



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: April 8, 2021

Re: **PB #364 – 60 First Street and 20 CambridgeSide Design Review**

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI
Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

The Special Permit for the CambridgeSide Planned Unit Development (PUD-8) was granted by the Planning Board on December 22, 2020. In Section 2 Approved Development Program, the Special Permit decision authorized development in two phases: the Initial Phase Buildings are 20 CambridgeSide Place and 60 First Street; the Subsequent Phase Buildings are 80-90 First Street and 110 First Street. The applicant has submitted an application for the Initial Phase Buildings for design review and approval. The Publicly Beneficial Open Space located on a particular building site is included in the design review. In addition, Section 5 Timing and Phasing of the Special Permit decision notes that the Initial Phase shall also include improvements to Lechmere Canal Park, which is owned by the City. The open space design of Lechmere Canal Park was not included in this design review submission and the Applicant has indicated that it would be submitted at a later time, after forming a stakeholder committee.

Planning Board Action

The Planning Board's review of the building and landscape design is guided by the conditions of the special permit, which references the design standards specified in the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study dated October 2001, the guidance provided in the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines dated October 15, 2001, the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan dated May 1978, the East Cambridge Development Review Process and Guidelines dated June 1985, and the Cambridge Riverfront Plan dated Spring 2011. A summary of these guidance documents is included at the end of this memo.

This memo summarizes the key areas of focus for the components of the project under current review.

Review Process

Since September 2019, staff has had numerous meetings with the developer team and the project architect to review various details of the project, including since the PUD-8 hearing at the end of 2020. The proposed designs for the phase one buildings reflect many of the suggestions made in these discussions.

PUD Urban Design Objectives and Guidelines

In addition to the guidelines referenced above, design objectives and strategies specific to the site were developed as part of the PUD process. The objectives and guidelines most relevant to the review of the buildings are:

Ground level design and uses

- Support an active pedestrian-oriented public realm on First Street by creating a recognizable base, activated by retail and active uses.
- Set back new buildings on First Street by at least 10 feet.

Siting, Scale and Massing

- To create a rich and varied skyline along streets abutting the development parcel, a diversity of heights and massings is encouraged in buildings fronting on First Street, Cambridgeside Place, and Land Boulevard.
- Create separations between buildings on First Street.
- Building tops, including mechanical penthouses, are to contribute to a varied skyline.
- For buildings over 85' tall, provide 10 foot setbacks at approximately 65' and at approximately 135'.
- For buildings under 85' tall, provide a horizontal articulation at approximately 65' through means other than a setback.
- Step back rooftop mechanical penthouses by 15'.
- New buildings shall be spaced to preserve adequate light, air, and view corridors for the benefit of the East Cambridge neighborhood. Where possible, separate buildings by courtyards or other significant breaks. On First Street such breaks should be aligned with Spring and Hurley Streets to the extent possible.

Architectural Character

- Diverse and varied finishes and façade elements are encouraged, to contribute to the reading of individual buildings along the perimeter streets.

Urban Design Comments:

- The original design of the CambridgeSide Galleria was a revolutionary achievement, bringing a strong urban sensibility to the creation of a vibrant retail center: designing it as an integral part of its urban context, framing the adjoining streets with streetwalls, creating an atrium galleria to connect north/south between Canal Park and Charles Park, and placing parking entirely in an underground garage. In recent years, the retail market has changed, de-emphasizing the large anchor stores traditionally associated with malls, and the City has promoted the activation of streets with retail and other publicly accessible uses and engaging pedestrian facades.
- The proposed renovation and expansion of the CambridgeSide Galleria, of which the two buildings under review are the first phase, builds on the Galleria's original design while responding to these changes. It contributes to the transformation of First Street into a pedestrian-friendly retail-lined street, and provides laboratory/office and residential space in taller buildings along both First Street and Land Boulevard, while at the same respecting the original intent of the project by its compatibility in height with the adjoining streets and by preserving the core mall's atrium and its first and second floor interior retail.
- The first phase of the project consists of the replacement/renovation/expansion of the Sears building at the complex's northwest corner, and the Macy's building at its southeast corner. According to PUD-8, improvements to the landscape of Lechmere Canal Park must also be completed as part of phase one, but they are not included in the package currently under review.
- Staff met with the applicant after the Planning Board's PUD-8 hearings at the end of 2020. Discussions mostly focused on the façade design of the buildings, including the fenestration patterns of upper floor facades, pedestrian level shopfronts and piers, lobby entrances, exterior sun shading devices, exterior lighting, the incorporation of art, glazing specifications, the landscape design of adjoining sidewalks.
- Both buildings frame the adjoining streets with clearly organized and carefully detailed streetwalls, roughly 85 feet tall and expressing an architectural character conceived in relation to the older masonry industrial buildings of the area. Above their streetwalls the upper portions of both buildings convey a more modern design intent: at 20 Cambridgeside Place the upper

