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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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**IRAM FAROOQ**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

**KHALIL MOGASSABI**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Planning

# Affordable Housing Trust

January 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

To participate in this meeting hosted on the Zoom video meeting platform, please register using this [link](#) in advance of the meeting.

[Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

## AGENDA

- Review of Meeting Minutes
- Update from the Community Development Department
- 52 New Street: proposed new construction of 107 affordable rental units, including:
  - Just-A-Start Corporation's request for a permanent commitment of \$18,025,390, including a new funding request of \$7,375,390;
  - Planning Board Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation;
- Walden Square Apartments: letter from Mayor Siddiqui and Vice Mayor Mallon dated January 20, 2022 "Concerns regarding Winn Property Management at Walden Square";
  - Letter Response dated January 27, 2022 from WinnResidential, the Property Owner
- Move to Enter Executive Session to Discuss:
  - A Request for Funding for Acquisition of New Property:
    - The acquisition and value of real property will be discussed in executive session as discussing it in open session could have a detrimental effect on negotiations;
    - all votes will be taken by roll call; and,
    - the Trust will not reconvene in open session.

- Adjournment

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CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST  
MEETING MINUTES

December 16, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Conducted virtually via Zoom

Trustees Present via Zoom: Louis DePasquale, Chair; Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Elaine DeRosa, Gwen Noyes, Susan Schlesinger, Jim Stockard, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Absent: Elaine Thorne

Staff Present via Zoom: Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Anna Dolmatch, Homeownership Project Manager; Janet Haines, Associate Housing Planner; Maura Pensak, Housing Liaison to the City Manager; Linda Prosnitz, Housing Planner; Emily Salomon, Associate Housing Planner

Others Present via Zoom: Michael Brandon, Charles Wyzanski

The chair, Louie DePasquale, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Chris Cotter explained that this meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust would be held virtually pursuant to the temporary emergency orders currently in place, that all votes would be taken by roll call, and that there would be no public comment. Mr. Cotter then coordinated to confirm that each participant was audible to each of the other Trust members.

#### MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by roll call of seven in favor and two absent (Ms. Schlesinger and Ms. Thorne) to approve the minutes for the meeting of Thursday, November 18, 2021.

Susan Schlesinger joined the meeting at 4:09 PM

#### UPDATE FROM CDD

**HomeBridge:** Five buyers have active commitments, one home is expected to this month. Two closed last month and one home is under agreement.

**Homeownership Resale Program:** Since the last Trust meeting, three units have been offered to new buyers. Staff are waiting for offers of other units that have recently been marketed. Resale units are being made available to new buyers under a revised process adopted due to the pandemic to offer virtual unit tours.

**Frost Terrace:** Construction is complete and all 40 units have been leased. The permanent loan closing is expected in December 2021.

**SquirrelWood:** Construction is underway and 90% complete including new and renovated units. All of the new buildings are complete and ready for occupancy, with residents moving in.

**2072 Mass Ave.:** Capstone/Hope team withdrew their request for a comprehensive permit at the September BZA hearing but remain committed to creating affordable housing at this site. The developers are assessing next steps and options.

**52 New St:** The first AHO design advisory review by the Planning Board was held last month. An initial design report has been issued and Just A Start is reviewing their comments on the plan. JAS is preparing to apply for state funds.

**Park View Cooperative:** Staff has been working with residents of the Cooperative in preparing to close on the loan commitment. The Coop is now seeking contractors to bid on the project.

**Fresh Pond:** Staff have finalized the closing of funding to preserve this 504-unit property. In coming months, CHA is continuing to certify tenant incomes; the new program is expected to officially begin in early 2022.

**Rindge Commons:** JAS has applied for state funds in order to secure the remaining funding to begin construction in 2022. They have a commitment from an investor for New Market Tax Credits. JAS and the City are working out details of how the City might be able to lease a portion of the non-residential space for City-sponsored pre-kindergarten classrooms.

**Broadway Park:** JAS has had several community meetings to review its development proposal and expects to seek a comprehensive permit for this development.

**Jefferson Park Federal:** The first AHO advisory design review by the Planning Board was held last month. The Cambridge Housing Authority is reviewing feedback provided at the meeting; the initial design report is anticipated to be issued shortly. It is expected that the Cambridge Housing Authority will be back at the Planning Board meeting in early 2022.

**35 Harvey Street:** HRI has applied for state funding to cover partial costs of the project rehab.

**Inclusionary Housing:** The City is preparing to market inclusionary homeownership units at Saint James and Inman Crossing in early 2022, and will roll out an online application. The City's rental team is preparing to offer new units which will soon be complete at 95 Fawcett Street and at the intersection of First and Charles Street.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

**Walden Square II:** The Planning Board's first AHO advisory design review for Walden Square II has been postponed at the developer's request and will be rescheduled at a later date.

**49 6<sup>th</sup> Street/Sacred Heart conversion:** POAH & Urban Spaces and proposing adaptive re-use of a portion of the Sacred Heart property into 46 units of affordable rental housing. There have been two public meetings for this redevelopment. POAH is preparing a submission for the Planning Board's advisory design review and a Trust funding request.

**St. Patrick's:** JAS has repaid a \$1.4 million loan to the Trust after receiving an insurance settlement from the 2016 fire.

**Incentive Zoning:** The City Council Housing Committee met to discuss increasing the contribution rate from the current rate of \$20.31 to \$33.34. It is expected the Housing Committee will continue this discussion at an upcoming Housing Committee meeting.

**Cherry Street:** The City has convened focus groups with neighbors and community members with language barriers to engage more voices in the planning process and to discuss ideas for creating housing on the site. At the public meetings there was strong support for family sized homeownership units. In the focus groups, there was more interest in rental housing for low-income households. Staff are convening the small groups again to review the comments from the community meetings. The City is waiting for MIT to transfer the property to the Trust. Following the transfer, they will then begin an RFP process to select a developer.

#### **Affordable Housing Overlay**

Trust members had a short discussion about the community engagement, permitting, and Planning Board approval process for Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) projects and how the timing of these processes compares to those for non-AHO developments.

#### **ZONING PETITIONS**

The Ordinance Committee held meetings over the last two weeks to review a yard setback zoning petition and a zoning petition concerning off-street parking requirements. The yard setback ordinance will be kept in Committee. The parking requirement ordinance was forwarded to the Council with a negative recommendation. The Planning Board will hold hearings on both petitions next week.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Analysis of Recent Funding Commitments**

Staff provided an analysis of Trust funding expenditures based on tenure type since FY2017, in response to a recent Housing Committee question. The analysis also included the total recent funding commitments (which have not yet been disbursed) to show the overall total of expenditures and commitments by housing type FY2017 – FY2022.

Trust funds committed for rental housing include significant contributions to preserve affordable housing in properties with expiring affordability restrictions (ex. Fresh Pond Apartments) and to revitalize formerly public housing where units are at risk (ex. Jefferson Park

Federal). Most new homeownership opportunities funded by the Trust are through support of the HomeBridge and Homeownership Resale Pool which reinvests in existing affordable homes as they are sold to new buyers.

