

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ

*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

To: Richard C. Rossi, City Manager

From: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Charles Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission

Date: December 16, 2015

RE: Policy Order #8 dated September 21, 2015 regarding zoning and building potential along Cambridge Street and Gore Street, between Second Street and Third Street

This memo is in response to the above mentioned policy order regarding the parcels along Cambridge Street and Gore Street, between Second and Third streets. Residents have expressed concerns about the recent sale and potential redevelopment of the property at the corner of Third and Cambridge streets. Future development on the parcel would be influenced by the zoning and subject to review by the Historical Commission.

Historical Commission Review

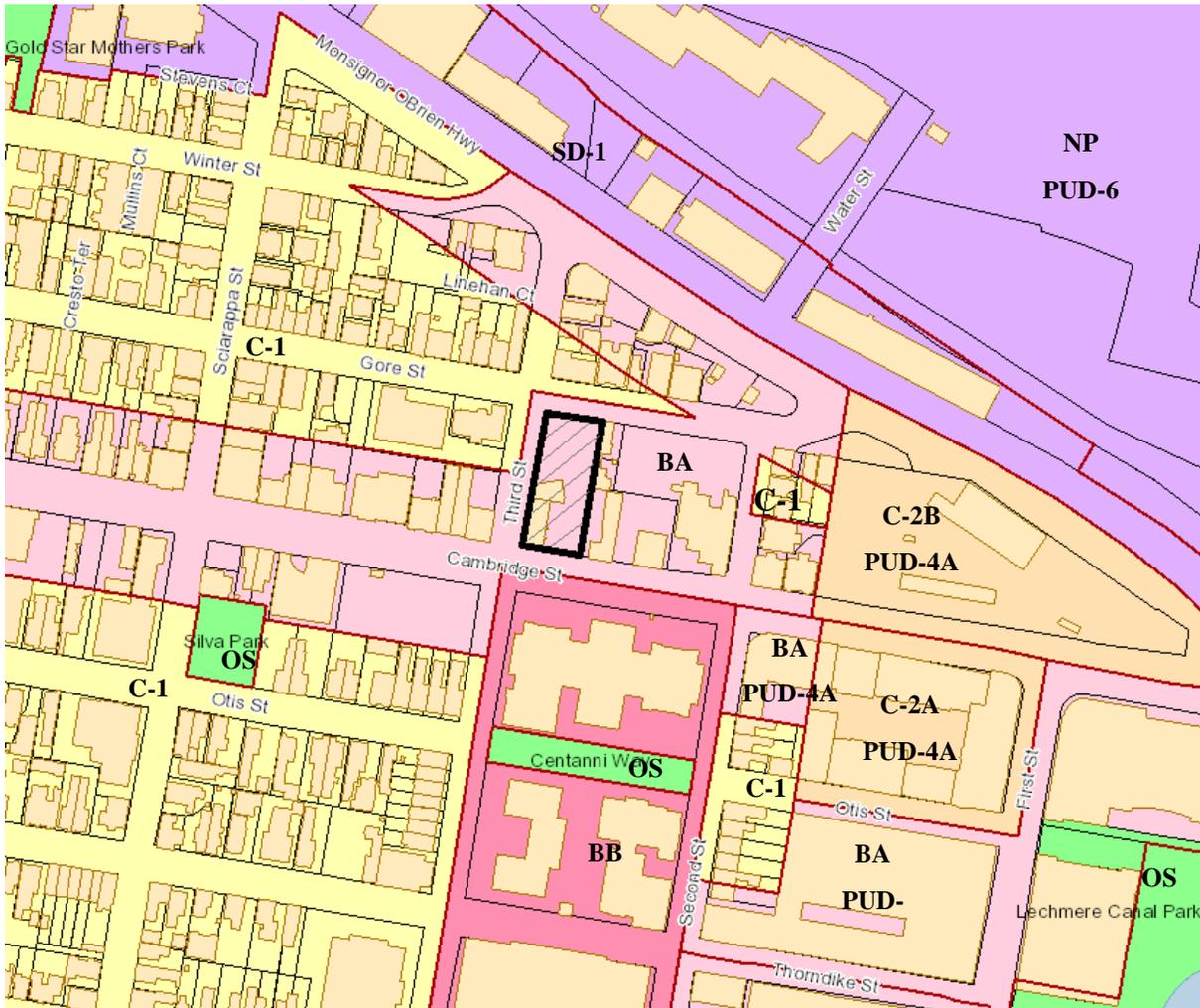
The Executive Director of the Historical Commission considers the building at 225 Cambridge Street (originally the Middlesex County National Bank, built in 1917) to be a significant building as per the city's Demolition Delay ordinance (Ch. 2.78 Art. II). The Commission will hold a public hearing to review a demolition request if the property is redeveloped.

