



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: September 6, 2022

Re: Special Permit **PB-26 Amendment 7, 125 Cambridgepark Drive**

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Overview

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|----------------------------|---|
| Submission Type: | Special Permit Application |
| Applicant: | Longfellow Real Estate Partners 260 Franklin Street, Suite 1920, Boston, MA 02210 |
| Zoning District(s): | Office-2A (O-2A), Alewife Overlay District 6 (AOD-6), Flood Plain Overlay District |
| Proposal Summary: | Construct an addition of 33,056 square feet to the existing building for technical office use, allow site improvements, relocate previously permitted retail area in the ground floor, reduce the off-street parking spaces from 379 to 279 by removal of 100 spaces in the existing surface lot, and add 2 loading docks, 19 long-term and 23 short-term bicycle parking spaces. |
| Special Permits Requested: | Flood Plan Special Permit (Section 20.73); FAR in excess of 1.25 for non-residential use (Section 20.95.1.5); Height in excess of 55 feet (Section 20.95.2); and Pooled Parking (Section 20.97.2). |
| Other City Permits Needed: | Order of Conditions granted by Conservation Commission in July 2022 |
| Planning Board Action: | Grant or deny requested special permits. |
| Memo Contents: | CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report |
| Other Staff Reports: | Department of Public Works (DPW), submitted separately. |

| Zoning Section | Required Planning Board Findings <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i> |
|---|--|
| Construction in a Flood Plain Overlay District (20.73) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No encroachment of the floodway or displacement of water retention capacity is allowed unless fully offset. • Flood water systems shall not cause nuisance, hazard or detriment to site or abutters. • Development is consistent with zoning, area plans and guidelines, and applicable laws including Wetlands Protection Act. • Review by the City Engineer and Conservation Commission are required. |
| Increase FAR and Height in Alewife Overlay Districts (20.95.1, 20.95.2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project promotes the general interests of the larger commercial and residential neighborhood noted in Section 20.92 and is consistent with the goals, objectives and guidelines established in the Concord-Alewife Plan. |
| Pooled Parking (20.97.2) – Amendment to Special Permit #PB26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility advances the objective of the Concord-Alewife Plan. • A shared facility is established that aids in implementation of effective Transportation Demand Management measures to reduce dependence on the single occupancy automobile. • The facility is appropriately located to serve the development it serves. • The facility is well designed, does not diminish the pedestrian-friendly quality the area around it, and is otherwise consistent with the urban design objective of the Concord-Alewife Plan. |
| General Special Permit Criteria (10.43) | <p>Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or (e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30. |

Zoning & Development Staff Report

Area Planning and Zoning

Site Context

Neighborhood/Area: Alewife Overlay District 6, aka the “Triangle”

Development Patterns: The area has mostly transitioned from industrial use to a mix of office, commercial research labs, and housing. The area recently experienced a considerable amount of multi-family housing production. There have also been recent office/lab developments and renovation and improvement projects to the larger-scale office and R&D buildings that were developed in the 1980s and 1990s.

Nearby Features: Alewife Red Line Station (including bus station and garage), Fitchburg Cutoff Path, Alewife Brook Reservation.