floors become increasingly metallic and glassy as they ascend through three stepbacks; at 60 First Street the mechanical penthouse is treated as an expressive cross braced louvered metal pavilion, floating above the masonry building. Given the importance and potential of the adjoining streets, this strategy: prioritizing the building's contributions to the definition and enrichment of public space at the scale of the adjoining streets, and reserving more unique expressions of individuality to their upper levels seems appropriate, and accords with the design guidelines.

- Overall, the massing and scale of the buildings is consistent with the PUD approval. The following comments generally focus on more detailed aspects of the design and on the sitework.

20 CambridgeSide

Massing and Character

- A ten-floor office/lab building is proposed to replace the existing Macy's building at the southeast corner of the CambridgeSide Galleria complex. The structure of the building's existing ground floor will remain, incorporated into the proposed building's volume and wrapped by new facades. Staff appreciates the environmental benefits of reusing the building's first floor, thereby minimizing the project's material and energy waste and embodied carbon footprint.
- The proposed building's streetwall will be its dominant feature from the point of view of pedestrians on the adjoining sidewalks. Its height is compatible with the width of the street and the nearby existing buildings. The building's upper massing steps back from the plane of the streetwall, the façade becoming lighter and more glassy and metallic at each step, but maintaining the pattern of regularly spaced windows. Thin metal projecting window frames on floors two through five and vertical perforated metal projecting sunscreens on floors six through ten will add detail and changing shadows to the façades.
- Due to the building's breadth along Land Boulevard, and the vertical continuity of its bay system and fenestration pattern from the ground through 10th floors, and despite its stepbacks at the sixth and ninth floor levels, the building's east side reads not so much as a tower on a podium as a broad and tall wall that increases the scale of the street while stepping back from it.
- Perhaps the building's most exceptional component is the translucently glazed two floor penthouse, which is intended to both blend in with the color of the sky and also stand out by virtue of its use of channel glass, adding a modernist note to the otherwise more traditional appearance of the building. The mechanical level Plan indicates louvers on the penthouse's south and west sides. These should be clearly shown on the elevation drawings and perspectives.
- From vantage points on the northern portion of Land Boulevard, the building continues the massing of the Hotel Marlowe along the street, separated from it by a vertical recess above the garage entrance. From the southern portion of Land Boulevard, the upper volume of the building, with its glass mechanical penthouse floors, will be a significant landmark, marking the southeast corner of the CambridgeSide complex and addressing Charles Park across CambridgeSide Place.
- The repetitive character of the Land Boulevard façade, enlivened by variations in the plane of window glazing, seems generally appropriate given the scale of the street. As the design develops, consideration could be given to strategically interrupting the regular pattern in response to significant views. For example, an opportunity presents itself at the building's rounded corner at the 6th through 8th floors, where a broader window could be created, potentially intermediating between the glazed lobby entrance and the metal and glass of the of the upper floors and penthouse. A similar façade modulation could be considered in response to the space between the two towers of the Royal Sonesta Hotel on the opposite side of Land

Boulevard, and to design guidelines recommending that buildings longer than 200' be articulated into smaller massings.

