
- Green construction technology and techniques are preferred.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENT

Pursuant to the Mayor's Executive Order relative to Inclusionary Development, any development resulting from the disposition of property owned by the City of Boston that has ten or more units is subject to the City's Inclusionary Development Policy. This policy requires that any such covered development set aside 15% of the market rate units as affordable units. At least 50% of the affordable ownership units must be affordable to households earning no more than 80% of the Area Median Income for Boston Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), with the remaining affordable ownership units being affordable to households earning less than 100% of the Area Median Income. All affordable rental units must be affordable to households with incomes under 70% of the Area Median Income.

The design, quality and materials of the affordable housing units must be indistinguishable from the base market rate units. Plans shall demonstrate that affordable units are proportional in size to market rate units, with a preference for larger units suitable for families. The affordable units must be distributed throughout the building and not all situated in one particular location.

DEVELOPER SELECTION PROCESS

DND's property disposition process operates in accordance with Massachusetts General Law (MGL), Chapter 30B which governs municipal property dispositions. Under this law, all qualified proposals must be ranked according to a specified set of comparative evaluation criteria and the City selects the proposal with the highest overall ranking. DND's Requests For Proposals include the following ranking criteria:

Development Concept: How well does the development concept achieve the objectives set out by the City and Community in the RFP? Community review/support is a required component of scoring this criterion.

Design: How well does the design fit into the community and does it provide for quality construction and energy efficiency? Community review/support is a required component of scoring this criterion.

Proposed Pro Forma: Does the developer's proposed sources and uses of funding appear reasonable and feasible?

Financial Capacity: Has the development team demonstrated they have the financial capacity to successfully execute their proposed development plan?

Development Team Experience: Does the development team demonstrate that it has sufficient relevant experience to successfully execute their proposed development plan?

Development Timetable: Does the developer propose to execute their development plan in an expeditious manner?

Additional ranking criteria may be added to accommodate specialized conditions of individual properties.