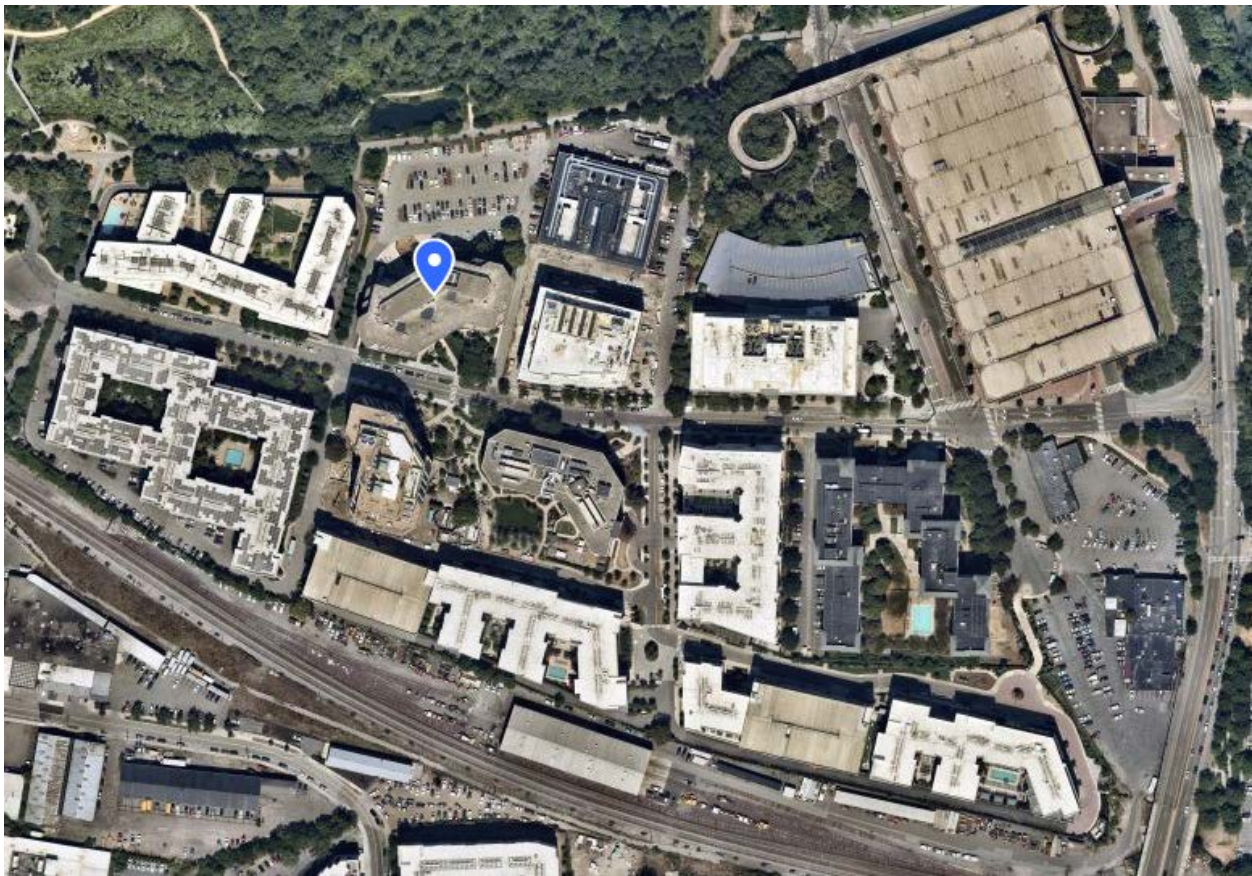


Figure 1: Aerial photograph of the area surrounding 125 Cambridgepark Drive dated August 3, 2022 (source: Nearmap, 2022)

Site Zoning

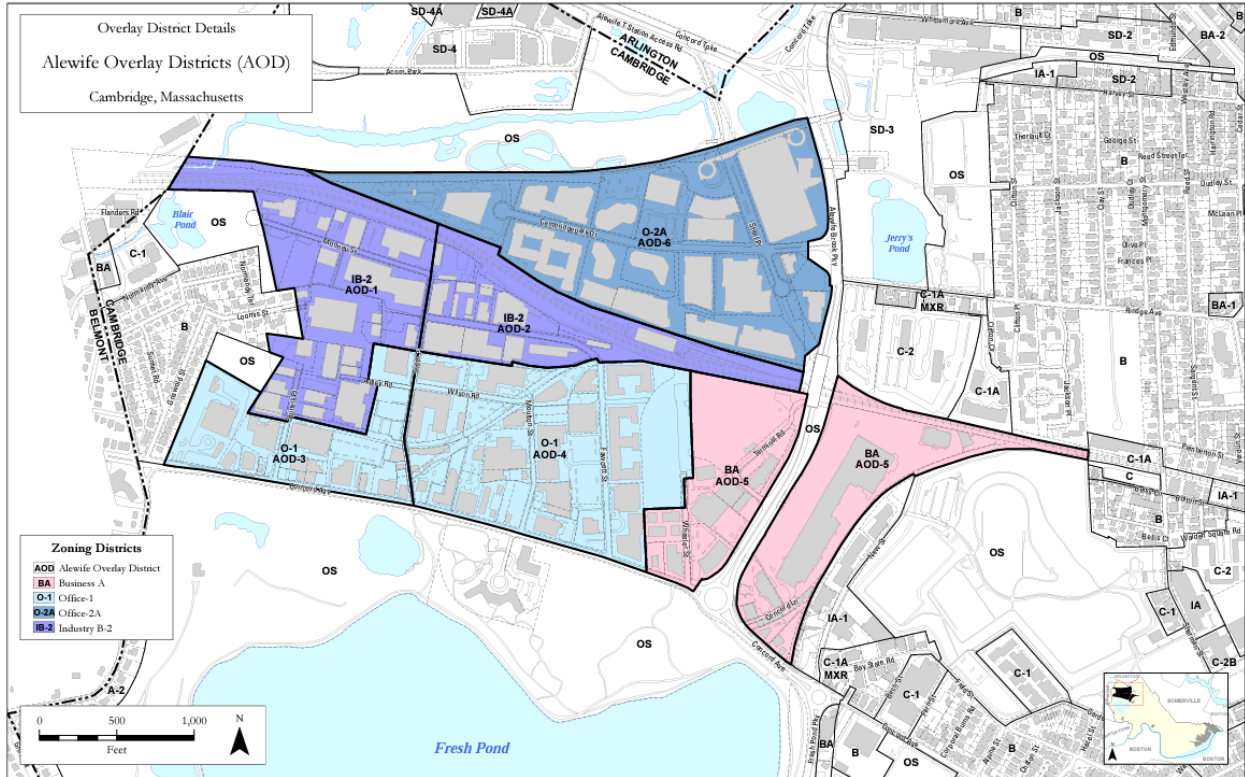


Figure 2. Alewife Overlay Districts and Base Zoning

NOTE: On May 23, 2022, the City Council adopted a zoning amendment to place a temporary development moratorium for Technical Office and/or Laboratory Uses (4.34(h) of the Table of Permitted Uses) in Alewife Overlay Districts 1-5. This zoning amendment excludes Alewife Overlay District 6 (the “Triangle”) and therefore **does not apply** to 125 Cambridgepark Drive. The full text of the adopted zoning amendment reads as follows:

