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Ground breaking held for \$15m mixed-use Parkside on Adams - Developed by Historic Boston Inc.; Roslindale Village Main Street, Inc.; and Peregrine Group LLC

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Mayor Martin Walsh recently joined the community and development team to toss a ceremonial shovelful of dirt, officially breaking ground on The Parkside on Adams, a mixed-use complex incorporating the historic former MBTA substation at 4228 Washington St., and starting construction on 43 new residences, including six affordable units. The project was approved by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeals in October 2013. The total development cost is estimated at \$15 million.

"It's easy to support a project like this because you know it's going to happen," mayor Walsh told about 200 people gathered at a sticky-hot 11 a.m. celebration at the The Parkside on Adams construction site. "This is one of the last pieces in making the Sq."

Walsh praised the development partners in the project: Historic Boston Inc.; Roslindale Village Main Street, Inc.; and Peregrine Group LLC of Rumford, RI. There will also be a restaurant with 120 seats on the main level of the former substation, anticipated to be owned and operated by Chris Douglass, the current owner of The Ashmont Grill and Tavolo in Dorchester.

"This project will invigorate a sleepy corner of Roslindale Village with new energy and vibrancy," Walsh said. "The collaborative effort to reinvent the iconic Roslindale substation building, demonstrates that the city's rich history can be a catalyst for economic growth in our neighborhoods."

Singling out the success of Roslindale Village Main St., Walsh said, "Every neighborhood talks about wanting to get to that point." Alluding to the former use of the historic building, he said, "Parkside on Adams is going to continue to power mobility in the neighborhood."

The project, located across from the popular Adams Park, includes both the former F.J. Higgins Funeral Home site as well as the substation. Demolition took place late in the summer on the closed Higgins Funeral Home on Washington St., making way for the project, which includes a restoration and repurposing of the 8,000 s/f brick substation. Adams Park will formally reopen on Oct. 18, after a full renovation.

Adam Rogoff of Roslindale Village Main St. said he had worked on the substation project for 12 years, as had five successive executive directors of the organization. "This was a time when civic structures were treasures as exemplars of progress. This project will make Roslindale a little bit more urban ... a little bit more of a village," he said.

Colin Kane, principal of Peregrine Group, said "the extraordinary work your community has put into this" and called it "one of the more interesting projects we have done. We are thrilled to be participating in such a vibrant community. The substation and The Parkside on Adams project are a

direct result of the extraordinary leadership demonstrated by Mayor Walsh, Roslindale Village Main Street and Historic Boston, Inc. in energizing and reclaiming infill locations."

The apartments will be located in a four-story building and will include studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. Six of the units will be designated as affordable and available by lottery. There will be parking spaces for residents in an at-grade garage.

Matt Kiefer, president of Historic Boston Inc. and a director at Goulston & Storrs PC law firm, said Historic Boston is about effecting transformations in neighborhoods and "a catalyst for that transformation."

"We've been thinking about this for a long time. It's a model for Historic Boston," Kiefer, said. "This building was 60 years as a substation, and we hope to give it at least another 60 years after this period of inactivity."

A commercial space on the first floor of the substation building will be available for new and growing companies.

"Historic Boston celebrates the cross-sector collaboration that made this entire project - both new and historic - possible," said Kathy Kottaridis, executive director of Historic Boston.

"What began as an effort to re-activate one long-vacant public building has become the source of economic growth and pride for the Roslindale community and everyone who played a role in triggering this preservation-based development."

The Roslindale Substation is a former switching and transformer station that was originally part of Boston's elevated railway network, preceding the existence of the MBTA.

"The Substation Development Project represents community economic development at its best," said Christina DiLisio, executive director of Roslindale Village Main St. "For the past 12 years dedicated community members -- working hand-in-hand with RVMS and its partners -- have pushed this project forward to ensure that this important corner of our business district is thriving and that our whole village is vibrant."

The project will generate about 80 construction jobs in total, and the restaurant is expected to create about 30 permanent jobs. Property management and maintenance operations will also employ 3-5 full-time equivalents.

Roslindale Village Main St. and Historic Boston were originally tasked by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 2001 with figuring out a feasible development plan for the long-empty Roslindale Substation in Roslindale Village. After further study at the request of the BRA in 2011, they played a critical role of acquiring the properties and assembling the development opportunity.

Peregrine Group joined as the master developer in late 2012 and purchased the funeral home on July 24. Demolition of the building began on July 28, for the new apartment structure. The Boston Redevelopment Authority Board in August voted to grant final designation for the project to the development team, and the substation property is expected to be transferred to a limited liability company controlled by Peregrine Group, in which HBI and Roslindale Village Main Street will be included as limited partners.

The substation will be rehabilitated following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of historic properties and will be transformed into a multipurpose structure including a restaurant. This will be the most substantial and transformative project of Roslindale Village Main Street to date. The former MBTA substation was designed in Classical Revival style by a well-known Boston architect, Robert S. Peabody, and was built in 1911.

The residential portion of the project is scheduled for completion in August 2015. The restoration

and repurposing of the substation is expected to be completed at about the same time.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's State Review Board approved the Roslindale Substation's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places in June 2013. The Roslindale Substation was then listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of Aug. 27, 2013.

Then-mayor Thomas Menino joined Historic Boston Inc., Roslindale Village Main Street, Peregrine Group, and scores of members of the local community to celebrate the listing of the substation on the National Register of Historic Places, which makes the substation eligible for State and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits.

The landmark substation was one of six stations built in the Boston area to convert AC electric power from the South Boston Power Station to DC power for trolley use. It went out of use in 1971 and has been vacant since.

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