



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: March 22, 2022

Re: Special Permit **PB-385, 160-180 Fawcett Street** – Continued Hearing

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Overview

Submission Type:	Special Permit Application
Applicant:	CCF Fawcett Street Property, LLC
Zoning District(s):	Industry B-2 (IB-2) and Alewife Overlay District 2 (AOD-2)
Proposal Summary:	Construct a 58,027 square foot four story building for technical office use and a 46-vehicle parking garage below.
Special Permits Requested:	Reduction of required off-street parking spaces (6.35.1); Project Review (19.20); Flood Plain Overlay District Special Permit (20.73); Floor area ratio (FAR) in excess of 1.5 (20.95.1); Building height in excess of 35 feet (20.95.2); Public infrastructure FAR bonus (20.95.22); and Reduction of Green Roofs requirement (22.35.3)
Other City Permits Needed:	Conservation Commission approval, PTDM Plan approval
Planning Board Action:	Grant or deny requested special permits.
Memo Contents:	CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report
Other Staff Reports:	Parking and Transportation Dept. (TP+T), in separate document.

Requested Special Permits	Required Planning Board Findings <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area, upon review of the traffic impact indicators analyzed in the Transportation Impact Study and mitigation efforts proposed. • The project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the City as set forth in Section 19.30.
Exemption of Required Green Roof Area (Section 20.35.3)	<p>The Planning Board may grant a special permit to reduce the required Green Roof Area, Biosolar Green Roof Area, or Solar Energy System below the area required by Section 22.35.2, provided that each square foot so reduced be compensated by a unit price contribution to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust.</p>
Increase FAR, additional FAR for public improvements, and increase building height in Alewife Overlay Districts (Sections 20.95.1, 20.95.11, 20.95.2)	<p>The project promotes the general interests of the larger commercial and residential neighborhood noted in Section 20.92 and is consistent with the goals, objectives and guidelines established in the Concord Alewife Plan. For granting of additional FAR for development that incorporates or provides the following improvements or property interests that are determined to be sufficient to significantly advance the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan.</p> <p>Conveyance of fee or easement property interests to the City of Cambridge (in a form acceptable to the City) to permit the future construction of roadway segments, pedestrian paths, the pedestrian bridge referenced above in Paragraph 1, public parks and other publicly accessible open space and recreation features consistent with the Concord-Alewife Plan, which segment, path, park or open space is identified on the maps entitled Priority Infrastructure Plan and Additional Infrastructure Plan or is otherwise identified by the Planning Board at another location and determined by the Board to be of equal value and consistent with those elements identified on the Map and the objectives set forth in the Plan.</p>
Flood Plain Special Permit (Section 20.70)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No encroachment of the floodway or displacement of water retention capacity is allowed unless fully offset. • Flood water systems shall not cause nuisance, hazard or detriment to site or abutters. • Development is consistent with zoning, area plans and guidelines, and applicable laws including Wetlands Protection Act. • Review by the City Engineer and Conservation Commission are required.

Requested Special Permits	Required Planning Board Findings <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Reduction in Minimum Number of Parking Spaces (Section 6.35.1)	Lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood; or will provide positive environmental or other benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood, including assisting in provision of affordable housing units.
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	<p>Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or (e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

Date: 3/22/2022

Zoning Report: **PB-385, 160-180 Fawcett Street**

Overview

The proposed project at 160-180 Fawcett Street, as revised, is for the construction of a technical office and laboratory building of approximately 58,027 square feet to replace an existing two-story wood gymnasium and office building. The project is located on the corner of Fawcett Street and Smith Place. The project is within Alewife Overlay District 2 (AOD-2). Other recent projects reviewed by the Planning Board in this area include 75-109 Smith Place, another technical office and laboratory building permitted on the street corner southwest of the current proposal.

The existing conditions in this area are dominated by commercial and industrial land uses, with vast expanses of impervious surfaces in the form of parking lots and truck loading areas. A few parcels have transitioned from industrial use to offices, commercial research labs, or recreational uses. This area has access to public transit through regional bus service on Concord Avenue, and the site is about a one-mile walk to the Alewife MBTA Station. It is also about a quarter-mile north of Fresh Pond Reservation.