Ground Floor Design and Uses

- The proposed building adheres to the existing Macy's building's façade line on Land Boulevard and Cambridgeside Place. Its streetwall, approximately two floors taller than that of the existing building, presents a rounded corner to the intersection. Its ground floor has large windows on Cambridgeside Place, continuing through to Land Boulevard.
- A recessed double-height lobby entrance faces Cambridgeside Place and Charles Park. The lobby's ground floor level extends through the building's rounded corner to the Land Boulevard façade. Elevators and escalators give access to its upper level, where the secure entrance to the upper floor elevators is located. The ground level of the lobby is intended to be public; building security is at the lobby's second floor level. The lobby will have a significant impact on the pedestrian realm due to its extensive sidewalk frontage, careful consideration should be given to its character and activation. To add visual interest to the building's ground level, consideration could be given to providing retail at the rounded corner, either as a feature within the lobby, or as a separate space accessed both from the lobby and directly from the sidewalk. Note that the design guidelines recommend that entrances be located at corners.
- The double height glazed lobby entrance seems in scale with the size of the building and with Charles Park on the opposite side of Cambridgeside Place. Consideration could be given to providing sunshading both for its energy benefits and as a thematic reference to the shading provided for the windows in the upper portions of the building.
- A small retail space, entered directly from Cambridgeside Place, adjoins the west side of the lobby. Staff supports the applicant's intent (discussed in meetings) to also open the retail onto the lobby to help activate it.
- On Land Boulevard, a large street-level artwork will screen the building's gas meters and internal service yard and extend across the service yard's large overhead door, a welcome enrichment of the public realm. The applicant is working with the Cambridge Arts Council on artist selection.
- Staff appreciates the large ground level windows, and the detailed brickwork at their heads. Consideration could be given to creating a richer pattern of mullions, and to providing canopies. More significantly, consideration could be given to providing retail at the corner facing the intersection, rather than simply a view of the double height lobby.

Site Design:

- The project's sitework is limited to the adjoining sidewalks on Land Boulevard and Cambridgeside Place. The work will need to be carefully coordinated with the City and with the State, as Land Boulevard is a state owned right of way.
- The width and location of the proposed loading dock's curb cut appears to remain as-is. While it would be preferable for it to be narrower and have smaller curb radii, staff recognizes that traffic flow on Land Boulevard and maneuvering space for trucks entering and exiting are important considerations.
- The application proposes the replacement of the existing brick pavement at the loading entrance and the Land Boulevard garage entrance with grey pavement. Consideration could be given to instead utilizing brick, to give visual priority to the continuity of the pedestrian movement along the sidewalk, and to also providing brick pavement at the Cambridgeside Place garage ramp entrance.
- It appears that there are opportunities for additional street trees at the southeast corner of the site and possibly on Land Boulevard.

Materials, Colors, and Details

- Further information on the fenestration should be provided, particularly the on transparency of the ground floor and upper floor glazing, and how it handles competing desires for transparency with energy efficiency.

60 First Street

Massing and Character

- The proposed building preserves the structure of the existing Sears Building's first two floors, renovating them and adding three occupiable floors plus a mechanical penthouse on top of them. At about 85', the proposed streetwall is about two floors taller than that of the existing Sears Building, but seems compatible with the width of First Street and the nearby existing buildings. The top (fifth) floor is slightly stepped back, and its piers are clad in metal, creating a strong datum line at its windowsill level at about 70', in accord with the PUD-8 Design Guidelines.
- The building's brick clad structural frame, regularly spaced and sized windows with multiple panes, and expressive brick detailing draw inspiration from the 19th century and early 20th century buildings of the area, some of which still remain. The penthouse is stepped back approximately 30' from the streetwall facades below, and, in contrast to the brick facade below, is an X braced construction of gray horizontal metal louvers and exposed steel frame members, giving it a light and linear quality, and adding variety to the roofscape.
- A green roof could be considered at the top of the building's main volume, and also on the penthouse, both for its environmental benefits and to enhance the view from the residents in the taller adjoining second phase building.