If the Historical Commission confirms the significance of the building it would seek to determine the public interest in delaying the demolition versus allowing a proposed project to proceed. If the bank is found to be a "preferably preserved significant building," then demolition could be delayed for up to six months.

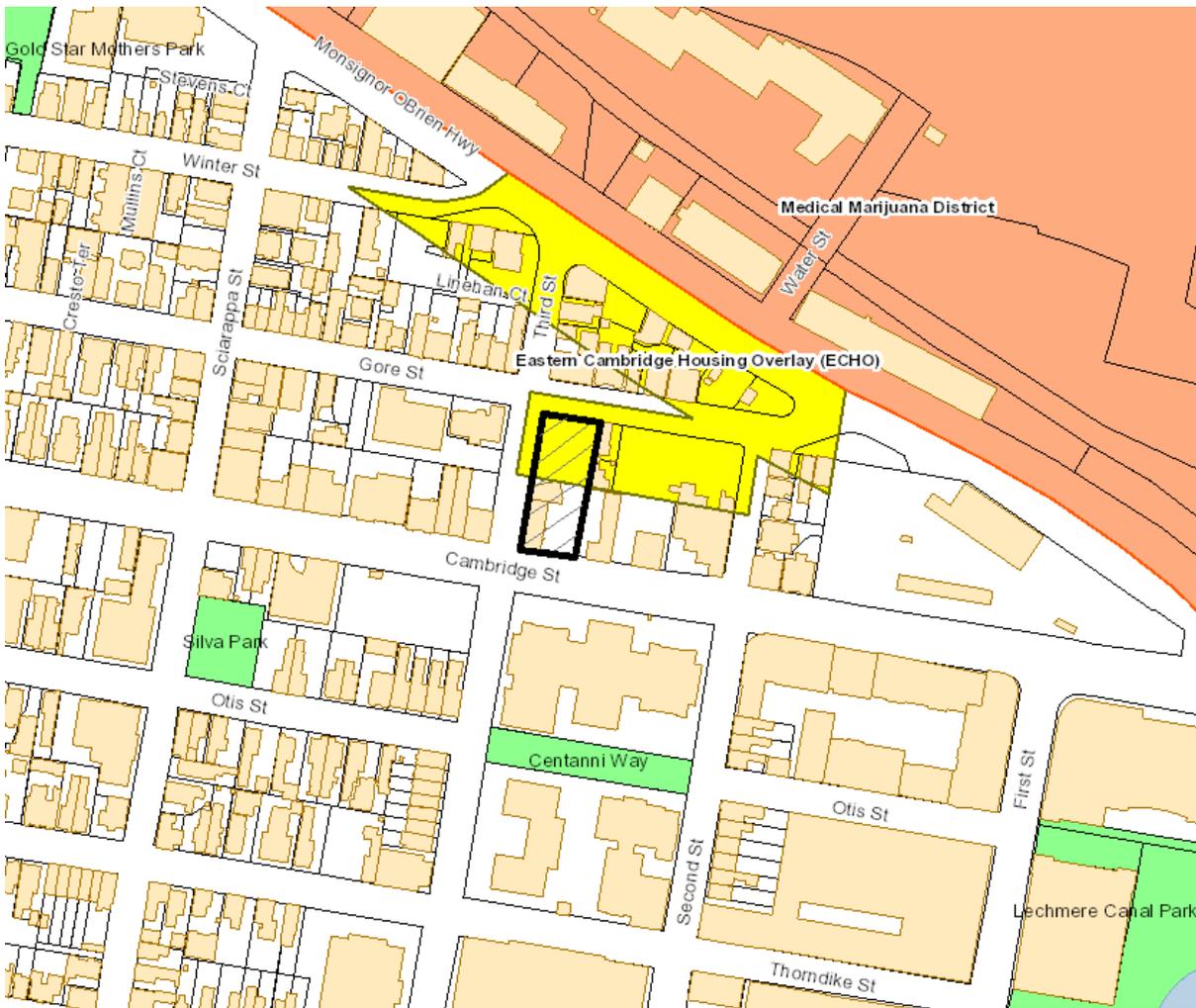
In addition, the Historical Commission routinely holds a hearing in the fifth month of a demolition delay to consider whether the building should be studied for landmark designation. If the Commission initiates a landmark designation study the building would be protected for up to an additional year while it prepares a recommendation to the City Council.