Update

Since the last Planning Board meeting on December 7, 2021, the Applicant has worked with staff to respond to comments and questions raised in the initial application review. The Applicant's recent submission provides a revised set of plans and additional information about the project in narrative and graphic form. This memo comments on the additional information and proposed changes and is supplementary to CDD's initial memo on this proposal.

Major changes related to zoning include revisions to the Fawcett Street and Smith Place facades to conform with specific front yard requirements in AOD-2, a reduction in proposed parking spaces to align with the 0.8 ratio envisioned in the 2019 Alewife District Plan, and a large increase in both the total percentage and quantity of proposed green roof area to comply with the Green Roof Requirement in Section 22.35. Other changes include a larger floor plate and reduction in the maximum height for the proposed mechanical screening from 86 to 76 feet.

Key Issues Raised at Initial Hearing

The following summarizes some of the key comments made by the Planning Board at the hearing on 12/7/2021, in addition to comments from staff memos:

- Many Planning Board members were concerned with an exemption for the required green roof area and requested a completed Cool Factor Score and additional data to confirm that the project warrants an exemption.

- Several Planning Board members raised sustainability questions about window glazing, shading, and tree caliper.
- Several Planning Board members were concerned with the height and design of the HVAC system and penthouse screening. Members requested additional evidence to demonstrate that the proposed height and area for the HVAC systems and associated screening were necessary.
- Several Planning Board members were concerned with the narrow design of the elevated walkways and a lack indications to the presence of retail spaces and doorways.
- Some Board members raised concerns with waterproofing measures for the underground parking garage entrances.
- Staff raised zoning compliance questions regarding the grading and permeability of the raised walkways.

Comments on Revised Materials

Open space, Permeability, and Public Improvements

According to the revised plan, the project exceeds the open space requirements of the AOD, meeting a ratio of 32.9% of the lot where 15% is required. It also exceeds the permeable area requirement of 25% with a proposed 29% of the lot shown as permeable. Included in these calculations is land intended for public improvements in the form of open space, grade separated bicycle lanes, and sidewalks that would be conveyed to the City of Cambridge in accordance with Section 20.95.11.2. The 29% permeable area calculation also includes space that is above a below-grade parking garage. If a proposal does not meet the 25% requirement, the AOD zoning allows a reduction if the City's stormwater management requirements are met through other means and if the Planning Board makes a finding in granting an AOD special permit that the relevant purposes of the AOD zoning are being served. DPW will certify at the building permit stage whether the stormwater management standards are met.

Section 20.95.32.1 of the Zoning Ordinance further requires that the area between the principal wall plane of a building and a street shall consist entirely of Green Area or Permeable Open Space with "customary" landscaping features that are "essentially at grade" with the adjacent streets, excluding access drives leading to vehicle parking facilities. (As defined in zoning, Green Area or Permeable Open Space may contain some amount of hard-surfaced walking areas.) In response to comments that the proposed elevated walkways might conflict with this zoning requirement, the applicant revised their submission by pinching the building at the corners and limiting the elevated walkways to this area. This allows the elevated covered walkways, which are above the parking deck, to sit behind the façade of the building, to comply with existing zoning while still advancing the design outcomes of the 2019 Alewife District Plan.

Transportation

The revised proposal includes 46 parking spaces, 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces, 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces, and one loading bay. The number of parking spaces is less than the minimum required ratio in current zoning, which would require 56 spaces, and therefore a reduction is being sought. This revision matches the maximum 0.8 parking space ratio recommended in the Alewife District Plan and is a further reduction from the applicant's initial request for 53 parking spaces.

The proposed bicycle parking spaces exceed the minimum requirements, and the one loading bay meets the minimum requirement for the proposed use.

