

Cambridge courthouse to be redeveloped as office-retail complex

By [Casey Ross](#) | GLOBE STAFF DECEMBER 14, 2012

Legatt McCall Properties will buy the former Middlesex Courthouse in East Cambridge and turn it into an office and retail complex, state officials said Friday.

The Boston development company submitted the highest bid of three to redevelop the 22-story building, said officials with the state Division of Capital Asset Management. A price was not disclosed, as the parties have yet to negotiate a purchase-and-sale agreement.

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The selection of Legatt McCall kick-starts a long-awaited effort to redevelop the dilapidated courthouse, which is near the growing technology community in Kendall Square.

The building, also known as the Edward J. Sullivan Courthouse, will require extensive renovations and the removal of a large amount of asbestos.



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Middlesex Superior Court moved from the building to Woburn in 2008, but the county jail is still housed in the top three floors. About 400 prisoners will be relocated late next year, officials said.

Legatt McCall, which will need state and city approvals, proposes retail stores at the base of the 595,000-square-foot building and offices in the rest of it. The company has not said when it will start construction.

A Legatt McCall executive declined to elaborate on the plans Friday.

Carole Cornelison, commissioner of the Division of Capital Asset Management, said she hopes the project will replace a neighborhood eyesore with a thriving commercial building.

“The key is to return this site to the active tax rolls,” Cornelison said. “The building is in very poor shape today, so it will take some time to reshape it.”

Officials estimated the renovations will take four years and create 2,100 permanent jobs.

The project adds to a flurry of development activity in and around Kendall Square, where growing medical and technology companies are fueling a red-hot market for commercial real estate.

HYM Investment Group is planning to start construction next year at the nearby NorthPoint development, where it is building apartments, offices, and a retail “town square.”

HYM was one of the losing bidders for the courthouse. It had proposed shrinking the building to 18 stories and building apartments, offices, and stores. The other losing bidder, DivcoWest of San Francisco, proposed a similar mix of uses.

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