Trust members noted that while some of the larger Trust-funded rental projects get a lot of positive publicity, they are happy to learn that Trust funds are also supporting homeownership and that there is a balance between tenure types.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by roll call of eight in favor one absent (Ms. Thorne), it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:01pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

### Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes from the Trust's November 18, 2021 meeting
- Project update: Status of Active Commitments
- Community Development Department Memo December 16, 2021: Analysis of Recent Funding Commitments
- Community Development Department Memo November 30, 2021: Responses to Housing Committee request for information regarding the Affordable Housing Trust

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust

January 27, 2022

Status of Active Commitments

	Active Projects	Sponsor	Rental Units	Ownership Units	Status	Total Cost	Trust Commitment	Loan Amount Per Unit	Trust Approval Date
1.	HomeBridge program	CDD	currently approved buyers:	6	80 scattered site units purchased by first time buyers to-date. Program expansion up to 120% AMI now active. 2 units closed November 2021 and 1 unit closing in January.	N/A	\$18,200,000	1-br: 40% sale 2-br: 45% sale 3-br: 50% sale	May 2011
2.	Homeownership Resale Program	CDD	currently active units:	22	Re-purchase, rehab and re-sale of affordable homeownership units to new homebuyers.	N/A	\$7,500,000		December 2011
3.	Frost Terrace 1971 Mass Ave	Capstone Hope	40		Construction is complete and all 40 units have been leased. The 40 tenants were selected through a lottery with 945 applications.	\$27,219,486	\$10,785,358	\$269,634	March 2016 and December 2018
4.	Vail Court (139 Bishop Allen)	TBD	TBD	TBD	Trust and City hosted public meeting in 2017 to hear from the community on affordable housing needs and ideas for the redevelopment of Vail Court. Additional public meetings will be scheduled but are currently on hold pending the legal action taken by former owner.	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A
5.	Squirrelwood (multiple addresses, corner of Broadway and Market)	JAS	23		JAS consolidated its existing Squirrel Brand Apartments and Linwood Court properties to enable renovations of the existing housing as well as new construction of 23 new units. Both new construction and renovations are now complete, including the new units which were leased up following a lottery.	\$9,505,726 (new units only)	\$4,115,457	\$178,933	January 2018 and December 2018
6.	2072 Mass Ave	Capstone Hope	TBD	TBD	Capstone/Hope purchased site in April 2018 and sought a comprehensive permit to enable the construction of a new 48 unit affordable housing building but withdrew their request at the September 2021 BZA hearing; they remain committed to creating affordable housing at this site and are assessing next steps and options.	TBD	\$5,071,000	TBD	February 2018 and June 2021
7.	52 New St	JAS	107		JAS purchased the site in early 2020 and is permitting the project through the Affordable Housing Overlay. After JAS held 3 AHO community meetings, the proposal was reviewed by the Planning Board at the two advisory design review meetings required by the AHO, first on 10/16/21, and again on 1/4/22. A final Planning Board has since been issued. Meanwhile, JAS is assembling the final pieces of funding needed to begin construction including an application for DHCD funds and a request for additional Trust funding on the agenda this month.	TBD	\$10,650,000	\$99,533	October 2019 and June 2021
8.	Park View Coop	Park View Coop		12	Funds committed May 2021; Preparing to close on funding commitment	TBD	\$4,199,215	\$349,935	March 2019 and May 2021
9.	Fresh Pond Apartments	Schochet	504		In March 2020, the Trust committed funding for the preservation of Fresh Pond Apartments. This commitment was combined with \$15 million in City funding which was appropriated by the Council. After many months of preparation, the Fresh Pond Apartments funding closed on October 6, 2021 and a new 50 year affordable restriction was recorded. The CHA is working with the tenants to certify tenant incomes; the new program is expected to officially begin in early 2022.	\$34,533,179	\$34,533,179	\$68,518	March 2020
10.	Rindge Commons - Phase 1	JAS	24		In June 2020, the Trust approved funding for the first phase of Rindge Commons. Following PB hearing in early August, BZA voted to approve a comprehensive permit for the project on August 23, 2020. JAS is in the process of securing the necessary financing to begin construction of Phase 1.	TBD	\$4,250,000	\$177,083	June 2020
11.	Broadway Park	JAS		15	In March 2021, the Trust approved funding to create 15 affordable homeownership units. JAS has had several community meetings to reviews its proposal and expects to seek a comprehensive permit for this development. JAS also seeking to assemble remaining funding needed for this development.	TBD	\$3,600,000	\$240,000	\$44,256
12.	Jefferson Park Federal	CHA	278		In September 2021, the Trust approved funding to assist with the comprehensive modernization of Jefferson Park Federal. The CHA is in the process of assembling the remaining financing needed, with a goal of beginning construction Summer 2022. They will be permitting the project under the AHO. They held 3 AHO community meetings to discuss the project. The first AHO advisory design review by the Planning Board was held on 11/9/21. CHA is reviewing feedback from that meeting in advance of the second PB meeting which has not yet been scheduled.	TBD	\$43,611,615	\$156,876	\$44,440
13.	35 Harvey Street	HRI / Cascap	12		In November 2021, the Trust approved funding to assist with the renovation and reconfiguration of Harvey Street from SROs to studio apartments. HRI is in the process of assembling the remaining financing needed, with a goal of beginning construction later this year.	TBD	\$2,917,664	\$243,139	November 2021

Total Units 1043

**Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust**  
**Status of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Developments**

	<b>AHO Development</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>AHO Status &amp; Activity</b>	<b>Rental Units</b>	<b>Ownership Units</b>	<b>Development Status</b>
1.	52 New Street	Just-A-Start Corporation	AHO Community meetings held on 2/25/21,3/25/21, and 4/15/21. Planning Board design consultation held on 10/26/21 and 1/4/22. Design consultation completed January 2022; Final Planning Board report issued 1/20/22.	107		Design Consultation Complete; see above.
2.	Jefferson Park Federal	Cambridge Housing Authority	AHO Community meetings held on 3/2/21, 4/1/21, and 10/19/21. Initial Planning Board design held 11/9/21, 2nd Planning Board design consultation to be scheduled.	278		Design Consultation Underway; see above.
3.	Walden Square II	WinnDevelopment Companies	AHO Community meetings held on 3/23/21, 4/13/21 and 5/27/21. Submission for first Planning Board advisory design consultation was withdrawn by developer on 11/16/21.	~102		Pending; original submission withdrawn
4.	49 6th Street	POAH & Urban Spaces	AHO Community meetings held on 7/27/21 and 11/3/21. Preparing submission for first Planning Board advisory design consultation, to be scheduled.	~46		Preparing to begin Design Consultation
5.	116 Norfolk Street	Cambridge Housing Authority	First AHO community meeting scheduled for 2/10/22.	~62		Preparing to begin Community Process

**Status of Active Inclusionary Housing Developments**

	<b>Approved Active Projects</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Rental Units</b>	<b>Ownership Units</b>	<b>Applicable zoning</b>
1.	305 Webster Ave.	305 Webster Ave. Condominiums L	Covenant Recorded 8/11/17. Construction is complete. Marketing of affordable units to begin early 2022.		4	Ordinance prior to revision
2.	St. James (1991 & 2013 Mass. Ave.)	Oak Tree	Converted to ownership. Construction is complete. Marketing of affordable units to begin early 2022.		5	Ordinance prior to revision
3.	95 Fawcett Street	Ed Doherty	Ownership Covenant Recorded 12/29/2016. Covenant Amended to Rental recorded 12/27/2021. Tenant selection is beginning.	5		Ordinance prior to revision
4.	Alexandria - 50 Rogers Street/Prism	Alexandria/Owner Amico	Covenant Recorded 6/4/19. Complete. Tenant selection nearing completion.	44		Zoning for Alexandria PUD
5.	Charles & Hurley Streets	Urban Spaces	Covenant recorded 8/6/19. Building Permit issued 9-3-19(Charles Street) and 12-23-19 (Hurley Street) Construction nearing completion.	16		Ordinance prior to revision
6.	50 Cambridgepark Drive	Hanover	Covenant recorded 8/6/19. Building Permit issued 12-5-19. Under Construction	55		Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement
7.	165 Main Street	Mitimco	IHP Covenant recorded 12/17/19. Building Permit issued 12-20-19. Under Construction.	63		Zoning for MIT
8.	95-99 Elmwood	95-99 Realty	Covenant recorded. Building Permit issued 7-2-20. Under construction.		4	Ordinance prior to revision
9.	Cambridge Crossing, Building I	DivcoWest	Covenant recorded; Building Permit issued 8-24-20 Under construction. Completion expected July 2022.	54		Ordinance prior to revision
10.	212 Hampshire Street (Ryles)	212 Hampshire LLC, Binoj Pradhan	Covenant recorded. Construction complete. Tenant selection underway	1		BZA requirement of affordable unit
11.	55 Wheeler Street	Toll Brothers	Covenant recorded 3/12/21. Building Permit issued 3/16/21. Under Construction	99		Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement
12.	40 Thorndike Street, Court House	Leggat/McCall	Covenant recorded. Building Permit issued. Under construction	48		All units are affordable
13.	605 Concord Ave.	Abodez Acorn	Covenant recorded; Building Permit issued 12/9/21	7		Revised ordinance at 15% sf requirement