20.93.5 Development Moratorium. For a period beginning from the date of enactment of this Section 20.93.5 and lasting until December 31, 2023, or until the time of enactment of an amendment to or deletion of this Section 20.93.5, whichever occurs sooner, no permits for the building, renovation, or enlargement of any structures to accommodate a new or enlarged Office or Laboratory Use as listed in Section 4.34 of this Zoning Ordinance shall be issued within the Alewife Overlay Districts 1-5. The purpose of such moratorium is to create and enact amended requirements for the Alewife Overlay Districts in consultation with residents of the Alewife Overlay Districts and surrounding neighborhoods, based on development plans and guidelines published by the City.

General description: The underlying base zoning is Office-2A (O-2A). The site is also in the Triangle Alewife Overlay District (AOD-6), which modifies the base district zoning regulations. The AOD district generally allows greater density and height than the base zoning by special permit, while imposing additional requirements to advance the City’s planning and design review objectives for the Alewife area. The base O-2A and AOD-6 allow technical office uses by right, among various other residential and commercial uses.

Most of the Project Site is located in in the Flood Plain Overlay District, which encompasses areas on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map in Hazard Zones A and AE.

Projects within this district require a Planning Board special permit following technical review by the City Engineer and the Cambridge Conservation Commission to ensure that the development will not diminish the site’s ability to accommodate the retention and flow of flood water. Approval is also conditioned on compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act, which could include an Order of Conditions imposed by the Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

| | Base District | Overlay District(s) |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| District(s): | Office-A2 (O-A2) | AOD-6 |
| Allowed Uses: | Most types of offices and laboratories; residential dwellings; most institutional uses | Additional uses permitted by special permit (if not otherwise allowed as of right in the district): All retail uses listed in Section 4.35 – Retail Business and Consumer Service Establishments subject to the limitations in 20.94.1 (unless those limitations are specifically waived by the Planning Board). |
| Max. Building Height | 60’ for non-residential uses | 85’ for all uses by special permit |
| Max. FAR/GFA | 1.25 for non-residential uses | 1.75 for non-residential uses by special permit |
| Required Setbacks | Front (minimum of 10’): (Height + Length) / 4 Side: (Height + Length) / 5 Rear (minimum of 20’): (Height + Length) / 4 | Front yards may be reduced to 15 feet by special permit Side and rear yards may be waived by special permit |
| Required Open Space | 15% | 15% minimum open space 25% permeable area* * Permeable area requirement may be reduced as of right with certification to the Superintendent by the City Engineer. |

Development Plans and Guidelines

Alewife District Plan (2019)

This site is within the area of the [Alewife District Plan](#) (2019), which was part of the Envision Cambridge comprehensive planning process. The plan is an update to the previous plan for that area, the Concord-Alewife Plan, completed in 2005.

The Alewife District Plan envisions Alewife as a mixed-use district, integrated with the rest of Cambridge, that includes climate resilient neighborhoods, increase open space, and multi-modal transportation options. Specific goals for the Triangle area include:

- Maintain its mixed-use character.
- Promote retail and active space on Cambridgepark Drive.
- Improve the urban form of the area through streetscape improvements.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections.

The full set of Alewife District Plan zoning recommendations are presented on [pages 156-163 of the Alewife District Plan report](#). Although the zoning recommendations of the Alewife District Plan are not yet adopted, the City Council has adopted a development moratorium with the aim of developing and adopting changes to the Alewife District zoning. A working group is currently meeting to develop additional recommendations.

Site Permitting History

Special permit [PB-26](#), granted in 1982, authorized the construction of an 183,000 square-foot office building at 125 Cambridgepark Drive (known as 115 Rindge Avenue Extension at the time) served by 549 surface parking spaces on that lot and another lot across Cambridgepark Drive. The conditions required approval from the Planning Board for any future significant alterations in the site plan, landscaping features, parking lot layout and grading, and proposed storm drainage systems, and required storm drainage catch basins to have capacity for separating grease and oil from surface runoff.

The special permit was subsequently amended 6 times. The first 4 amendments included modifications to the parking for the site as the surface parking was redeveloped into office and residential buildings with structured parking facilities (150 Cambridgepark Drive, 160 Cambridgepark Drive, 130 Cambridgepark Drive, and 88 Cambridgepark Drive). The conditions required membership in the Alewife Transportation Management Association (TMA) and the creation of a transportation information center on-site.

The special permit was amended a fifth time in 2015 to allow portions of the first floor of 125 Cambridgepark Drive to be used as a café and a full-service restaurant serving alcoholic beverages. The Planning Board approved a [sixth amendment](#) to PB-26 in March of 2022 to allow landscaping improvements that were part of a slate of changes proposed for 100, 125, and 150 Cambridgepark Drive. These and other changes have supported the evolution of Cambridgepark Drive to a more mixed-use, transit-oriented area with less surface parking as envisioned by the City's planning for the area.