Ground Floor Design and Uses

- The building's engagement with Thorndike, First Street, and the pedestrian walk around the Canal, and the building's flexibility to accommodate tenants of different sizes, would benefit from more entrances and from large operable windows to connect the retail space to the adjoining sidewalks. All retail spaces with frontage on First Street should include an entry on First Street, in addition to entries within the Arcade.
- Consideration could be given to incorporating some of the lighter, more modern, sensibility of the penthouse into the design of the first floor: creating simpler, less heavy masonry piers, and to adding detail to the storefront fenestration.
- On First Street, the office lobby entrance and the entrance to the "Arcade" – the retail passage connecting through the building to the Galleria's food court - are paired together and spanned by a continuous beam that is supported by a central two-floor-tall column. Staff recommends that the Arcade entrance be given more visual emphasis relative to the lobby entrance, for instance by recessing it for its full two-story height, and by treating the lobby entry as a smaller single floor pavilion within the larger opening.
- The arcade passes between retail spaces, its side walls angled in plan to add visual interest, and it incorporates a widened space at its center for retail use. . Additional consideration should be given to its design to maximize the visual connection and movement between the adjoining retail and the arcade, including adjustments to its configuration in plan, its ceiling design, and the possibility for large operable openings in its glazed sidewalls.

- A bicycle room, accessed from First Street, adjoins the arcade. The possibility of creating a more direct route from the sidewalk to the bicycle room and from the bicycle room to the arcade could be explored.

Site Design

- As noted above, the application does not address improvements to the landscape design of Lechmere Canal Park. Improvements to its landscape must be completed as part of phase one. More information on the schedule of the park's design, review, and construction would be helpful.
- On the building's three exposed sides, it would be helpful if the documentation included a clear dividing line on the plan distinguishing the work intended to be constructed with the building from work to be discussed in future hearings.
- Thorndike Way is significant as the entrance to Canal Park from First Street. More information regarding the use of that space by adjoining retail, retail signage, and regarding the potential for additional street trees, furniture, lighting, etc. would be helpful to understand how the adjoining retail will enhance the space's character and connection to Canal Park.
- A study regarding improvements to First Street, including the construction of mandated separated bicycle lanes, is being completed as part of PUD-8's second phase. The final design of the First Street sidewalk will need to be deferred until the study is completed. It can be noted, however, that the proposed clearance width for pedestrian flow between the tree planting areas (and the proposed benches and low barriers that protect them) and the building façade is very narrow.

Materials, Colors, and Details

- Further information on the fenestration should be provided, particularly the transparency of the ground floor and upper floor glazing, and how it handles competing desires for transparency with energy efficiency.

Environmental Impacts

Lighting

- The application depicts exterior lighting of both buildings, limited to the roughly 85 feet of their streetwall heights, including uplights that obliquely graze the brickwork and illuminate the soffits of the streetwall cornices. Staff appreciates that exterior lighting will use high cut-off fixtures, be dimmable, and will be limited to certain hours, but suggests that to further minimize light pollution, consideration be given to only illuminating the first and second floor pedestrian zones and to avoiding glare.
- Given the proximity of the phase one buildings to residential East Cambridge, and to the project's own phase two residential building, consideration could be given to going beyond the requirements of PUD-8 (section 13.107.3) by providing automatic control of light after working hours for both of the phase one buildings regardless of whether they contain laboratories or offices.

Noise and Vibration

- The design of the buildings and their systems should minimize noise impacts both on the East Cambridge residential neighborhood and also the proposed second phase residential building on

First Street and Hotel Marlowe. The application includes a noise narrative that describes the type and location of proposed rooftop mechanical equipment and measures being taken to reduce ambient noise. The developer's acoustical consultant provides an analysis predicting that the noise levels will comply with the Cambridge Noise Ordinance, which is one requirement of the PUD-8 zoning and special permit.