**Under Development:**

**392**

**13**

**Completed Units:**

**886**

**202**

**All Units:**

**1278**

**215**

**1493**

	<b>Active Pipeline Projects</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Rental Units</b>	<b>Ownership Units</b>	<b>Applicable zoning</b>
1.	3-5 Linnaean	Willow Land Corp.	Covenant recorded; pending building permit	1		Zoning for basement housing overlay
2.	1043-1059 Cambridge St.	418 Real Estate	IHP plan was submitted. Property sold. Special Permit Amended. Inclusionary Plan under review.		3	Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement



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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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**IRAM FAROOQ**

*Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development*

**SANDRA CLARKE**

*Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration*

**KHALIL MOGASSABI**

*Deputy Director  
Chief Planner*

## TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

**To:** Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust  
**From:** Chris Cotter, Housing Director  
Cassie Arnaud, Senior Housing Planner  
**Date:** January 27, 2022  
**Re:** 52 New Street

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Attached hereto please find the following materials related to Just A Start's planned redevelopment of 52 New Street under the Affordable Housing Overlay:

- 1) Permanent Funding Request of \$18,025,390, including \$10,650,000 previously committed
- 2) Planning Board Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation for 52 New Street, dated January 20, 2022

For more information on 52 New Street, including Planning Board submission and presentation materials, please see the City's project page at:  
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Housing/52newstreet>







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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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**IRAM FAROOQ**

Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

### MEMORANDUM

**SANDRA CLARKE**

Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

**To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust**  
**From: Janet Haines, Cassie Arnaud**  
**Date: January 27, 2022**  
**Re: 52 New Street – Permanent financing request**

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**KHALIL MOGASSABI**

Deputy Director  
Chief Planner

Just A Start (JAS) is requesting up to \$7,375,390 in additional Trust funding as the final piece of Trust funding needed for their upcoming development of 52 New Street, a new 107-unit affordable rental building in North Cambridge. This new financing would be combined with the \$10,650,000 in short-term funding previously provided for acquisition and predevelopment, which JAS is requesting be converted to permanent financing at construction closing. The new request would bring the Trust's total commitment to the project to \$18,025,390 or \$168,513 per unit.

As you may remember, JAS acquired the site in January 2020 with funding from the Trust. At the time, the Affordable Housing Overlay had not yet been adopted but they were hopeful that it would be in place by the time they needed to secure permitting. Fortunately, the AHO was enacted in October 2020 and JAS has been able to take advantage of the increased density and as-of-right permitting path available under the AHO for fully affordable projects.

Throughout last year, JAS worked to develop and refine their plan, incorporating design input provided through the community process, consultation with City staff and, most recently, feedback provided by the Planning Board at two advisory design meetings. JAS held three AHO community meetings in 2021 and completed the second advisory design review by the Planning Board earlier this month, following an initial design review in October 2021.

JAS determined that a single building would be the most efficient use of the long and narrow site. Their designs call for a single 6-story building containing a total of 107 apartments, 78% of which will be family-sized units. The unit mix will consist of 23 one-bedroom, 63 two-bedroom and 21 three-bedroom units.

The building is being designed to comply with Passive House standards and will include features to ensure maximum energy efficiency such as a robust thermal envelope, efficient HVAC systems, and eco-friendly materials.

In addition to the residential component, the building also contains a range of amenities including 2 exterior upper-level decks, a large community room, a fitness center and a business center as well as the possibility of a future connection to Danehy Park.

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Under their AHO submission, 97 units will be affordable to households earning up to 80% of area median income (AMI) and ten of the units will be eligible to households earning up to 100% of AMI. However, the actual income targets will be lower as the 97 units will be targeted to households earning less than at 60% AMI as required by the low-income housing tax credit program, and will include 14 units for households earning under 30% AMI.

The proposed building has been generally well-received by both the community and Planning Board. JAS was able to address the bulk of the design recommendations made by the Planning Board at the first advisory review meeting in October 2021, as well as feedback received from City staff and the community. The plans presented at the second Planning Board meeting in January 2022 were found to be responsive to these recommendations. The Planning Board advisory design report includes a small number of remaining recommendations such as adding backs to exterior benches, consideration of brighter colors on the façade, exploration of additional flood deterrents in the bicycle room, and possible changes to exterior façade materials. Staff will continue to work with JAS as they finalize design details in advance of construction closing.

#### Anticipated Development Budget

The total development cost (TDC) for the project is anticipated to be \$67,776,297 or \$633,423 per unit. While the overall TDC per unit is higher than other Trust-funded new construction completed in recent years, it should be noted that the Trust request, at \$168,513 per unit, is in line with, or lower than, other recent new construction projects.

JAS attributes the major cost drivers for this project to be primarily construction related in the form of material shortages, labor shortages and COVID-19 related protocols. JAS is presently carrying a 6.5% construction contingency in order to absorb unanticipated costs, but plans to reduce the contingency to 5% once they have final construction pricing.

In addition to the \$18,030,930 in Trust financing, the other project sources will include approximately \$23.9 million in 4% tax credit equity, \$14 million in amortizing debt, \$5 million in state tax credit equity, \$5.25 million in DHCD subordinate funding, \$1 million in MassHousing Workforce Funds, and \$400,000 in deferred developer fee.

While more expensive than other new construction completed in recent years on a TDC per unit basis, staff will continue to work with JAS to reduce costs where possible. A reduction in final development costs prior to construction closing will be reflected in a reduction in the Trust contribution.

JAS is in the process of assembling the final funding needed to begin construction. They have submitted an application for needed state funding to DHCD this month, and are planning for a November 2022 construction closing, with an estimated completion date in late summer 2024.

**Recommendation:** The 52 New Street development will create 107 much needed new, high-quality, energy efficient homes in an excellent location. Located immediately adjacent to Danehy park and within closing walking distance of the neighborhood's many amenities including the Fresh Pond Reservation, shopping, restaurants, and public transportation, the New Street site is a great opportunity to add a significant number of family units to Cambridge's stock of much needed affordable housing.

CDD staff recommends that the Trust approve Just A Start's request for up to \$7,375,390 in Trust permanent financing and that the existing \$10,650,000 in short-term financing which has been already committed for acquisition and predevelopment, be combined with the new permanent financing as a single permanent loan commitment of \$18,030,930. We have reviewed and discussed this request with Peter Daly, Susan Schlesinger, Jim Stockard, and Bill Tibbs, who agreed with our recommendation to bring this request to the Trust and recommend approval.