Current Proposal

Overview

The current proposal is to construct an approximately 33,000 sf addition to the northwest corner of the existing 183,925 sf technical office building. The addition will include three new loading docks, and a revised vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern. The proposal also includes upgrades to the existing building and a reduction in surface parking to be used as open green space.

The existing surface parking is proposed to be reduced from 179 spaces to 79 spaces, which requires an amendment to Special Permit PB-26. No change is proposed to the 200 spaces dedicated to 125 Cambridgepark Drive in the adjacent parking garage located at 140 Cambridgepark Drive.

This proposal requires Planning Board Special Permits for increased height and FAR in the Alewife Overlay Districts and for construction in the Flood Plain Overlay District.

Proposed Uses

The main proposed use of Technical Office / R&D Laboratory is permitted as-of-right in the district.

The proposal retains the ground-story restaurant and café uses that were granted a conditional special permit by the Planning Board in 2015 (Amendment #5). The Application explains that the café will be expanded and relocated to face Cambridgepark Drive since it will be displaced by the proposed addition. The existing approx. 2,500 square foot patio will also be expanded to encompass approximately 4,500 square feet in order to accommodate outdoor dining fronting Cambridgepark Drive.

Proposed Dimensions

The proposal includes requests for three (3) special permits related to dimensional standards in AOD-6:

| Dimension | Proposal | Special Permit? |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Gross Floor Area (GFA) | 216,981 sf total; 33,056 sf new addition | Special permits to allow additional FAR in AOD. |
| Floor Area Ratio (FAR) | 1.75 | Maximum FAR in base zoning is 1.25, Planning Board may approve up to 1.75 in AOD-6 by special permit. |
| Height and Stories | 85'; 6 stories | Maximum height in base zoning is 35'; Planning Board may approve up to 85' in AOD-6 by special permit |

In making a finding to grant a special permit for additional height and density in the Alewife Overlay District, the Planning Board must determine that the general purposes of the Alewife Overlay District are being met, such as: encouraging walking, biking and transit use; improving flood resilience; supporting retail services in the District; and helping to create an identity and sense of place.

Proposed Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading

Vehicle Parking

As discussed above, the Application proposes to modify the existing special permit to reduce the provided surface parking spaces from 179 to approximately 79 and to retain 200 previously approved off-site parking spaces in a nearby garage.

A full transportation impact study (TIS) is not required, since the additional GFA does not exceed the incremental change amount noted in zoning section 19.23.2. However, the Applicant submitted a Transportation Memorandum, which included a trip generation analysis, driveway sight distance study, vehicle and bicycle parking analysis, and a commitment to transportation demand management (TDM) measures on pages 51-52 of the attachment. TP+T staff reviewed the memo and are supportive of the reduction in vehicle parking.

While the proposal is not subject to PTDM, the Applicant has included a series of proposed TDM measures to counterbalance the reduction in parking at the site. Staff have reviewed the measures and would recommend that the language be modified so that the commitments are firm.

The transportation analysis in the Application indicates that the project would require a minimum of 197 spaces and a maximum of 395 spaces. The Application seeks an amendment to the previously granted special permit for pooled parking by continuing to use the off-site garage in addition to the reduced number of on-site spaces. The facts supporting the Planning Board's findings on that request have not substantially changed.

Bicycle Parking

The proposed addition increases the overall GFA of the site by more than 15%, which triggers the requirement to provide bicycle parking for the entire building. For the approximately 230,000 square feet of total GFA, 48 long-term spaces and 23 short-term spaces are required to be provided. The project exceeds these requirements and proposes to provide 68 long-term and 46 short-term spaces.

The Applicant has committed to funding a 19-dock Bluebikes station that is currently shown on the proposed site plan in the parking lot. Staff would recommend memorializing the details of this proposed benefit as a condition of approval in the Planning Board's decision.

Loading

The development is required to provide two loading bays, and the proposal includes three total bays.

Flood Plain Requirements

Nearly the entirety of the project site is located within the City of Cambridge Flood Plain Overlay District and include portions of FEMA Map Zone AE. The Flood Plain Special Permit requirements in Section 20.70 of the Zoning Ordinance largely parallel the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act, which is overseen by the Cambridge Conservation Commission, requiring compensatory storage for any development that impacts the volume of the flood plain. The Planning Board relies mostly on documentation from the Conservation Commission and the City Engineer to determine if the requirements are met. A separate memorandum from the City Engineer accompanies this memo. The Conservation Commission approved the Notice of Intent (NOI) with an Order of Conditions on July 25, 2022. The permit file number is #123-0318. The Project proposes a net increase of flood storage of approximately 1,843 sf.