The project has completed a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) and staff have made recommendations in the accompanying TP&T memo. The proposal also requires a PTDM Plan, which includes programmatic measures to achieve specific reductions in single-occupancy vehicle mode shares. Staff issued a final PTDM Plan approval with conditions, which is included in the Board materials. Issuance of the PTDM plan approval is necessary prior to the City granting permits. Additional comments and recommended conditions are provided in the TP+T memo.

Green Roofs

The revised application shows 9,225 sq. ft. of mechanical space. This is a reduction from the previous submission, which showed 11,905 sq. ft. of mechanical space with an additional 2,720 sq. ft. reserved for future tenant mechanical equipment. The revised application further shows 12,294 sq. ft. of green roof area. By consolidating the rooftop mechanical space and removing a proposed rooftop patio, the applicant has increased the total area and percentage of green roof. The proposed 98% green roof area, which exempts space for mechanical equipment, complies with the zoning minimum of 80% green roof area. The applicant has not formally requested to withdraw this application. The Planning Board could either deny this special permit request, or could approve it with the expectation that the requirement will be met based on the current plans and that no payment will be required, but if it is determined not to comply at the building permit stage then a compensating payment will be made.

After the initial Planning Board review, CDD staff shared the draft “Cool Factor” worksheet recommended by the Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force with the design team. The Applicant provided a draft calculation to staff showing that the score would far exceed the recommended minimum standards, with most of the score derived from canopy tree plantings and Green Roof Area. A Cool Factor calculation was not provided with the latest design, but would likely still exceed the standards since the amount of tree planting and Green Roof Area has increased.

GFA

The revised application shows a wood trellis extending over portions of the elevated walkway. Zoning section 22.53 creates a floor area exemption for pergolas, arbors, and trellises that meet provided definition. The trellis structure must be at least 80% open to the air across all horizontal or vertical surfaces, and any parallel structural support members with a cross-section of greater than one (1) inch by two (2) inches are to be separated from each other by at least three (3) feet on center. The applicant needs to provide additional design details at the building permit stage for the proposed trellis to confirm compliance with this zoning provision.

Conditions

If the Planning Board decides to grant the requested special permits, the following standard set of conditions should be incorporated, in addition to those recommended in the Urban Design section of this memo and in the accompanying memos from TP+T and DPW:

- The development must proceed in conformance with the plans and application documents reviewed and approved by the Planning Board. CDD will review all applications for building permits and certificates of occupancy to certify that they are in conformance with the Planning Board’s approval.

- The development will be subject to continuing design review by City staff. The Urban Design section of this memo, and the memos from TP+T and DPW, highlight aspects of the development that will be subject to explicit review before issuing a building permit.
- The proposed use is technical office for research and development (Section 4.34.f in the Table of Use Regulations). To facilitate flexibility in the future use of the building, and to support the Alewife District Plan goals, staff recommends that the Planning Board also authorize any Retail or Consumer Service Establishment in Section 4.35 of the Zoning Ordinance that is permitted in the underlying zoning district for the corner space at the ground story. Any other proposed use that is permitted in the zoning district, but not authorized by this special permit, will be subject to Planning Board approval.
- The Planning Board approves the conveyance of land for public use as depicted in the plans, and the bonus development associated with that conveyance per Section 20.95.11. The increase in density would be conditioned on the City's design approval and eventual acceptance of an easement for the section of the site that would be used as a portion of the public street. The applicant shall submit a plan and legal description of the easement prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.
- Transportation mitigation measures, as recommended in the TP+T memo and agreed to by the Permittee, would be incorporated as conditions. Ongoing PTDM compliance would also be made a condition of the special permit.
- The Permittee will be responsible for the design and installation of all necessary infrastructure and utility improvements both on and off the site needed to support the construction of the building. All improvements to public infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, plantings, and utilities – in addition to those portions of the site to be conveyed by easement – will be subject to DPW approval.
- Staff recommends that a Construction Management Program be required, subject to approval by City departments before issuance of a building permit, consistent with Section 18.20. The Construction Management Program should also include an outreach component, including a designated point of contact for questions during construction, and signage with project information posted on-site.
- The project will continue to be subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The Planning Board approves the requested reduction in parking to 46 spaces. Any further reduction in parking shall be permitted to the extent allowed by zoning at the time. However, any increase in parking shall require an amendment to the special permit.
- The project will be subject to the Incentive Zoning Requirements in Section 11.202 and will provide a contribution to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust in accordance with that Section.
- If it does not meet the permeable area requirements in the Alewife Zoning Districts, certification will be required by the City Engineer that the applicable stormwater management standards are being met.
- The development shall provide revised design details for the wood trellis extending over portions of the elevated walkway to ensure compliance with zoning section 22.53.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