- The PUD-8 zoning also includes a requirement that "any noise or vibration emanating from new commercial or substantially altered commercial buildings shall not be normally perceptible without instruments at a distance of one hundred (100) feet from the source lot line." This requirement is not discussed in the noise narrative. The PUD-8 zoning requires that as a condition of receiving a certificate of occupancy, another acoustical report must be provided with field measurements demonstrating that the requirements are met.
- In addition, consideration could be given to requesting that an independent peer assessment of the anticipated noise levels produced by both buildings and of the proposed mitigation strategies be provided.

Wind and Shadow

- Wind and shadow studies are included in the Special Permit application of August 2020. The proposed buildings in the current review package are very similar in massing.

Urban Heat Island

- On a heat map of Cambridge, the existing Galleria is hotter than the surrounding areas. High albedo colored roofs are proposed for the buildings, but consideration could be given to providing green roofs, or bisolar roofs (combining green roofs and photovoltaic arrays).

Green Building Review

20 CambridgeSide Place

- The 20 CambridgeSide Place project is subject to the City's current Green Building requirements that mandate meeting LEED Gold requirements. It is currently targeting LEED Gold, under LEED v4 BD+C: Core and Shell and meets the minimum requirement with 70 credit points. An additional 16 points have been designated as possible. The Green Building Report sufficiently demonstrates compliance with Article 22 requirements.
- While there are no plans to install photovoltaics (PVs) at this time, a small portion of the roof is designated as "solar ready." It would be helpful to have more information regarding product and materials for some of the LEED credits, including , but not limited to, Credit 2, Building Product Disclosure & Optimizations (BPDO): EPDs, Credit 4, BPDO: Material Ingredients, and Credit 2, IEQ Low Emitting Materials.
- Staff urges the design team to continue pursuing additional points, especially from impactful categories such as energy and atmosphere, indoor environmental quality, and materials and resources. In addition, it would be informative for staff to know the USGBC's comments from their project reviews.

60 First Street

- The 60 First Street project is subject to the City's current Green Building requirements that mandate meeting the LEED Gold requirements. It is currently targeting LEED Gold, under LEED v4 BD+C: Core and Shell and meeting the minimum requirement with 66 credit points. An

additional 19 points have been designated as possible points. The Green Building Report sufficiently demonstrates compliance with Article 22 requirements.

- While there are no plans to install photovoltaics (PVs) at this time, a small portion of the roof is designated as “solar ready.” Since 60 First Street involves the existing Sears building, staff recommend exploring Building Life-Cycle Impact Reduction credit points. It would be helpful to know more information on product and materials on some of the LEED credits. Some of these credits include, but are not limited to, Credit 2, Building Product Disclosure & Optimizations (BPDO): EPDs, Credit 4, BPDO: Material Ingredients, and Credit 2, IEQ Low Emitting Materials.
- Staff urges the design team to continue pursuing additional points, especially from impactful categories such as energy and atmosphere, indoor environmental quality, and materials and resources. In addition, it would be informative for staff to know the USGBC’s comments from their project reviews.

Signage and Wayfinding

- The application package shows proposed locations for the signage of the project’s major elements - building lobbies and garage entries - but not for the signage of individual retail spaces, nor for wayfinding. Additional study should be given to graphic standards, to a strategy for the coordination of signage across the site, and to the process to establish the design and placement of retail and wayfinding signage.

Engineering

- Work proposed outside of project parcels - in roadway right-of-ways - shall be reviewed and evaluated as the project progresses. Mitigation and/or improvement limits shall consider impacts as a result of utility work as well as construction.
- Existing street trees shall remain and be protected, and all proposed trees shall be planted in accordance with the Urban Forestry Masterplan.
- Land Boulevard is a State owned right of way and any work will require review and approval by the State. The DPW would request that the Applicant review and conditions along this frontage and consider changes to improve conditions for pedestrians, specially conditions at the wide curb cut that is being maintained.
- The First Street Corridor, including the frontage of the entire Cambridgeside 2.0 Redevelopment project will be reimaged as part of a broader City planning process. Any construction in this right of way will be evaluated with respect to the design proposal and schedule of this planning process.