Other Zoning Requirements

- Green Building Requirements (GBR): The proposal is subject to the requirements of Section 22.20. The documentation provided by the Applicant was determined to be adequate to demonstrate compliance with the GBR applicable at the Special Permit stage of review. The project is expected to achieve LEED Gold certification with 64 points. CDD staff included the following advisory comments in the GBR certification, and will review the project again at the building permit stage of review:
 - Provide environmental product declaration (EPD) sheets for concrete, steel, aluminum, gypsum boards and insulation.
 - Conduct a whole building life cycle analysis for the Project to demonstrate commitment to reducing environmental impacts including those of global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, and other concerns. Provide an estimate on life cycle/embodied carbon emissions for the new addition as part of the total project.
 - Identify alternative strategies used by the design team during the design development stage to reduce embodied carbon especially for products/materials in the A1-A5 stages for steel, concrete, aluminum, gypsum board and insulation.
 - Staff recommend pursuing WELL building standards, or Fitwel guidelines to demonstrate the Applicant’s commitment to occupants’ health and wellbeing and ensuring that would be part of the interior fit-out work.
 - Considering the amount of landscape area involved, staff recommend the team consider collecting/harvesting rainwater for reuse in irrigation to the maximum extent possible.
- Incentive Zoning: Because the project is an addition for office and laboratory uses that exceeds 30,000 square feet, it is required to make a funding contribution to the Affordable Housing Trust per the requirements of Section 11.202.

Community Engagement

According to the application materials, the Applicant hosted two Early Community Engagement Meeting Virtual Open Houses over Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on May 18, 2022 and July 7, 2022. Invitations were sent to abutting property owners. The application does not indicate questions, comments, or how many attendees were present.

Special Permit Conditions

If the Board decides to grant the special permit, the following list summarizes the general categories of conditions recommended for this development based on the requested special permits:

1. **Approved Development:** Authorized development would need to conform with the submitted application materials. An Approved Dimensional Form would be attached as an Appendix. Also attached as an appendix would be an update to the table included in the decision for Amendment 4 titled “Summary of Parking Space Allocation, Location and Sharing.”
 - a. As with other proposals in Alewife, staff recommends that the Planning Board approve further reductions in parking, to the extent permissible by zoning at the time, without requiring an amendment to the special permit. This would not be true of future increases in parking, which would require amending the special permit.
2. **Permitted Uses:** The special permit would authorize the proposed uses, including technical office for research and development and the previously approved retail uses. In the future, uses that are allowed by zoning but not authorized by the special permit would require Planning Board approval, and uses that are limited by the Zoning Ordinance (e.g., requiring a separate special permit from the Planning Board or BZA) would need to seek the necessary relief.
 - a. The conditions associated with the prior approval of retail or consumer establishments at the ground story shall continue to apply, except for any changes in plan that are approved as part of this amendment.
3. **Design Review:** CDD staff would review and approve design details at the construction documents phase, prior to issuance of a building permit, to certify that the plans conform to the Planning Board’s approval. Board members may cite specific areas of focus for detailed review, based on the Urban Design Report and Board discussion. The continuing design review process would require a façade mock-up on or near the site for Board members and staff to review material selections before installation.
4. **Infrastructure:** Work being done on City property would be subject to review and approval by appropriate City departments, including DPW, TP+T and CDD. The special permit would also be conditioned on certification by DPW that the following infrastructure standards are met:
 - a. Stormwater management, including mitigation requirements for stormwater inflow and infiltration from the sewer system. In this case, certification of stormwater management requirements in the Alewife Overlay Districts will be required if the permeable area is less than 25% of lot area.
 - b. Tree management for both public and significant private trees, per the applicable provisions of the Cambridge Tree Protection Ordinance.
 - c. Continued compliance with the Order of Conditions issued by the Cambridge Conservation Commission.
 - d. Other conditions suggested in the memorandum from the City Engineer.

5. Transportation: Although this proposal is not subject to a Transportation Mitigation Program, the special permit would be conditioned on compliance with the transportation-related commitments made in the Application Documents, including the following:
 - a. Transportation Demand Management measures on pages 51-52 of the Transportation Memorandum from VHB. Staff recommends that the language be updated to make the commitments clearer and more certain.
 - b. Fund a 19-dock public bikeshare station (Bluebikes or its successor), in the location shown on the project plans unless an alternative is approved by the City. Payment will be made prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. If the final location of the station is on private property, the Applicant shall be responsible for securing a siting/licensing agreement with the City.
6. Sustainability: Development will be subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20, which will be reviewed again by CDD staff at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages. CDD would also review for compliance with Green Roof Requirements in Section 22.35.
7. Resilience: A Site Action Plan is recommended to allow for future building adaptation to flooding risks associated with climate change, to be reviewed and approved by DPW and the Cambridge Fire Department at the building permit stage and made operational upon occupancy.
8. Incentive Zoning: The Project will be subject to the applicable Incentive Zoning requirements set forth in Section 11.202 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, which will be calculated at the time of issuance of a Building Permit and contribution made prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
9. Construction Management Program: Per Section 18.20, staff would recommend a Construction Management Program be provided and approved by TP+T, DPW, and other applicable City departments before issuance of a building permit. This program would also include a community outreach program designating a point of contact to provide information to the public during the construction process and notification panels posted on the site with project information.

Appendix - Zoning Text Excerpts

Special Permits to Increase FAR and Increase Building Height in Alewife Overlay Districts

20.92 *General Purpose.* It is the purpose of this Section 20.90 to augment existing base district zoning regulations to respond to the unique problems and pressures for change in the Alewife area. The regulations contained in this Section 20.90 provide for more careful public scrutiny of future development proposals and provide an opportunity to shape the form and character of that development in ways that will benefit both individual property owners and the general interests of the larger commercial and residential neighborhood as a whole.