Date: 3/22/2022

Urban Design Report: **PB-385, 160-180 Fawcett Street**

Overview

The design is generally similar to that presented in the previous hearing, but numerous changes have been made to bring it into better accord with the Alewife District Plan and its Design Guidelines. The Fawcett Street and Smith Place massing and facades have been revised to conform with zoning requirements, bringing portions of the façade closer to the adjoining streets, while still providing an elevated walkway at the portions of the Smith Place and Fawcett Street facades closest to the intersection. The building has a larger floorplate, and its height has been reduced. The site/landscape design has been adjusted to relate the building more directly with the adjoining pedestrian sidewalks. The layout of the sidewalks and bicycle lanes has been improved to better relate to expected movement patterns.

Planning Board Comments:

While the Board felt that the architecture is generally appealing, and appreciated that the design's accommodation of the Alewife District Plan's street sections makes a considerable amount of site area available to the public, there were concerns about numerous aspects of the site plan and the facades, including:

- Concern that the mechanical screening/penthouse was very large.
- Concern that the split of the south façade into two parts and the projection of its eastern portion (with the loading and garage entries) beyond its western portion are awkward.
- Concern that the portions of the site over the underground garage's western projection beyond the building's façade would not function as permeable area and would be an unsuitable location for trees.
- A suggestion that the number of parking spaces could be reduced from 53 proposed by the applicant to the 47 proposed by TP+T in their December 1, 2021 Planning Board memo.
- A request for the Cool Factor calculation.
- A suggestion that larger caliper trees should be planted.
- Concern that ground floor retail space is not shown, nor entrances to the tenant space at the building's southwest corner from the elevated walkway.
- A suggestion that gender neutral bathrooms should be provided.
- Concern that the facades, with their large windows, lack of sun control and triple glazing are energy inefficient.
- Concern about the proposed reduction in green roof area.

Urban Design Comments

The building and site design address many of the Planning Board's comments from the hearing on December 7, 2021, and from the CDD's memo of December 1, 2021. Since then, the applicant has met

with staff to review design issues and solutions, including options to provide the elevated walkways recommended in the Alewife District Plan while conforming to existing zoning.

Site and landscape design

Zoning requires that the front yard between the principal front wall plane and the abutting street must be permeable (with some exceptions) and that landscaping features, elements, and grading must remain “essentially” at sidewalk grade. In the proposed design, permeable materials are proposed between the principal front wall planes facing Fawcett Street and Smith Place. The elevated walkways are limited to the southwest corner of the site – the corner most suitable for ground floor retail. The principal front wall planes facing Fawcett Street and Smith Place have been brought forward and aligned with the outer edge of the elevated walkway. This appears to have brought the elevated walkways into accord with zoning, and also has the benefit of reducing the façade-to-façade widths of Fawcett Street and Smith Place to dimensions more characteristic of an urban, rather than a suburban, area.

The design continues to preserve the existing street trees on Smith Place, and to also provide new street trees on Smith Place and Fawcett Street. The scheme provides continuous planting beds for existing and new street trees. Short-term bicycle parking spaces are provided as required by zoning, and a 19 dock Bluebikes station as a commitment of the PTDM plan.

As in the previous scheme, separated bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks are provided in the setbacks on both Fawcett Street and Smith Place. Their layouts have been revised based on staff input, including at the site’s southwest corner.