Additional Information Requested

- Provide clear dividing lines on the site plans showing the scope of work proposed as part of the building construction.
- Provide the proposed schedule for documentation, review, and construction of landscape improvements to Canal Park.
- Indication of penthouse louvers on the 20 Cambridgeside Place building’s perspectives and enlarged bay elevations.
- On 60 First Street, an explanation of how the building design will accommodate the later phase removal of the existing parking ramp and the construction of the pocket park between the building and the neighboring second phase building.

Continuing Review:

The following is a summary of issues that staff recommends should be further studied by the Applicant, either in preparing revised materials if the Planning Board continues the meeting to a future date, or as items for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to approve the design review:

20 CambridgeSide

- Design of ground floor façade and lobby entrance, including the potential for exterior sun shading devices.
- Character of the lobby, and the location of ground floor retail and its connection to the lobby.
- Fenestration pattern and window and pier widths at the rounded corner façade facing the intersection, and the curvature of the metal panel system at the 8th to 10th floors.
- Junction of the proposed building with the existing mall building at the CambridgeSide Place parking ramp entrance.
- Location of signage for the retail space.
- Potential for a green or bisolar roof, and for green terraces at stepbacks.
- The design of exterior lighting.
- Coordination with State and City on sidewalk design and materials, including planting standards, utilities, paving, and the potential for additional street trees.
- Coordination with the city on the number, and location of short term bicycle racks.
- Review of long term bicycle storage.
- Continuing review of the project will need to focus on exterior materials, colors and details. A mockup of all wall assemblies (including the ground floor façades) should be provided on site. Samples of glass types and information on transparency/ reflectivity should be provided.
- Prior to the final selection of colors and textures for façade materials, the construction of exterior wall mock-ups near the building sites to be reviewed by the Community Development Department for comment. Members of the Planning Board shall be notified when the mock-ups are erected and given an opportunity to view the materials and transmit any comments to the Community Development Department.

60 First Street:

- Additional retail entrances on First Street and Thorndike Street and facing the canal.
- Potential for large folding fenestration to connecting retail space to the sidewalk, and design of fenestration and piers.
- Design of the paired First Street entrances to the Lobby and Arcade.
- Design of the “Arcade” or “Mall Connector”, including the possibility of broad openable fenestration in its side walls.
- Route to the first floor bicycle storage room.
- Provide the proposed schedule for documentation, review, and construction of landscape improvements to Canal Park.
- Location of signage for the lobby, arcade, and retail spaces.
- Potential for green or bisolar roofs.
- The design of exterior lighting.

- Coordination with the city on the number, and location of short term bicycle racks.
- Review of long term bicycle storage.
- Coordination with City staff on sidewalk design, including the potential for additional street trees, planting standards, utilities, paving, etc. Final decisions will need to be deferred to after the completion of the First Street Corridor Study, expected in the summer of 2021.
- Samples of glass types and information on transparency/ reflectivity should be provided.
- Prior to the final selection of colors and textures for façade materials, the construction of exterior wall mock-ups near the building sites to be reviewed by the Community Development Department for comment. Members of the Planning Board shall be notified when the mock-ups are erected and given an opportunity to view the materials and transmit any comments to the Community Development Department.

Appendix: Relevant Design Guidelines

Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines, 2001

1. Street-level Uses and Design

Retail blocks are intended to have a high volume of pedestrian traffic, and to support public activity throughout the day and evening.

- a. At least 75 percent of the street frontage should be occupied by retail uses, including cafes and restaurants.
- b. Major entrances should be located on public streets, and on corners wherever possible. Entrances should relate to crosswalks and pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations.
- c. Transparent materials and interior lighting should be used to maximize visibility of street level uses. Ground floor facades should be at least 50 to 75 percent transparent surface to permit a clear view from the sidewalk to the interior space of the building.
- d. Blank walls should be avoided along all streets and pedestrian walkways.