These regulations are intended to harness the opportunities presented with the redevelopment of private property in ways that will:

1. Encourage forms of development, mix of uses, and range of improvements that will facilitate and encourage walking, biking and transit use and reduce the growth of auto trips in an area already burdened with regional vehicular traffic passing through to other destinations in the metropolitan region;
2. Preserve and enhance the capacity to store floodwater, recharge groundwater and manage the collection and disposal of stormwater in ways that add to the quality and visual appeal of the built environment as well as to the quality of the water itself;
3. Minimize the negative impact of new development on the adjacent Cambridge Highlands residential neighborhood while introducing new amenities and services that will benefit the residents of that neighborhood;
4. Integrate the entire area through the creation of new pedestrian paths, roadways, green spaces and bridges that will facilitate movement within the several Districts and beyond to the Cambridge Highlands, North Cambridge and Neighborhood Nine neighborhoods and the Fresh Pond Reservation;
5. Introduce a significant component of residential living and support retail services to enhance the area's appeal for all persons who come to work, shop as well as live within the Districts; and
6. Create an identity and sense of place for the Alewife Districts that parallels the development of the historic urban centers that characterize much of Cambridge.

20.95.1 Maximum Floor Area Ratio. The maximum ratio of floor area to the lot area may be increased as set forth below, after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board.

5. Triangle District: 1.75 for non-residential uses; 2.0 for residential uses.

20.95.2 Maximum Permitted Height. The maximum height for any building may be increased as set forth below, after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board:

6. Triangle District: 85 feet for all uses...

Special Permit for Building Construction in Flood Plain Overlay District

20.73 *Applicability.* No structure or building shall be erected, constructed, expanded, substantially improved, or moved and no earth or other materials shall be dumped, filled, excavated, transferred or otherwise altered in the Flood Plain Overlay District unless a special permit is granted by the Planning Board.

20.74 *Procedure.* Application for a special permit shall be made on a form prescribed by the Board. In addition to the information required for the submittal, the applicant shall also present the following:

1. A detailed landscape plan drawn to a scale of one inch equals twenty (20) feet showing the elevation and design of flood water retention systems as required by applicable law;
2. Base flood elevation data, where the base flood elevation is not provided on the FIRM;
3. Certification and supporting documentation by a Massachusetts registered professional engineer demonstrating that such encroachment of the floodway as specified above in Subsection 20.73 shall not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the 100-year flood;
4. Such other technical information as necessary to permit the Planning Board to make the findings required in Section 20.75 below;
5. Description of the status of the proposal, pursuant to the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, before the Cambridge Conservation Commission, including any Order of Conditions or Determination of Applicability issued; and
6. Four (4) copies of all application materials.

20.74.1 Upon receipt of the application and development plans, the Planning Board shall transmit copies of the plans to the Conservation Commission and the City Engineer. Within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the plans, the Conservation Commission and the City Engineer shall review said plans and submit their respective reports and recommendations to the Planning Board. The Planning Board shall not render any decision on an application for a special permit for development in the Flood Plain Overlay District until said reports have been received and considered or until the forty-five (45) day period has expired without the receipt of such report, whichever is earlier.

20.75 *Criteria.* The Planning Board shall grant a Special Permit for development in the Flood Plain Overlay District if the Board finds that such development has met all of the following criteria in addition to other criteria specified in Section 10.43:

1. No filling or other encroachment shall be allowed in Zone A areas or in the floodway which would impair the ability of these Special Flood Hazard Areas to carry and discharge flood waters, except where such activity is fully offset by stream improvements such as, but not limited to, flood water retention systems as allowed by applicable law.
2. Displacement of water retention capacity at one location shall be replaced in equal volume at another location on the same lot, on an abutting lot in the same ownership, on a noncontiguous lot in the same ownership, or in accordance with the following requirements.
3. All flood water retention systems shall be suitably designed and located so as not to cause any nuisance, hazard, or detriment to the occupants of the site or abutters. The Planning Board may require screening, or landscaping of flood water retention systems to create a safe, healthful, and pleasing environment.

4. The proposed use shall comply in all respects with the provision of the underlying zoning district, provisions of the State Building Code, Wetlands Protection Act, and any other applicable laws.
5. Applicants for development in the Alewife area shall be familiar with area-specific and general city-wide land use plans and policy objectives (e.g. *Concord-Alewife Plan, A Report of the Concord Alewife Planning Study*, November 2005; *Toward a Sustainable Future, Cambridge Growth Policy*, 1993, *Update*, 2007; Section 19.30 - Urban Design Objectives of this Zoning Ordinance) and shall demonstrate how their plan meets the spirit and intent of such documents in conjunction with the requirements of this Section 20.70 - Flood Plain Overlay District and Section 20.90 – Alewife Overlay Districts 1-6.
6. The requirement of Section 20.74(3) has been met.