This loan commitment of \$18,030,930 shall be made subject to the Trust's standard terms and conditions including, but not limited, to the following:

1. Staff approval of the final development and operating budgets;
2. Staff approval of construction plans and specifications;
3. Firm written commitments from all funding sources, sufficient to complete transaction;
4. Staff approval of the tenant selection and marketing plan, which shall include provisions to ensure at least 70% local preference in tenant selection and such other provisions required under the Affordable Housing Overlay;
5. The Trust's review and consideration of Planning Board report(s) and any responses from the Just A Start pursuant to the advisory design review;
6. Standard Trust terms and conditions, including:
  - All affordable units shall be subject to the City's affordable housing covenant to be signed at loan closing which shall reflect the requirements of the Affordable Housing Overlay, including the requirement for permanent affordability;
  - All units shall be restricted to households earning below 100% of Area Median Income (AMI), and 97 units shall be restricted to households earning less than 80% AMI, as defined in the affordable housing restriction;
  - The loan shall be secured as a shared second mortgage loan of up to \$18,030,930;
  - The loan shall have an interest rate of 3% compounding, or such other rate approved by Staff
  - Loan shall be subject to a penalty rate of 8% compounding; applicable upon violation of the affordability restriction;
  - All principal and accrued interest shall be due and payable at the end of the term; however, the repayment date may be extended for an additional term upon approval by the Trust and extension of the affordability period;
  - The loan shall provide for repayment of principal and interest from 50% of net cash flow from the development, or other terms acceptable to staff;
  - Repayment of accrued acquisition and/or predevelopment interest shall be waived and/or deferred at conversion to permanent financing at construction closing;
  - Loan shall be non-recourse;
  - Any reductions in project costs or increases in non-Trust funding sources shall be used to reduce the amount of the Trust commitment.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	January 20, 2022
Subject:	Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation
Project Location:	52 New Street
Date of Planning Board Meeting:	January 4, 2022

## Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> to review and comment on the revised design for 52 New Street, a residential building being developed by Just A Start under the Affordable Housing Overlay (Section 11.207 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed plan sets submitted by Just A Start dated November 23, 2021 and December 14, 2021, as well as a presentation dated January 4, 2022. They also reviewed a memo from the Community Development Department (CDD) dated December 28, 2021, which is attached. The Planning Board held its first design consultation on October 26, 2021 and issued an initial report dated November 12, 2021, which is also attached.

## Proposal Description

The proposed building will have approximately 129,230 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) containing 107 permanently affordable rental apartments and approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The existing building, which was last used as a fitness center, will be demolished. The new building will be six stories above grade with a height of 70 feet. The development will include 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project is pursuing Passive House Institute (PHI) certification for environmental sustainability.

## Board Comments

Board members appreciated Just A Start’s thorough response to the comments issued in the initial report. They agreed that the project was improved by the revisions. Many members noted that this project sets a high benchmark for future projects under the AHO.

The following are areas that Board members suggested the developer continue to work on in consultation with staff, as funding and time permit:

- Revise the concrete slab bench design to be more comfortable and inviting, such as by incorporating benches with backs;
- Continue to work with CDD on building façade colors and material selection;
- Consider using tilt/turn windows;
- Camouflage the vents;
- Reconsider the size and location of the handicap parking space to allow adequate access to the bicycle parking room;
- Continue to work with the Department of Public Works to mitigate possible flooding impacts on the bicycle parking room.

This report certifies that Just A Start has completed the Advisory Design Consultation Procedure in order to comply with the procedures for development under the Affordable Housing Overlay set forth in Section 11.207.8 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

*Swaathi Joseph*

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.



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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: 12/28/2022

Re: **AHO-1, 52 New Street – Advisory Design Consultation Meeting #2**

**IRAM FAROOQ**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

**KHALIL MOGASSABI**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Planning

## Overview

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Submission Type: Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Advisory Design Review

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Developer: Just A Start

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Zoning District(s): Industry A-1 (IA-1)

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Proposal Summary: Demolition of an existing building and construction of a 129,230-square-foot residential building with 107 permanently affordable rental apartments and approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The new building will be six stories above grade with a height of 70 feet. The development will provide 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

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Planning Board Action: Review and comment on the responses from the developer to the Board's initial comments regarding conformance with AHO Development Standards, City Development Guidelines for the proposal area, Design Guidelines for AHO, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives. The Board may discuss revising the initial report to generate a Final Report that will be provided to the Superintendent of Buildings to certify compliance with the advisory design consultation procedures under AHO zoning.

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Memo Contents: CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report

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Other Staff Reports: None

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**11.207.5 – 11.207.7 AHO Development Standards**

Development Standard	Requirements for an AHO Project in IA-1
Building Height & Stories Above Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum six stories / 70 feet.</li> </ul>
Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No maximum FAR or minimum lot area per dwelling unit.</li> </ul>
Yard Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No required front yard in IA-1.</li> <li>• 10’ minimum side yards for residences in IA-1, may be reduced to 7.5’ by AHO.</li> <li>• 10’ minimum rear yard for residences in IA-1.</li> </ul>
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No required open space in IA-1.</li> </ul>
Existing Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable to the proposed development.</li> </ul>
Parking and Bicycle Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No minimum off-street parking.</li> <li>• Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures are required if there are 20 or more units and less than 0.4 spaces per dwelling unit are provided.</li> <li>• Bicycle parking is required per Article 6.100, with flexibility in the location and type (long-term and short-term), and the number of spaces may be reduced if a Public Bicycle Sharing Station is provided.</li> </ul>
Site Design and Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front yards may be landscaped or hardscaped but cannot be used for off-street parking.</li> <li>• Pedestrian entrances shall be visible from the street.</li> <li>• Buildings with front facades in excess of 250’ in length parallel to a street shall provide forecourts to break up massing.</li> </ul>
Building Facades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building facades facing a public street or public open space shall have a minimum 20% clear glass.</li> <li>• Building facades shall incorporate projections/recesses at regular intervals to promote visual interest.</li> </ul>
Ground Stories and Below Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground stories shall be at mean grade or no more than 4 feet above, with entrances to non-residential uses accessible at grade, unless the City Engineer determines that a higher ground story elevation is necessary for flood protection.</li> <li>• Structured parking within a ground story shall be set behind residential units, common areas, or other populated areas of the building.</li> <li>• Facades of ground stories cannot have expanses of more than 25’ with no windows or pedestrian entryways.</li> <li>• Ground stories with non-residential uses must have a height of at least 15’, average depth of 35’ from the front façade, and at least 30% clear glass frontage.</li> </ul>



Development Standard	Requirements for an AHO Project in IA-1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms in dwelling units cannot be located below grade.</li> </ul>
Mechanical Equipment, Refuse Storage and Loading Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanical equipment shall be generally screened from view. Rooftop mechanical equipment must be set back from the roof line equal to its height.</li> </ul>
Environmental Design Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Building Requirements as set forth in Section 22.20 apply to AHO Developments of 25,000 square feet or more.</li> <li>• New outdoor light fixtures shall be fully shielded and directed to prevent light trespass onto adjacent residential lots.</li> <li>• AHO Developments are exempt from the Green Roofs Ordinance.</li> </ul>