1. Public access easements or agreements will be needed with the City for the sidewalks and bicycle facilities, including maintenance. An agreement on the nature and instruments to be used should be finalized and approved by the city prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
2. Consideration should be given to providing smoother transitions where the separated bicycle paths approach the northern and eastern borders of the site.
3. The applicant should continue to collaborate with staff on the detailed layout of paths, curb cuts, crosswalks, grading, etc.

The first-floor plan, building sections, and site/landscape plans differ with regard to the configuration of the Fawcett Street and Smith Place sides of the building and the layout of the adjoining sitework: The steps and ramp up to the elevated walkway are shown in different locations, the first floor is recessed to a different depth behind the second-floor façade, and the Bluebikes station, planters, and benches are not shown on the first-floor plan.

4. The applicant should collaborate with staff to resolve the discrepancies.

The building’s principal façade plane and elevated walkway on Smith Place appear to be slightly farther from the right-of-way than is indicated in the Alewife District Plan.

5. To reduce the amount of paved area in the Smith Place front setback, increase the amount of permeable area elsewhere on the site, and bring the building’s west façade into better alignment with potential future buildings on Smith Place, consideration could be given to moving the building slightly west.

The handrails for the steps up to the elevated walkway are shown extending beyond the outer face of the elevated walkway into the sidewalk zone.

6. Consideration should be given to reducing or eliminating their intrusion.

The number of street trees on Smith Place has been increased since the previous submission. New curbside trees are shown on Fawcett Street between the separated bicycle lane and the curb.

7. As this project will set a precedent for potential future development of Fawcett Street, the alternative arrangement shown in the Alewife District Plan, with the separated bicycle lane adjacent to the curb, and the trees between the bicycle lane and the pedestrian sidewalk, should be discussed with city staff.
8. Consideration should be given to increasing the caliper of the new trees above 3 ½”.

Ground level low plantings and intermittent benches are shown at the northern portion of the Smith Place facade.

9. Consideration should be given to providing a continuous low seat wall as a public amenity and to contain the plantings.

Short term bicycle racks are located on the Smith Place frontage.

10. It appears that if adjustments to the layout of the short-term spaces were made (while maintaining the zoning required dimensions for short term bike spaces), some planted areas may be provided. To facilitate access to both sides of the bike racks, consideration should be given to positioning them at 45 degrees to the building, rather than parallel. Staff would welcome collaboration on the layout.

A 19 dock Bluebike station is provided in the Fawcett Street setback, adjacent to the elevated walkway.

11. Consideration should be given to relocating it slightly to the west, to allow the introduction of steps down to grade from the east end of the elevated walkway.
12. Potential shading of its PV panel by the street trees should be checked.

Discrepancies between different drawings in the application make it difficult to precisely evaluate the proposed setback from the Fawcett Street property line to the principal front wall plane facing it, but the setback seems to be several feet wider than the zoning minimum of 15 feet.

13. To reduce the breadth of pavement in the Fawcett Street setback, increase the amount of permeable area available elsewhere on the site, and to bring the building’s south façade into alignment with potential future buildings along Fawcett Street, consideration should be given to moving the building south to achieve a 15-foot setback from the property line. To allow some extra space between the Bluebike station and the pedestrian sidewalk, the width of the elevated sidewalk facing Fawcett Street could be somewhat reduced from the full 12 feet shown in the application.

The site plan indicates permeable paving materials in the separated bicycle lane on Smith Place and Fawcett Street (porous asphalt), for the pedestrian sidewalk (porous concrete), and for the bike lane’s buffer zone and the short-term bicycle parking area (permeable pavers). The project’s permeability calculations depend on the efficacy of the paving materials and the subsoil conditions to achieve the minimum zoning requirement for permeable area.

14. Permeable asphalt is not a standard material for city sidewalks. Permeable paving materials need maintenance to preserve their permeability over time and matching them may be difficult

should they be disturbed in the future. Consideration should be given to using the city's standard concrete for the sidewalks.