Special Permit for Pooled Parking in Alewife Overlay District

20.97.2 Pooled Parking. In order to provide the flexibility to advance the policy objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan through the creation of more pedestrian friendly development throughout the area, to permit greater permeable land surface to be established, to facilitate environments with greater landscaping and green area including parks and recreation areas, to more efficiently use the supply of parking available in a district where greater use of non-auto forms of transportation are encouraged and less land area devoted to parking use is desired, the Planning Board may, by special permit, allow accessory parking serving one or more lots to be located in whole or in part in pooled parking facilities, or a public parking facility, located anywhere within the Alewife Overlay Districts, notwithstanding the limitations set forth in Section 6.22.1. In granting such a special permit the Planning Board shall consider the following:

1. The facility advances the objective of the Concord-Alewife Plan.
2. A shared facility is established that aids in implementation of effective Transportation Demand Management measures to reduce dependence on the single occupancy automobile.
3. The facility is appropriately located to serve the development it serves.
4. The facility is well designed, does not diminish the pedestrian-friendly quality the area around it, and is otherwise consistent with the urban design objective of the Concord-Alewife Plan.

General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit

10.43 *Criteria.* Special permits will normally be granted where specific provisions of this Ordinance are met, except when particulars of the location or use, not generally true of the district or of the uses permitted in it, would cause granting of such permit to be to the detriment of the public interest because:

- (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or
- (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or
- (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or
- (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or
- (g) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and
- (h) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

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

Urban Design Staff Report

Urban Design Comments

Overview

The project at 125 Cambridgepark Drive consists of a relatively small addition to the existing building's north side, interior renovations to the existing building, the elimination of a large portion of the existing surface parking lot, and the creation of a landscaped green space in its place. The project's landscape is conceived in relation to the landscape design of 100 and 150 Cambridgepark Drive on the opposite side of the street, with their extensive and varied plantings, winding small scale paths, numerous seating areas, and meandering naturalistic dry creek beds. The proposed path system connects to the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path along the south side of the Alewife Brook Reservation. The project is designed for the anticipated 2070 flood levels and incorporates a subsurface stormwater detention system.

The building's interior ground floor plan is revised to create a direct route through the building between its main facing entrance Cambridgepark Drive and its north entrance facing the new north green space. The existing Mothership restaurant and its outdoor deck will be expanded to occupy the full extent of the building's south wing's frontage. The existing Revival Café will be relocated to face the building's south entry and greenspace and will serve as the Mothership restaurant's entrance. The new addition will provide an indoor long-term bicycle storage room in addition to outdoor short-term parking, and a Bluebikes station. The existing exposed exterior loading dock on the building's north side will be replaced by a new loading dock within the building volume.

Design Guidelines

The Alewife Triangle is covered by the [Alewife Design Guidelines](#) (2020). These are intended to encourage the creation of a welcoming, usable, and beautiful public realm consisting of streets, parks, squares, and courtyards that are interconnected with each other and with the surrounding districts. They encourage building massing and façade design that frames and enriches public spaces and relates to nearby buildings, first floor uses that enliven adjoining streets, and landscape design that reinforces public spaces and offers beauty and environmental benefits.

The guidelines support 125 Cambridgepark Drive's reduced surface parking and provision of new green space; its increased street facing retail; its connection to the Alewife Brook Reservation; its screened electrical equipment, located on the interior of the site and above flood level; its screened rooftop mechanical, and its contributions to stormwater management and reduced urban heat island effect.

Site Design

Landscape

The project will make positive changes to the area north of the building, significantly reducing the size of the existing surface parking lot and replacing it with naturalistically designed greenspace designed to both provide stormwater mitigation and amenity for the site's workers and the public. The landscape design provides seating areas, numerous canopy trees and varied low plantings, a significant increase to permeable area and vegetation, underground stormwater detention, and rainwater capture. The green

space will be open to the courtyard between the neighboring buildings to the east (87-101 Cambridgepark Drive which is currently in construction) thereby enhancing pedestrian connectivity within the block.

The site-mounted electrical equipment is elevated above 2070 flood levels, located away from Cambridgepark Drive, and screened. Photovoltaic canopies are provided above the parking spaces dedicated to electric vehicles.

To further enhance the site plan, consideration could be given to:

1. Providing additional canopy trees along the east and west site boundaries.
2. Further reductions in the site area dedicated to vehicular parking and increased open space.

Circulation Systems

The project proposes counterclockwise vehicular circulation to and from the revised parking lot in the northern portion of the site, and to the new loading dock on the west side of the addition. The existing driveways at the east and west sides of the site will be renovated and adjusted accordingly.

Short term bike storage is sheltered under the overhanging upper floors on the east side of the existing building. A Bluebikes Station is being sponsored by the proponent and will be located in the northern part of the parking lot, near the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Trail.