**AHO Design Guidelines**

<b>Site Design Objectives</b>	
1. <u>Response to Context</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design site layouts to harmonize with the neighborhood context.</li> </ul>
2. <u>Open Space &amp; Landscape Design</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design open space to enhance the lives of residents and the broader community by offering aesthetic and environmental benefits.</li> <li>• Offer useful amenities to residents, provide opportunities to minimize the impact of new development on neighbors' privacy and quality of life, and contribute to the beauty of the city.</li> </ul>
3. <u>Circulation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote non-motorized mobility by prioritizing pedestrian-friendly and bike-accessible site design.</li> </ul>
4. <u>Parking</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize the impact of parking and driveway.</li> </ul>
5. <u>Utilities</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize the visual, acoustical, and environmental impacts of essential utilities and services.</li> </ul>
6. <u>Outdoor Lighting</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide lighting for safety and functionality while minimizing energy use, light pollution, and other negative impacts.</li> </ul>
7. <u>Public Art</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrich the visual environment and strengthen the sense of place by incorporating art.</li> </ul>
<b>Building Design Objectives</b>	
1. <u>Massing</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Configure massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. In evolving areas, configure new developments to help realize the City's vision for urban form.</li> </ul>
2. <u>Facades</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design facades to enhance and enliven the public realm. In established areas, emphasize compatibility and reinforce sense of place. In evolving residential and commercial districts, contribute to the transformation of urban form by setting precedents for design excellence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where appropriate, incorporate ground level retail spaces and common areas to foster a lively enliven the urban environment.</li> <li>• Provide daylight to interior spaces, avoid excessive energy use, and protect the privacy of residents of neighboring buildings.</li> <li>• Design facades to relate to the residential scales and patterns of Cambridge's diverse and historic neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Design street facades to offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and visual interest as appropriate to their role in defining public space.</li> </ul>
3. <u>Architectural Details, Materials, Color, and Finishes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use materials that are warm, inviting, and compatible with surrounding existing buildings and the neighborhood context. Develop building facades of high-quality, durable materials and with colors, finishes, and textures appropriate to building contexts.</li> </ul>
4. <u>Building Interiors</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing, like all housing, should serve the needs of its residents while contributing to the residential character and sense of neighborhood within the area at large.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Design Objective</b>	
1. Site and Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve resilience measures to the maximum extent possible, including energy efficiency and measures to promote the health and wellness of residents.</li> </ul>

The complete set of Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing, 28 July 2020 can be found at:  
[https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend\\_aho\\_designguidelines\\_20200728v2.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend_aho_designguidelines_20200728v2.pdf)

**19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]**

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition to lower-scale neighborhoods</li> <li>• Consistency with established streetscape</li> <li>• Compatibility with adjacent uses</li> <li>• Consideration of nearby historic buildings</li> </ul>
Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inhabited ground floor spaces</li> <li>• Discouraged ground-floor parking</li> <li>• Windows on ground floor</li> <li>• Orienting entries to pedestrian pathways</li> <li>• Safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access</li> </ul>
The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location/impact of mechanical equipment</li> <li>• Location/impact of loading and trash handling</li> <li>• Stormwater management</li> <li>• Shadow impacts</li> <li>• Retaining walls, if provided</li> <li>• Building scale and wall treatment</li> <li>• Outdoor lighting</li> <li>• Tree protection (requires plan approved by City Arborist)</li> </ul>
Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management</li> <li>• Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service</li> <li>• Efficient design (LEED standards)</li> </ul>
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional use focused on existing campuses</li> <li>• Mixed-use development (including retail) encouraged where allowed</li> <li>• Preservation of historic structures and environment</li> <li>• Provision of space for start-up companies, manufacturing activities</li> </ul>
Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing as a component of large, multi-building development</li> <li>• Affordable units exceeding zoning requirements, targeting units for middle-income families</li> </ul>
Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly beneficial open space provided in large-parcel commercial development</li> <li>• Enhance/expand existing open space, complement existing pedestrian/bicycle networks</li> <li>• Provide wider range of activities</li> </ul>



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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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Date: 12/28/2021

Zoning Report: **AHO-1, 52 New Street – Advisory Design Consultation Meeting #2**

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## Overview

The developer, Just A Start, proposes to construct a 129,230-square-foot residential building with 107 permanently affordable rental apartments. The building will also include approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The development will provide 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

This is the first project to come before the Planning Board (the “Board”) under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The AHO standards apply “as-of-right,” meaning that no special permit or discretionary zoning approval is needed. Upon completing the advisory design review procedure, the developer can seek a building permit.

The Board held the first of two required advisory design consultations on October 26, 2021. Following their review, the Board issued a report, dated November 12, 2021, that highlighted the key comments that Board members made during the meeting. The developer submitted responses to those comments and is now before the Board for their second and final required advisory design consultation. Following this meeting, the Board may submit a revised report to the Superintendent of Buildings or submit the initial report as the Final Report.

## Planning Board Comments from Initial Consultation Meeting

Board members were supportive of the proposed building, so their feedback focused on opportunities for improvement. Overall, Board members encouraged Just A Start to pursue a bolder, more colorful design for the building that would make it less drab and provide an attractive edge to frame Danehy Park.

Additionally, Board members endorsed the comments made in the memos provided by CDD and DPW and asked that they be considered when refining the design. Board members also asked the developer to consider the suggestions made in written public comments, calling specific attention to those submitted by Jan Devereux.

## Staff Comments on Responses to Planning Board’s Comments

As mentioned in CDD staff’s first memo, the project as proposed is generally consistent with the standards set by the AHO. Most of the standards relate to basic development characteristics such as height, setbacks, and parking. As a result, the Board primarily issued comments in response to the building and site design, which are addressed in the accompanying urban design report.

The developer provided a thorough response to the various questions and comments that were issued by City staff, the Board, and members of the public. The following are some aspects of the project that the Board had requested more information on in relation to the AHO development standards:

- Ground Level Retail. The Board agreed with CDD staff that it would be helpful to learn more about what range of use types might be envisioned for the proposed Level 1 space that is designated in the plans as “retail.” The zoning allows an AHO project to have active non-residential uses on the ground floor, which it defines as Institutional Uses listed in Section 4.33, Office Uses listed in Section 4.34 Paragraphs a. through e., and Retail and Consumer Service uses listed in Section 4.35 that provide services to the general public. The developer notes that they have not started the leasing process for the ground floor retail but aims to secure a tenant that will benefit residents of the building and neighboring community. CDD Economic Development staff notes that some types of retail use that have been successful along New Street include fitness, craft retail manufacturing, personal services, and commercial recreation. As the street has changed over time, there may be other successful uses such as food uses (e.g., restaurant/café), which was mentioned during the [2015 Fresh Pond-Alewife Customer District Survey](#).
- Unit Size. The Board also commented on the appropriateness of the size of the units and the unit rent price point. In response, the developer shared information about the unit sizes and rent price points of other Just A Start residential properties. The zoning sets standards for AHO Eligible Households based on household income relative to the Area Median Income (AMI); the zoning also sets standards for rent and sale prices. AHO projects are not required to meet certain requirements for the size of units as measured by the amount of net square feet or the number of bedrooms. In addition to the zoning standards, Just A Start is also required to follow standards set by funders, such as the state Department of Housing and Community Development. This includes standards regarding rental price points, unit sizes, and cost per unit. CDD staff has reviewed the proposed interior layouts and will continue to work with Just A Start to ensure that units are maximally livable for households they’re designed to serve.
- Transportation Demand Management. Since the proposed project has a parking ratio of 0.4, per the Zoning Ordinance, the developer is not required to implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM). However, Just A Start has committed to voluntary TDM measures, including the following:
  - Conduct residential education sessions on location of bike parking and nearby Bluebikes stations, how to get a Bluebikes membership, where people can go in bike lanes, and transit options, including location of nearby bus stops and routes, and how to get and reload a Charlie Card;
  - Invite the Community Development Department to conduct an annual bicycle safety training for residents;
  - Install a bulletin board for car/vanpool matching;
  - Provide a Transportation Coordinator using the same property manager at Rindge Commons;
  - Provide a Transit Screen in lobby with MBTA bus and subway information and Bluebikes information;
  - Provide one 3-month bus/subway link pass Charlie Card to each of the 107 units upon move-in and commit that JAS resident services will provide on-going annual T-passes, subject to securing grant funding.

- Flood Resilience. CDD consulted with the Department of Public Works (DPW) on the information provided relative to flood resilience. DPW acknowledges the challenges associated with meeting the City's standards for flood resilience at this site and supports Just A Start's efforts to find passive protection methods for vulnerable building entrances as well as their commitment to a management plan for other spaces. DPW has also expressed to Just A Start that they should pursue design options that would protect critical infrastructure. DPW will continue to work with Just A Start on these designs and plans as the project progresses.