15. Existing underground utilities in the building's front setbacks may interfere with the flow of water through the soil. The actual absorption benefit of permeable paving materials is not clear at present.
16. Additional permeable area could be created at the north and east sides of the site by moving the building south and west, closer to Fawcett Street and Smith Place.
17. To minimize potential tripping and bicycling hazards presented by uneven finish surfaces, consideration should be given to reducing the number of different materials used.
18. As the amount of permeable site area depends on the widths of the Fawcett Street and Smith Place setbacks, the calculations should be checked.

Trees are shown in northern portion of the project's narrow east setback.

19. Species with a narrow/columnar growth habit should be considered for this location.
20. The possibility of providing additional trees on the southern portion of the east setback should be considered.

Architectural Massing and Character

While the elements that make up the building's facades are similar to those of the previous scheme, they are arranged differently in response to changes to the building's massing. The revised concept retains the elegance of the earlier scheme's X-braced and "wood" (phenolic rainscreen) facades while responding to the changed arrangement of the elevated walkways.

The previous scheme consisted of two parallel masses with contrasting façade designs oriented north/south on the site, and an occupied and setback fourth floor. Its overall height was 85 feet, including 31-foot tall rooftop mechanical screens. The revised scheme has a larger footprint, but with occupied space limited to the first three floors. Its overall height is 76 feet, including 22-foot tall rooftop mechanical screens.

A curtainwall-glazed four-floor tall element faces the intersection of Fawcett Street and Smith Place, accessed from the elevated walkways. Its fourth floor is occupied by mechanical equipment. It is adjoined on east and north by the second and third floor X-braced facades, which wrap around the building's southeast and northwest corners onto the east and north facades. The elevated walkways at the glazed curtainwall element at the building's southwest corner are shaded by wooden trellises; the wooden members continue on the soffits above the slightly recessed first floors for the full lengths of the south and west facades, helping to tie their various components together. The east and north facades retain the previous scheme's whitish metal panel rainscreen cladding. The bays and mullion patterns of the X-braced façades do not correlate with the structural bays, which could cause conflicts if the interior space is at some point partitioned into separate spaces. On the west façade, the X braces are at different angles, due to the different widths of the façade bays they articulate.

21. Consideration could be given to further coordination and adjustments to create a façade pattern more aligned with structural bays and with more consistent spacing.

The revised massing and façade concept reduces the prominence of the eastern portion of the building's south façade.

22. The garage and loading dock façade still seems unduly prominent, however. Additional design attention could be paid to its design and materials.

The south and west curtainwall facades include narrow vertical channels, one either side of the lobby entry and one on the south façade; they are located outboard of the typical plane of fenestration. Their purpose is unclear and the one on the south façade interferes with the pattern of the glazing system.

23. Consideration could be given to eliminating them.

An open trellis is provided above the elevated walkway.

24. Consideration could be given to changing it to a solid canopy, as suggested in the Alewife District Plan. The wooden members could be retained as beams on its underside.
25. Consideration could be given to including photovoltaic panels on top of the canopy.

The walls at the ends of the elevated walkways are shown as blank opaque surfaces.

26. Consideration could be given to glazing them or to providing some other visually interesting feature in these locations.

The mechanical penthouse at the southwest corner of the building is glazed. The portion above the second and third floor curtainwall at the building's corner is provided with shadow boxes; the other portions, above the X braced facades, appear to have spandrel glass.

27. Consideration could be given to utilizing shadow boxes for the full extent of the penthouse's visible facades.

Narrow vertical windows are now proposed on the eastern panel clad portion of the north façade, and for the full length of the east façade.

28. Consideration could be given to retaining the larger windows of the previous scheme.

The application does not mention control of light trespass from interior spaces.

29. Consideration should be given to controlling interior light to mitigate light trespass.

Plans and Ground Floor Uses

Numerous changes have been made to the ground floor plans, including the relocation of the lobby closer to the intersection, the provision of a unisex bathroom; the addition of doors from the south elevated walkway directly to the tenant space at the building's southwest corner, making it more suitable for retail use; and the relocation of the bicycle storage room.