A fine-grained network of paths is proposed throughout the new north greenspace. While some of the narrow and meandering paths may be adequate as routes to seating areas, the more heavily used paths that will connect the building's north entrance, the Fitchburg multiuse trail, the bicycle parking areas, and Cambridgepark Drive are excessively indirect and narrow (many are between 4' and 6' wide; the primary paths should be 10'). There appear to be opportunities to more clearly respond to the primary desire lines for people walking and bicycling. Consideration could be given to providing:

3. A wider path at the site's north entry, linking the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path and the parking lot.
4. A wider and more direct path through the green space to the building's new north entrance.
5. A wider and more direct route from the site's north pedestrian and bicyclist entry at the Fitchburg Trail to the short-term bicycle storage area on the east side of the existing building,
6. A wider path from the short-term bicycle storage area to Cambridgepark Drive. It seems feasible to create this by reducing the width of the east vehicular drive and adding a bicycle lane on its west side.
7. A path connecting to the southern end of the north/south oriented parking aisle.
8. A more direct path leading to the courtyard between the two buildings at 87-101 Cambridgepark Drive.
9. Wayfinding signage should help guide people through the site, including how people can access the Fitchburg path and the Bluebikes station. for the bicycle path.

In addition, the Applicant is also working with the Conservation Commission and City staff on opportunities to convert the Cambridgepark Drive bike lane, along the front of the Project site (North side of Cambridge Park Drive), into a sidewalk level cycle track, to the extent possible under the flood plain regulations. DPW staff have noted that raising the north side bike lane to a cycle track will fill additional flood plain. DPW Staff and Project Proponents are exploring additional compensatory flood storage volumes.

Architectural Design

Massing and Facades

The project proposes a relatively small addition to the building's rear north side. Its massing and façade pattern relate to the existing building's horizontally grained irregular stacked chamfered-corner floorplates while at the same time creating a more vertical expression. Its ribbon windows are taller than those of the existing building, and it is clad with white metal panels in contrast to the existing building's precast concrete.

10. Consideration could be given to giving the new addition a more assertive form and more independence from the existing building. A more vertical massing and more distinct articulation from the existing building would help stabilize the latter's irregular massing, and may suggest a sympathetic relationship to the east wing of the neighboring "Fuse" residential building to the west. Means could include providing more articulation where the addition meets the existing: a vertical reveal or wider recessed vertical façade zone.
11. The proposed white metal panels may be excessively bright. To complement the precast of the existing building, a warmer white could be considered.
12. Light trespass from building interiors should be controlled to protect nearby residents and habitat in the Alewife Brook Reservation.

The project reconfigures the building's first floor, creating a direct connection through the building between its north and south entries, relocating the Revival Café to the building's street facing south wing, expands the Mothership restaurant to use the full width of the Cambridgepark Drive frontage of the south wing, extends the restaurant's deck across that façade, and encloses the loading dock, all positive changes.

13. As the loading area will be visible from the residential units in the adjoining Fuse building, consideration could be given to providing garage doors to screen the loading dock when it is not in use.

Rooftop Mechanical Systems

The rooftop mechanical for the new addition will be visually screened from the north and west. There appears to be sufficient area within the screening for future tenant equipment.

14. Consideration could be given to extending this screening farther on its southwest and east sides, and to providing acoustical screening, as the addition is close to neighboring residential units on that side.

As part of the preexisting PB-26 special permit, a considerable amount of new mechanical equipment is also being added to the roof of the existing building. It appears from the renderings that it will barely be visible, but other vantage points should be carefully evaluated.

15. Screening for mechanical equipment on the existing building could be installed as part of the amendment currently under consideration if needed.
16. The location of potential tenant mechanical equipment should be carefully controlled.

Bicycle Parking

Long-term bicycle storage is provided within the building.

17. The long-term bicycle storage room must be revised to provide spaces for tandem bikes and bikes with trailers.

Green Building

As noted above, the project's site design makes extensive contributions to sustainability and resilience in terms of urban heat island and stormwater.

18. Additional canopy trees at the east and west site boundaries would further enhance the project's urban heat island performance.
19. Revisions to the widths and layouts of the path system for direct and logical movement to support people walking and cycling would further the goal of promoting sustainable travel.

A photovoltaic canopy will be located over the electric vehicle portion of the parking lot, and an additional one at the top of the separate parking garage at 140 Cambridgepark Drive.

20. Consideration could be given to providing PV canopies over all the surface parking spaces instead of just the ones for electric vehicles.

Regarding embodied energy, interior and exterior materials such as concrete, steel, aluminum, gypsum boards and insulation should be assessed for their greenhouse gas impacts, and more sustainable alternatives with lower carbon emissions should be considered. Staff suggests that the applicant:

21. Provide third-party verified environmental product declaration (EPDs) sheets for concrete, steel, aluminum, gypsum boards, and insulation.
22. Demonstrate a commitment to reducing environmental impacts including those of global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, and other concerns by conducting a whole-building life-cycle analysis (LCA), and by providing a narrative with estimated lifecycle/embodied carbon emissions for the new addition.
23. Identify strategies to reduce embodied carbon especially for products/materials in the A1-A5 life cycle stages (the production and construction stages of the project) for steel, concrete, aluminum, gypsum board, and insulation.

Continuing Review

The following are additional recommendations for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- A visual mockup and of all exterior building materials and colors, curtainwall and window systems, glass specifications, building mechanical and site electrical screening, etc.
- Layout of the pedestrian and bicycle paths and routes.
- Landscape materials and details, including tree species and their locations.
- Any signage areas on the building facades.
- Architectural and site lighting.
- Control of light trespass from building interiors.
- Layout of long-term bicycle storage rooms and routes to them.