Prior to issuance of a building permit, some additional clarification will be needed on the following zoning-related items:

- Open Space. It appears that the amount and type of open space has changed from the numbers that were recorded on the dimensional form in the original project materials. There are also some discrepancies between page 9 and page 55 of the PDF of the Planning Board Response document. When applying for a building permit, an accurate recording of open space will be needed.
- Bicycle Parking. Bicycle parking dimensions, including layout and access routes, will need to be reviewed for conformance with zoning standards before issuance of a building permit. As part of this review, the developer should provide a 1" = 10' plan of the long-term bicycle storage room that notes clearances within the room and on the route to it, as well as the location and number of the required tandem and trailer bicycle parking spaces.



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# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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Date: 12/28/2021

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## Urban Design Report: AHO-1, 52 New Street – Advisory Design Consultation Meeting #2

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### Urban Design Comments on Design Revisions

The updated design of the proposed affordable housing project at 52 New Street is similar to the design that was presented in the Planning Board hearing on October 26, 2021. While numerous improvements have been made in response to Planning Board and staff comments, the project's basic urban design concept remains the same, and the project's architectural and site design remains generally consistent with the AHO Guidelines. As before, the project's civic benefits to Cambridge include the provision of urgently needed affordable housing and its contributions to the creation of a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use neighborhood at the western border of Danehy Park.

Changes to the design include:

1. Color accents have been added at window jambs, sunshades at windows, in opaque areas of fenestration, and in areas of cladding panels.
2. Numerous changes have been made to the northwest façade, facing New Street, adding color and details, extending the zones of the first-floor windows down to floor level, and strengthening the façade's role as a streetwall for New Street.
3. At the northeast façade, facing Danehy Park, colored recesses have been added at the fifth and sixth floors increasing the articulation of the building's skyline. The proportions of the facades' outermost planes in elevation have been adjusted.
4. The fifth and sixth floors facing Danehy Park have been articulated into smaller individual segments (approximately relating to the sizes of individual residential units) by slight recesses and contrasting colors.
5. Landscape elements have been added, including additional trees in the entry terrace/courtyard and vegetated screening of the entry drive from the neighboring property, and the deck on the second-floor terrace has been enlarged.
6. A new entrance to the long-term bicycle room is provided, allowing more direct entry from the building's entry terrace/courtyard.
7. In anticipation of a possible future path along the methane vent at the south side of Danehy Park (the realization of which is dependent on the results of an ongoing study and subsequent process), the documents depict potential locations of future connections from the building's entry terrace/courtyard and the project's own path along the building's north façade. The retail entrance is more prominent on the plaza at New Street.
8. A more connective pedestrian route has been created from New Street to the entry terrace/courtyard via the covered passage on the building's north side.
9. The deck on the south facing second floor terrace has been enlarged.
10. Screening has been added to control light trespass from the garage.

In addition, new information is provided regarding residential unit configurations and sizes and resident amenities, indicating that the unit sizes and amenities are similar to those of other affordable residential projects.

Because the Planning Board's review of this project is advisory, there are no conditions for continuing design review. However, as the developer further refines the design through the building permit and construction process, staff would encourage the developer to review the following considerations. Staff are happy to continue to consult with the developer as appropriate.

**Site Plan:**

1. As was mentioned in the previous hearing, northbound pedestrians on New Street may choose to enter the site via the driveway on the building's south side and walk through the drop-off to the entry courtyard/terrace, instead of using the loggia/passage on the building's north side. People arriving on bicycles will also be likely to use the driveway to get to the long-term bicycle parking room. The design of the driveway should recognize its importance as a pedestrian and bicycle route in terms of its pavement, plantings, and the first-floor façade adjoining it.
2. There were suggestions that the pedestrian route from New Street to the building's lobby consist of a more connective ensemble of spaces. The revised drawings have addressed this to some degree, adding trees in the courtyard and adding wood-look wall panels to the facades, but the linkages between these spaces could be further strengthened. Possible means include the eastward extension of the ramped loggia/passage's soffit to the courtyard, or perhaps into it; greater continuity of first floor facade materials from the passage through the courtyard to the lobby; the addition of a continuous (or semi-continuous) horizontal element at the top of the first-floor façade that would thread from the retail façade on New Street through the passage to the courtyard to the lobby entry, and perhaps into the lobby itself; slightly angling the easternmost portion of the retail space's north wall to relate to the angle of the trees in the entry terrace/courtyard; more continuity of plantings; etc.
3. Consider providing backs on at least some of the benches in the entry terrace/courtyard.
4. The retail entry has been moved to directly face the plaza on New Street, making it much more visible to the public. To create a more gracious relationship to the plaza, adjustments could be considered to the exact location of the retail space's entry door, the design of its small stoop, the width of the steps and the arrangement of their railings, and the glazed areas next to the door could be increased.
5. Consideration could be given to replacing the pole lights in entry courtyard terrace with low level lights.
6. Greater clarity should be provided regarding screening of the driveway from the adjoining property to the southwest, and whether the fence could extend closer to the street without interfering with view triangles.
7. The location of the emergency generator and gas meters (if any) should be clarified.
8. The City acknowledges the perception that the gravel trench that runs along sections of the perimeter of Danehy Park could be a logical location for an active shared use path, and that this project should make considerations for connections to a future path. It should be noted that this gravel path is an active methane vent trench that supports the abandoned landfill that has been develop into the Danehy Facility. With its required function, along with the current design, this trench cannot support use as a pathway. That said, the City is currently in the process of completing an evaluation of the Danehy site as part of a review 30 years after the landfill closure. Part of this review includes an evaluation of the condition and design of this trench vent system. Pending the results of this evaluation, the City may identify options, as have been used



elsewhere in the park, for a broader redesign of the trench system which will allow for reconsideration of the gravel trench space. No specific project or schedule has been identified for this reconsideration of the space and there is no guarantee that if the space can be reconfigured, its best use will be determined to be a shared use path. Regardless, as a direct abutter, there is value in the project reviewing potential connections should a future change at this location occur.

**Massing:**

9. Suggestions for giving the building's southeastern end a more articulate massing could be considered. Compatibility with the low scale buildings on Bay State Road would be increased if the end of the building were expressed more as a group of masses, some of them shorter than the building's typical six floor height, and additional green roofs and/or roof terraces could be provided.
10. The suggestion to extend the massing of the building's upper floors over the driveway to the drop-off could be considered further (but as noted in the application, this would likely reduce the size of the first-floor retail space).

**Elevations:**

11. Consideration could be given to lighter or less brown colors in the panelized cladding system, to increasing the amount of variation in the phenolic wood panels, and to providing additional accents and areas of color.
12. As noted in the first memo, the joint systems, fasteners, joint patterns, surface textures, etc. of the panelized cladding system should be carefully studied.
13. Consideration could be given to using tilt/turn operable windows instead of inswing hoppers.
14. At the first-floor retail façade, the relation between the retail space and sidewalk could be further strengthened by recessing the areas below the windows all the way down to grade.
15. More glazing could be considered at the retail entry.
16. As seen looking north from New Street, the building's south and west facades are treated as similar, roughly symmetrical with each other around the building's corner. To help frame New Street as civic space, consideration could be given to a greater distinction between the building's front façade facing New Street facing and its side façade facing the adjoining property. If the westernmost zone of the south façade - the zone approximately the width of the first-floor retail window - were distinguished by a reveal or a change in color or materials from the rest of the south façade, it would do much to create a more articulate corner and give emphasis to the building's New Street façade's frontality as it addresses the street.
17. The south facing portion of the first-floor façade will be prominent for pedestrians walking north on New Street. The size and proportions of the retail window, the treatment of the wall below it, its relationship to the windows above, and to the potential vertical zone described in the item above could be further studied.
18. Through-wall vents for kitchens, bathrooms, etc., are shown on the elevations. It would be preferable if these spaces were vented to the roof. If through-wall venting can't be avoided, their sizes and locations should be carefully arranged to achieve a pleasing outcome.
19. The heights of rooftop mechanical equipment should be checked relative to vantage points in the surrounding area, including Danehy Park, and the dimensions of screening should be checked relative to equipment heights and required clearances to comply with zoning standards.

