




West

		SECTIONS	 MY SAVED	
NEWS	▶	METRO		
ARTS	▶	BUSINESS		▶
SPORTS	▶	OPINION		▶
LIFESTYLE	▶	MAGAZINE		▶
INSIDERS	▶	TODAY'S PAPER		▶
LOTTERY	▶	OBITUARIES		▶
GLOBE NORTH	▶	GLOBE SOUTH		▶
GLOBE WEST	▶	GETTING IN		▶

West

New plan calls for hotel, apartments, businesses at Cleveland Circle

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT AUGUST 19, 2012

 ARTICLE

 COMMENTS



THE BOSTON GLOBE /FILE 2008

A view of the intersection where Boston Development Group is proposing to build a mixed-use development, including a hotel and luxury apartments, at the site of the former Circle Cinema (right) and an Applebee's.

[PRINT](#) [REPRINTS](#) [E-MAIL](#) [SHARE](#) ▼

A developer has filed new plans with officials in Boston and Brookline to build a five-story building in Cleveland Circle with a 181-room Hilton Garden Inn hotel and 82 luxury apartments, along with space for offices, restaurant and retail establishments, and parking.

The mixed-use project, revised substantially from original plans presented more than a year ago, would replace an Applebee's restaurant in Boston's Brighton neighborhood, and the vacant Circle Cinema next door, which overlaps the Brighton-Brookline border, according to John Meunier, project manager for Boston Development Group.

The project is contingent on getting approval from both Boston and Brookline officials, but the developer hopes to begin construction next spring and finish the project in 18 months, Meunier said.

“We’re excited and looking forward to the public process,” Meunier said in an interview. “We’ll continue to work with both communities to make this a project a success.”

The 236,500-square-foot building would include 19,000 square feet of medical office space and 14,200 square feet of ground-floor retail and restaurant space, he said. The project would have 141 parking spaces in a garage below the building, along with 87 other parking spots in a surface lot behind it.

The apartments would be a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, according to a summary of the plans.

All of the housing would be built in Brighton; all of the office space would be on the Brookline side. Portions of the other uses would be built in each of the two municipalities, including at least 40 hotel rooms in Brookline.

Those staying in the hotel portion and those living in the apartments would have access to an indoor pool and fitness center, Meunier said.

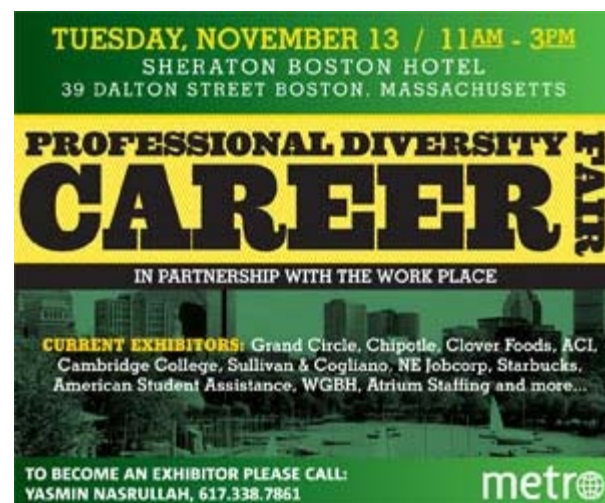
Development officials from Brookline and Boston have been working together to review proposals that the developer first filed more than a year ago.

Under previous plans for the 2.5-acre property, the developer proposed building a 180-room hotel with retail, restaurant, office and parking space, but without any residential use. The project was originally slated as a two-phase endeavor with the cinema site being redeveloped first, followed later by work on the restaurant site. The Circle Cinema closed in 2008 after a 68-year run.

At a community meeting in May 2011, the chief concern among residents — from Brookline, Brighton and nearby Newton — was that the development might not live up to its full potential if it were designed as two separate sites and phases instead of one. Some also said they wanted the project to include some residential use.

One month later, the developer canceled plans for the second, smaller site and announced it would submit a new, one-site proposal after the deal to acquire the Applebee’s property at 381 Chestnut Hill Ave. fell through, due to looming deadlines in the approval process and differences on the deal’s price.

But, in early November, the Boston Development Group was able to negotiate and sign a deal with the trust



that owns the Applebee's site.

Since then, the developer has worked to draft the latest plans, which call for housing to take up space previously eyed for office use. And the developer now plans to build the project in one phase.

The developer has also retained a new architect, ADD Inc.

The Applebee's lease expires in May 2014, but it is not clear whether the restaurant chain would keep operating there through the duration of its lease or move out so construction could start sooner.

The developer submitted detailed plans to the Boston Redevelopment Authority last week, according to Susan Elsbree, a spokeswoman for the city department. The filing kicks off the approval process in Boston, which begins with a 30-day public comment period that will include a community hearing.

After the comment period, the Redevelopment Authority can either decide to waive further review of the project, or ask the developer to conduct further study of its project, which then requires further public review. The authority's five-member board ultimately votes on whether to approve a proposal.

In Brookline, a preliminary application for the project was filed on July 25, according to Polly Selkoe, assistant director of regulatory planning for the town.

The developer is expected to meet with a design advisory team next month before eventually filing a formal application with the town's Building Department. She said because of the project's size, it is expected to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals; unanimous approval by its three members is needed to grant building permits.

Approval from the zoning board typically comes with conditions for the developer to meet, Selkoe said. Zoning board decisions can be appealed in court.

"It obviously is a much more complicated process because it is in two municipalities and needs approval from both," she said.

Longtime area resident Eva Webster said she likes that the proposal calls for bringing a hotel, retail space and high-end housing to Cleveland Circle, but she does not think the project's latest configuration is a good fit.

"I'm excited because it has the potential to improve the area," she said. "It's just poorly designed."

Webster, who lives in Brighton and is a member of a city-appointed group reviewing the approval process in Boston, said she would rather see the hotel positioned closer to the intersection, and the housing pushed farther away from where noise from traffic, trolleys, and outdoor retail space could bother the

development's residents.

“It’s really important that this hotel is not hidden or obscured,” she said. “It will be inferior housing if it has to conflict with commercial components.”

“If they build it the way they intend, we’re going to get more of the same. It’s not going to attract the type of tenants this area needs,” Webster said.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com.

 PRINT  REPRINTS  E-MAIL  SHARE

 ARTICLE  COMMENTS

Learn more

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS](#) [REFER A FRIEND](#) [EPAPER EDITION](#)

MY ACCOUNT

[LOGOUT](#)

 [MY SAVED LIST](#)

[MANAGE HOME DELIVERY](#)

SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[TWITTER](#)

[GOOGLE+](#)

CONTACT

[HELP](#)

[FAQS](#)

[GLOBE NEWSROOM](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

MORE

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

[TERMS OF PURCHASE](#)

[WORK HERE](#)