2. Building Height and Orientation

Major Public Streets

- a. Set back any portion of the building above 65 feet by at least 10 feet from the principal facade.
- b. For retail and office uses, build to the lot line or provide small setbacks (5 to 15 feet) from the right-of-way for café seating, benches, or small open spaces. Setbacks used exclusively for ornamental landscaping are not permitted but may be allowed to accommodate street furniture, street trees, or generous sidewalks. Awnings and canopies are encouraged to provide shelter and enliven the ground floor facade.
- c. For residential uses, provide small setbacks (5 to 10 feet) for stoops, porches, and front gardens.
- d. Driveway turnaround and vehicle drop-off facilities are strongly discouraged along public streets.
- e. Locate loading docks on side streets or service alleys, and away from residential areas.
- f. In use, design, and entry, orient buildings towards corners.

Park Edges

- a. The height of the principal façade of buildings surrounding a park should be no greater than 1/3 the width of the park. For additional height above this limit, buildings should be stepped back by at least ten feet from the principal facade. Greater height without setbacks may, however, be appropriate at corners or in specific locations to create architectural variety.
- b. Locate buildings to minimize shadows on the park, especially in the afternoon.
- c. Surround public parks with uses that create an active environment throughout the day and evening and increase safety for park users, such as: –
 - Buildings should be designed with individual units and front doors facing the street, including row house units on the lower levels of multi-family buildings.
 - Shops, cafés and other public uses that enliven the street.

Other Streets

- a. If the prevailing height of surrounding buildings is 65 feet or less, establish a cornice line that matches the prevailing height of surrounding buildings. For additional height above the cornice line, provide a setback of at least 10 feet from the principal façade. |

- b. For retail and office uses, build to the lot line or provide small setbacks (5 to 15 feet) from the right-of-way for café seating, benches, or small open spaces. Setbacks used exclusively for ornamental landscaping are not permitted.
3. Scale and Massing
 - a. Buildings should avoid continuous massing longer than 200 feet facing mixed-use and retail streets. If massing extends beyond this length, it should be made permeable and visibly articulated as several smaller masses using different materials or colors, vertical breaks, bays, or other architectural elements.
 - b. Buildings should reflect a rhythm and variation appropriate to the urban context. E.g., this can be achieved by expressing bay widths of 25 to 50 feet along mixed-use and retail streets
 - c. Buildings should have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top. This may be achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, or other elements.
 - d. Use variations in height and architectural elements such as parapets, cornices and other details to create interesting and varied rooflines and to clearly express the tops of buildings.
 - e. Emphasize corners using taller elements such as towers, turrets, and bays
 - f. Taller buildings should be articulated to avoid a monolithic appearance: Taller buildings should be point towers instead of slabs, and should have smaller floor plates instead of larger floor plates.
 4. Architectural Character - Commercial
 - a. Create varied architecture and avoid flat facades by using recessed or projected entryways, bays, canopies, awnings, and other architectural elements.
 - b. Vary the architecture of individual buildings to create architecturally diverse districts.
 - c. Where buildings are set back at upper stories, lower roofs may be used as balconies, balustrades, and gardens.
 5. Parking
 - a. Locate vehicular parking entrances on side streets and alleys and provide safe pedestrian access from public streets.
 - b. All parking garages must provide direct pedestrian access to the street.
 - c. The primary pedestrian exit/access to all garages serving nonresidential uses should be to the street or a public area.
 - d. Design and locate lighting fixtures in surface parking lots and garages to enhance safety while minimizing light spillover onto adjacent properties.

East Cambridge Development Review Process and Guidelines, 1985

1. Height
 - a. Height and bulk of buildings should be configured to minimize visual dominance, shadows, and undesirable wind impacts.
 - b. Limit building height around the canal, especially at the northern edges of the shopping crescent. The crescent must contain the Lechmere Canal spatially as well as sunlight.
 - c. Building planes facing or generally oriented toward the riverfront open space must be stepped back to minimize the shadows that are cast on the open space system.
 - d. A coordinated system of expressive building tops is encouraged and should become an integral part of the design concept.
2. Scale
 - a. Relate to human dimensions and provide a sense of intimacy in all aspects of design.