**Plans:**

20. As noted in the accompanying Zoning Report, The Department of Public Works (DPW) acknowledges the challenges associated with meeting the City's standards for flood resilience at this site. DPW will continue to work with Just A Start on these designs and plans as the project is progressed.
21. A 1" = 10' plan of the long-term bicycle storage room should be submitted. Clearances within the room and on the route to it should be checked, and the location and number of the required tandem and trailer bike parking spaces should be clarified.
22. As noted above, bicyclists will likely enter the garage via the driveway at the south edge of the site. Consideration could be given to eliminating the parking space in front of the door at the western corner of the long-term bicycle storage room. Bicycle parking dimensions, including layout and access routes, will need to be reviewed for conformance before issuance of a building permit.
23. Light trespass from the drop-off and garage should be controlled by means such as fixture shielding, motion sensors, louvers, etc.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	November 12, 2021
Subject:	Initial Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation
Project Location:	52 New Street
Date of Planning Board Meeting:	October 26, 2021

## Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> to review and comment on the design for 52 New Street, a residential building being developed by Just A Start under the Affordable Housing Overlay ([Section 11.207](#) of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed a plan set submitted by Just A Start dated September 10, 2021 and presentation dated October 26, 2021, which contained some revisions to the design. They also reviewed memos from the Community Development Department (CDD) and the Department of Public Works (DPW), which are attached.

## Proposal Description

The proposed building will have 129,230 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) containing 107 permanently affordable rental apartments and approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The existing building, which was last used as a fitness center, will be demolished. The new building will be six stories above grade with a height of 70 feet. The development will include 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project is pursuing Passive House Institute (PHI) certification for environmental sustainability.

## Board Comments

Board members were generally supportive of the proposed building, so their feedback focused on opportunities for improvement. Overall, Board members encouraged Just A Start to design a building that would be a statement that would provide an attractive edge to frame Danehy Park. Board comments are as follows:

- **Building Design.** Board members provided several suggestions for reconsidering various design elements:
  - Break up the parapet on the north elevation to de-emphasize the length of the horizontal line;

- Provide more variation in the building design on the north elevation to break up the solid wall;
  - Replace the louvers in the bicycle parking room with windows;
  - Extend the New Street façade along the full length of the lot frontage, perhaps locating the drive aisle under the building;
  - Refine the articulation of the roof line;
  - Provide renderings of the building design as viewed from Danehy Park and across New Street;
  - Rethink the design of the retail space as it interacts with New Street.
- **Materials.** Many Board members were disappointed with the proposed building materials, which they called “drab.” Board members disagreed on the appropriateness of the wood veneer, but most would like to see a bolder and more playful color scheme.
  - **Amenity Spaces.** Many Board members commented that the interior and exterior amenity spaces, especially the roof deck on Level 2 seemed too small. Given the presence of Danehy Park to the north of the site and the opportunity for future development to the south, they thought that it could turn out to be short-sighted for the roof deck to be oriented to the south. Some Board members suggested that adding balconies to the building would help provide more open space to residents and would make the building look more residential, though a few cautioned that Juliet balconies could be less functional than regularly sized balconies. Some Board members were also concerned that the interior amenity spaces were too small to accommodate the number of residents in the building.
  - **Open Space.** There was some discussion from Board members about the size, quality, and location of open space on the site. Some Board members were concerned that there should be more play areas for children, while others believed that there was already ample children’s play space in the area. Another Board member suggested revisiting the design for the open space and considering options other than a climbing structure.
  - **Unit Size.** There was some discussion on the Board about the size of the units, with some Board members concerned that the units were undersized and others commenting that the size was appropriate given market demands, and that increasing unit sizes would result in fewer units. These Board members asked to know more information about the unit sizes and rent price points of other Just A Start residential properties.
  - **Flood Resilience.** Several Board members were concerned that some parts of the building, including spaces used for entrance lobbies, parking, and bicycle parking, were located below the projected 2070 long-term flood elevation. Board members asked how potential flooding would be managed in those spaces.
  - **Building Plan.** One Board member noted that the front door is a long way from the street but appreciated that the location of the door prevented residents from having to walk down a long corridor. Another Board member suggested that the building should be

shorter in length, that a shorter building would leave more open space at the southeast end of the site.

- **Site Plan.** One Board member raised a concern that pedestrians coming from the south would cut through the driveway and drop-off area to enter the building, creating potential traffic and safety concerns, and asked if that area could be designed to be safer. Another Board member requested that Just A Start improve its lighting plan for the covered entry route in order to feel safer at night. A Board member suggested that a covered route be provided across the entry plaza to the Lobby.
- **Landscape.** Board members suggested increasing the caliper of new trees planted on the site.
- **Roof:** Several Board members noted a preference for prioritizing usable green roof area over solar photovoltaic arrays on the roof of the building. They requested that Just A Start explain their decision to install a photovoltaic system. A Board member suggested that all rooftop equipment be screened.
- **Parking and Loading.** Board members would like more details on how the loading works. A Board member expressed concern about the impact of the parking garage on future development to the south of the building.
- **Uses.** Board members agreed with CDD staff that it would be helpful to learn more about what range of use types might be envisioned in the Level 1 space that is designated as “retail.”

Additionally, Board members endorsed the comments made in the memos provided by CDD and DPW and asked that they be considered when refining the design. Board members also asked the developer to consider the suggestions made in written public comments, calling specific attention to those submitted by Jan Devereux. Finally, Board members advised that it would have been helpful to have received the design refinements shown in the October 26, 2021 presentation further ahead of time.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

*Swaathi Joseph*

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
SUMBUL SIDDIQUI

mayor@cambridgema.gov  
Phone: 617-349-4321



OFFICE OF THE VICE MAYOR  
ALANNA M. MALLON

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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge, MA

January 20, 2022

Affordable Housing Trust

### **Re: Concerns regarding Winn Management property at Walden Square**

Dear Housing Trust Members,

We are writing to raise some serious concerns about Winn Management that have been brought to our attention over the course of last two years. Due to the repeated nature of these complaints, the similarity of their content, and evidence presented to us, we believe that Winn Management is continually failing its residents, especially at the Walden Square Apartments. Based on these concerns we would strongly advise against supporting the Walden Square project in the City of Cambridge moving forward if these concerns are not addressed adequately:

- Egregious and unresolved pest infestation issues over several years (Inspectional service Department has documentation of this)
- Lack of appropriate communication from management to residents (not accommodating of diverse language needs, posting notices at the last moment, poor attitude of office staff, unresolved work orders)
- Environment of intimidation and suggestion that residents leave if they are dissatisfied, which is not a viable option given the lack of affordable housing options in Cambridge

We have spoken to the City's Inspectional Services Department on many occasions, and there is photographic evidence to back up allegations, and residents are willing to speak to trust members about the conditions they are living under. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sumbul Siddiqui in black ink.

Mayor Siddiqui

Handwritten signature of Alanna M. Mallon in black ink.