Zoning Districts

The parcels bound by Cambridge Street, Second Street, Gore Street and Third Street are entirely located in the Business A (BA) District in East Cambridge, which covers most of the Cambridge Street commercial corridor. There is a Residence C-1 District to the north and east and a Business B District to the south. The northern half of the block is also located within the Eastern Cambridge Housing Overlay (ECHO) District, which provides additional incentives for residential uses (see following page).



Zoning Districts



Overlay Zoning Districts

Existing Uses

The existing principal uses are permitted by right in the BA zone. The largest parcel in the block is used by the City as a fire station. The other uses include a bank, offices, a mixed-use building with residences above an office, and two single family homes. Generally speaking, development of higher density is allowed for residential and non-residential uses than what currently exists on many of the parcels, particularly sites that are dominated by surface parking.



Aerial View

(1 – bank; 2 – fire station; 3 - offices; 4 - mixed-use building with residences above an office; 5 & 6 – single family home)

Development Allowed by Zoning

The tables below summarize the major zoning requirements for development in this district. Overall, the zoning allows residential, commercial or mixed-use development of moderate density in buildings of up to three or four stories. The zoning provides some incentives that favor residential development; however, the zoning also imposes stricter yard (setback) requirements for residential uses than commercial uses. Off-street parking and bicycle parking would be required for new uses. Zoning provides incentives for parking to be located below-grade, though there may be economic advantages to providing on-grade parking due to the high construction costs of below-grade parking.

Any development of at least 20,000 square feet would be required to seek a Project Review Special Permit from the Planning Board. The Planning Board would review the project's conformance with the citywide urban design objectives in Article 19.000 of the Zoning Ordinance. For development in the ECHO district, the Board would also review the project's conformance with the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines.

Requirements in Business A (BA), Outside ECHO District

Zoning Requirement	Non-Residential Use	Residential Use
Maximum FAR	1.00	1.75
Maximum Height	35 feet	45 feet
Allowed Unit Density	N/A	600 SF lot area per unit
Minimum Front Yard	None	10 feet (or more by formula)
Minimum Side Yards	None	According to formula
Minimum Rear Yard	20 feet (or more)	20 feet (or more by formula)
Minimum Open Space	None	15% of lot area
Required Parking	Varies by Use	One space per unit

Requirements in Business A (BA), Inside ECHO District

Zoning Requirement	Non-Residential Use	Residential Use
Maximum FAR	1.00	2.00
Maximum Height	35 feet	45 feet
Allowed Unit Density	N/A	300 SF lot area per unit (where total FAR is at least 2.00)
Minimum Front Yard	None	10 feet (or more by formula)
Minimum Side Yards	None	According to formula
Minimum Rear Yard	20 feet (or more)	20 feet (or more by formula)
Minimum Open Space	None	15% of lot area
Required Parking	Varies by Use	One space per unit