3. Massing
 - a. New development should extend the East Cambridge grid pattern.
 - b. Break down typical building massing to relate to the historic character and mass of 19th century Cambridge; and to prevent a monolithic appearance.
 - c. Maximize sunlight available to Lechmere Canal.
 - d. Avoid the creation of alleyways along property lines visible from any public view.

4. Streetwalls and Setbacks
 - a. Maintain existing streetwalls. This may be accomplished by principal front wall plane setbacks and cornice lines, which are consistent with existing buildings on the same block or neighboring blocks.

5. Silhouette
 - a. Tall buildings should be shaped to be increasingly slender and broken down in scale toward the top.
 - b. Buildings should be of a tripartite architectural configuration consisting of base/middle/expressive top.
 - c. Buildings must provide animated silhouettes that enliven views from the open space system, and surrounding areas.

6. Details
 - a. Development bordering the public domain must be rich in architectural details, pay special attention to the ground plane and Silhouette, and incorporate appropriate imagery depending on location
 - b. Overall form and individual elevations must be designed to emphasize human scale and presence through the use of properly proportioned features.

7. Materials
 - a. New buildings should be mainly faced with an authentic New England water-struck brick, with elegant highlights and subtle embellishments of granite and limestone.
 - b. A granite base treatment (to match that used at Lechmere Canal) is needed to relate to the public open space system and thoroughfares.
 - c. Use limestone or granite string courses, lintels, sills and trim to soften and refine the brick facades. Flemish bond or American bond with headers every 6 or 7 courses is recommended.
 - d. Use the highest quality of materials at the pedestrian level of all buildings.

8. Awnings
 - a. Provide lateral-arm awnings, color coordinated with adjacent development.

9. Transparency of Ground Floor Spaces
 - a. Maximize visibility and transparency through ground floor retail.
 - b. All tenant improvements visible from public open spaces and thoroughfares are subject to design review as part of the PUD process.

10. Balconies
 - a. Provide human-scaled balconies at appropriate locations overlooking the public open space systems. Balconies must be detailed so that they are inviting, highly useable and relate directly to the character of the adjoining open space.

11. Penthouse
 - a. All mechanical penthouse and other projections should be architecturally integrated within the overall form and individual elevations of the building.
12. Color
 - a. Use warm and inviting color in all buildings.
13. Windows
 - a. Use operable windows and traditional masonry openings and articulated fenestration.
 - b. Avoid strip windows.
14. Art
 - a. Individual works of art and their settings must work together in a harmonious, subtle way.
 - b. Artists should work on basic architectural elements of the building instead of individual free-standing objects.
15. Signs
 - a. Signs should be designed to fit well on the buildings, to be legible but not overpowering, and to complement other elements applied to buildings, such as awnings, canopies, or artwork.

East Cambridge Riverfront Plan, 1978

1. Principles
 - a. Create a functionally diverse and active urban focus with the Canal and surrounding development.
 - b. Create a strong and inviting pedestrian environment around the Canal
 - c. Encourage development along the western edge that provides a compatible and sensitive physical interface with District 4 – especially the residential community
2. Use
 - a. Reinforce existing commercial activity along First Street with additional commercial establishments.
3. Scale
 - a. Limit height and bulk of buildings to minimize their shading and visual dominance
 - b. Limit building height around southern and western edge of the canal
4. Form
 - a. Enlarge and strengthen the Canal, redefining its edges and reducing the vertical distance between water level and abutting land.
 - b. Arrange new development so that it respects the First-Sixth Street grid.
 - c. Orient new development to interrelate activities in the Canal area and Bulfinch Courthouse area.
5. Design Details
 - a. Encourage development around the canal that is colorful in details and rich in open space amenities.