30. As noted above, the discrepancies in the location and configuration of the first-floor plan and the elevated walkways on the Smith Place and Fawcett Street sides of the building should be resolved.
31. To make the first-floor tenant space at the building's southwest corner more suitable for retail, consideration could be given to making the first floor bathrooms accessible from the lobby, rather than only from inside the northern tenant space or through the bike storage room.

Two doors from the elevated walkway are provided to the tenant space at the building's southwest corner, enhancing its suitability for retail.

32. Consideration could be given to providing a direct entrance on the west side of the southwest tenant space.

The lobby has a wider frontage on Smith Place than the 25 feet recommended by the Alewife Design Guidelines.

33. Consideration could be given to reducing its width.

The long-term bicycle storage room is now accessed from the path on the east side of the building.

34. The route to the bicycle room could be improved by reversing the swing of the exterior door. Wide doors with automated button entries (akin to accessibility buttons) should be provided.
35. Fully dimensioned plans of the room and the route to it should be provided.

More than half of the total roof area is now covered by a green roof, 98% of the area not occupied by mechanical equipment. All rooftop mechanical equipment is either within the penthouse or the screened enclosure. The enclosed mechanical penthouse is now treated as the top floor of the glazed element at the building's southwest corner, vertically integrated with its massing and facades. The screened rooftop enclosure has been moved farther away from the building's south and west facades, reducing its visual impact.

36. Consideration could be given to including rooftop PV panels.

Mechanical

The rooftop mechanical equipment inside the perforated penthouse screen is dark grey. It does not extend above the top of the screen.

37. The equipment's height should be verified.
38. Consideration should be given to using a lighter color for the equipment.
39. Consideration could be given to providing acoustical as well as visual screening.

Materials, colors, and details

The building's exterior materials are generally the same as those presented in the previous hearing.

40. Consideration should be given to using clear glass with high visible light transmittance and low visible light reflectance, especially at the ground floor.
41. More information should be provided on the rooftop mechanical screening, and on the glazed, spandrel glass, and shadow box facades of the penthouse.

Loading and parking

The number of cars accommodated in the parking garage has been reduced to 46 as recommended by city staff to be consistent with the Alewife District Plan's parking ratio recommendation. The garage's footprint has been reduced and now fits within the area under the building's first floor and the elevated walkways, thereby eliminating the earlier scheme's interference with permeable site area. The loading dock has been deepened. It appears that the "WB-40" design truck will fit entirely inside the building.

Sustainability

The project's LEED scoresheet and general description of its sustainable features appear to be the same as those of the previous submission. The area of green roof has been considerably increased, above the

minimum established by the Green Roof Ordinance. The first floor is set at 22.5 CCB, above the currently estimated 2070 100-year flood level, and deployable barriers are proposed to exclude floodwater from the garage entrance. Critical electrical equipment is located above flood level.

42. Consideration could be given to including PV panels on the rooftop and/or on canopies over the elevated walkways.
43. Consideration should be given to controlling light trespass from interior spaces.
44. Consideration should be given to using triple glazed windows.
45. Consideration should be given to providing exterior sun shades on large glazed areas.
46. For comparisons with other projects, it would be helpful if a “Cool Factor” calculation was provided.

Continuing Review:

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends as conditions for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

1. Collaboration with staff as the layouts of the elevated walkways and front setbacks are resolved between the various plans and sections.
2. Collaboration with the City to finalize and approve the nature and instruments of public easements for the pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle paths in the Fawcett Street and Smith Place setbacks.
3. Review of all exterior materials, colors, and details, including an exterior wall mock-up prior to any exterior materials being ordered.
4. Review of detailed layout of separated bike lanes, curb cuts, sidewalks, crosswalks, and street trees, etc.
5. Review of tree species and planting standards.
6. Review of paving materials.
7. Review of the details of the elevated walkway and associated steps, ramp, railings, benches, etc.
8. Review of dimensions and clearances of short- and long-term bicycle parking areas and routes, and of the Bluebikes station.