Vice Mayor Mallon

## WALDEN SQUARE APARTMENTS

21 Walden Square Road · Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140 · TEL (617) 492-3020 · FAX (617) 492-3112 · TTY (800) 439-2370

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January 27, 2022

Mayor Siddiqui  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Vice Mayor Mallon  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Concerns regarding Winn Management property at Walden Square

Dear Mayor Siddiqui and Vice Mayor Mallon:

Please accept this letter as our response to your letter dated January 20, 2022. WinnResidential is committed to providing our residents the highest quality property management services and housing and will take all necessary steps to address each of the items noted. We would like to note that, during the past 22 months of an unprecedented, deadly global pandemic, the health and safety of resident households at Walden Square has been the top priority of our staff. With this focus, there is no doubt that some of our normal maintenance procedures have been occasionally impaired to align with vital public health restrictions.

The following details our responses to each of the issues noted in your letter.

**Egregious and unresolved pest infestation issues over several years (Inspectional service Department has documentation of this)**

WinnResidential provides extermination services to the residents of Walden Square on a weekly basis for any resident who reports an issue. Our extermination contractor is on site approximately six hours each week performing these services. In addition to the weekly treatments, a comprehensive inspection of all units was performed during the last week of October and first week of November 2021. Any units found to have activity were treated. Units noted requiring additional attention by our exterminators were treated again as recommended. Our practice is to make sure that units with persistent issues continue to be treated until it is determined that no

Professionally Managed by Winn Management Company, Boston, MA

Walden Square does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, familial status or national origin.

further action is necessary. To continue combatting the pest issues at the site, we are scheduling another inspection for all units during the first week of February 2022. We will continue to perform quarterly unit clean-outs to ensure all pest issues, reported or observed, are addressed. Please note that many of the reports of pests that you reference may stem not from Management's inactivity or unwillingness, but rather, in documented cases, from tenants who have repeatedly refused access to their unit for treatment, do not prepare properly for such treatments or are in need of personal housekeeping assistance. This is a serious reality that affects neighbors as well as the property itself. Resident attention and cooperation are critical to ensure that pest control services are effective over the long term (see attachment). However, we pledge to renew and step-up our efforts to secure cooperation from such residents, now and in the future, until the concerns expressed in your letter are fully rectified.

In addition to the interior pest control services, WinnResidential has had the exteriors of the buildings and dumpster areas at Walden Square baited for rats. The exterior bait stations are serviced on a bi-weekly basis. In November of 2021, after receiving a report from Inspectional Services relating to trash issues, we increased the number of trash pick-ups from 3 to 4 days a week. The property has historically had a weekend cleaner on Sundays to deal with weekend trash. We added an additional four hours of cleaning service on Saturdays exclusively dedicated to trash pick-up. To best of our knowledge there are no outstanding Cambridge Inspectional Services reports for extermination or any other maintenance related items. We hope this increase to the above industry standard of 4 days a week trash pick up will continue to be successful and result in no further complaints around this issue. We are happy to continue to monitor this issue with your staff as appropriate to make sure its continued success.

**Lack of appropriate communication from management to the residents (not accommodating of diverse language needs, posting notices at the last moment, poor attitude of office staff, unresolved work orders)**

Management acknowledges that current practice has been to send all notices out in English. Until this time, we have not received any requests to distribute notices in any other language. To address this concern, we will conduct a survey of all Walden Square residents to determine the additional translations residents would like going forward. Upon completion of the survey, all community notices will be in multiple languages whether they are posted or sent directly to residents.

It is WinnResidential's policy to send notices out to residents 24 to 48 hours prior to relevant activity occurring at the property. In some cases, that is not possible, Recently, for example, our sprinkler contractor had to cancel a service at the last minute and reschedule due to a permitting issue. The abrupt change made it impossible to notify residents within our policy timeframe. Other than this one instance, we are not aware of providing less than adequate notice to our residents. We have reiterated to the site team the importance of ensuring proper notice is provided to the residents of Walden Square.

During the past year, we did have an office staff member about whom residents had lodged complaints. That employee left the company on December 30, 2021, after company efforts to address behavior issues. All remaining members of our site team will attend customer service



refresher training course conducted by WinnResidential's Learning and Development Department in the weeks ahead. We take customer service very seriously and pride ourselves on delivering great service.

Over the past 12 months, the Walden Square maintenance team received 1,719 work order requests and completed 1,716 for a 99.8% completion rate (see attachment). As of this date, there are three (3) open Resident Service Orders. Two have been open one day or less. The one work order that has been open for more than a day will be completed when the necessary parts are delivered. The affected resident has been notified of the delay.

It is also important to note that all Walden Square residents receive anonymous satisfaction surveys *on a 3<sup>rd</sup> party software program*, at least once a year so that they can rate various aspects of the property on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the best possible score. In the most recent surveys conducted during 2021, respondents gave maintenance of the property an average score of 4.67 out of 5. In 2020, the average maintenance score was 4.44 out of 5. In 2019, the average maintenance score was 4.55. Overall, Walden Square residents have scored WinnResidential's management of the property in the mid to high 4s during the past three years

We will be reaching out to all residents to remind them of our Service Orders procedures. In addition, we will conduct a survey of all residents asking them to report to us any unresolved maintenance concerns in their units and in the common areas. Upon completion of the survey, we will address all unresolved items that residents bring forward.

We believe that rectifying the language barrier issue correctly identified by your letter will resolve much of the perceived issues among certain tenants. And we pledge to attack that issue right away so communication is made in native languages.

**Environment of intimidation and suggestion that residents leave if they are dissatisfied, which is not a viable option given the lack of affordable housing options in Cambridge**

**Response** – WinnResidential does not condone this type of attitude among our team members. As noted above, team members who consistently fail to meet our standards for customer service are subject to discipline up to and including termination. We believe the upcoming customer service refresher training for all site staff will be valuable in ensuring that our team is working meet or exceed the high standards we set. In addition, as noted above, we believe the rectified communication in native languages will serve to address this miscommunication issue as well.

**To better address all the concerns brought forth by residents and outlined in your letter, WinnResidential is committed to funding an additional Resident Services staff person at the site. This staff person would be dedicated to the day to day concerns of the resident population, working directly with residents to listen to and resolve requests or questions and to connect them with appropriate services, as needed.**

In addition, it is important to note that the site benefits from the presence of the Walden Square Community Association (WSCA), a resident-led organization with a core mission to represent residents of the property. The WSCA provides programming to the residents, including operating

a computer lab on site and coordinating programs for family households. **WinnResidential will work with the staff and resident board of the WSCA to build their capacity to represent the residents and create an environment of open communication.** WinnResidential will meet at least monthly with the WSCA board to understand any improvements that can be made at the site or with management staff. We acknowledge that some residents may have concerns that they do not feel comfortable bringing directly to the property management company. The WSCA serves as an additional resource for those residents, providing another avenue for issues to be addressed by our team.

WinnResidential has proven itself extremely committed to the residents of Walden Square. Since we acquired the buildings in 2001, we have completed several significant upgrades, including installing new roofs and HVAC systems to rectify issues inherited when the property was purchased. Since 2018, we have implemented a multi-year capital plan where we have spent \$3.5 million on improvements to the site, including accessible unit upgrades, new toilets and doors, and common area finish upgrades in the nine-story building.

To ensure we fully understand and are addressing the specific issues of the Walden Square residents, we would like to schedule a meeting as soon as possible with residents who have raised concerns to your office as they chose not to bring their concerns to the established WSCA Tenant Board whom we regularly interact with. It is our goal to meet and exceed the needs of our residents whenever possible. We look forward to working together constructively with residents to listen to, discuss and resolve any concerns they bring forth. We also look forward to creating much needed deed-restricted additional affordable housing units for families at Walden Phase 2 which will address so many of the housing cost issues plaguing Cambridge.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Kuppens, Executive Vice President  
WinnResidential

Cc:

Chris Cotter  
Cassie Arnaud  
Gilbert Winn  
Lawrence Curtis  
Michael O'Brien  
Matthew Robayna