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Sydney Associates to transform Fresh Pond into 19,400 s/f landmark retail center in Cambridge

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What do you do with an eyesore that has a water view, high visibility, and many commuters and cyclists passing by?

When it's the former Fresh Pond Seafood site, overlooking Fresh Pond, you turn it into a landmark community retail center with panoramic frontage for retail shops and an inviting experience for pedestrians, commuters and cyclists along Fresh Pond Parkway.

"This program reflects our commitment as developers to creating first class retail projects that are appealing to the community as well as to our retail tenants and their customers," said Roberta Sydney, president of Sydney Associates, owner and developer of the property.

"Our goal is to create a distinctive building that will embrace the community, become a successful retail destination and reflect well on the city of Cambridge," said Hans Strauch, President of HDS Architecture, Watertown, project architect.

The new 19,400 s/f, two-story, brick building with architectural accents and metal and glass storefronts will replace a dilapidated one-story retail strip, which has been empty for more than a year. Separating the site from the National Guard Armory in the back is a strip of overgrown weeds and trees and a corroded, rusty six foot high chain link fence topped with barbed wire. On the north and south sides are filling stations.

The plan was approved unanimously by the City of Cambridge Planning Board and has already attracted significant interest from potential retail and commercial tenants. Construction is planned for the fall.

Three or four retailers are expected on the ground level, with additional commercial space on the second level. The building has almost 100% frontage because of its unique shape with multiple entrances, storefronts and signage. The site accommodates 45 parking spaces with intensive landscaping, benches, bicycle racks and a pedestrian plaza.

"When we embarked on this design opportunity, we wanted to find a way to engage the street with a lively and inviting building that would showcase its tenants. We did not want the prototypical freestanding, blank facaded fortress surrounded by parking," said Strauch.

Serving Mass. for more than 40 years, Sydney Associates, Inc. is one of the oldest family-owned and operated real estate development and management companies in the Commonwealth. The firm has built and managed quality office, retail and residential properties, with expertise in asset management, property management, development, rehabilitation, construction management, consulting, research and marketing.

HDS Architecture is a leading architectural design firm specializing in the design of distinctive retail and commercial projects in high profile urban and suburban locations. In addition to several retail,

office and residential projects underway in New England, HDS is currently building its national reputation with projects in N.J., North Carolina, Alabama and Oklahoma.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540