



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139-0303

2016 DEC 6 PM 1:03  
CAMBRIDGE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	319
Address:	605 Concord Avenue (579 Concord Avenue)
Zoning:	Business A (BA) / Alewife Overlay District (AOD-5) / Parkway Overlay District
Applicant:	Acorn Holdings LLC One Gateway Center, Newton, MA 02458
Owner:	Abodez Acorn Concord LLC. One Gateway Center, Newton, MA 02458
Application Date:	September 6, 2016
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	October 25, 2016
Date of Planning Board Decision:	December 6, 2016
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	December 21, 2016

**Application:** Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20), Special Permits to increase FAR (Section 20.95.1), increased building height (Section 20.95.2.5), and reduced yard requirements (Section 20.95.34) in Alewife Overlay District, Special Permit to reduce green area open space in front yard in Parkway Overlay District (Section 20.63.7) and Special permit to reduce setback for on grade open parking facility (Section 6.44.1); to construct a new six-story building with total gross floor area of 57,679 square feet containing 49 residential units and 4,128 square feet of retail space in the ground floor. This building is "Phase II" of the Concord-Wheeler project of which "Phase I" was completed on the neighboring site at 601-603 Concord Avenue (Planning Board case #269). The proposal also includes the addition of balconies and a residential management office to the Phase I building.

**Decision:** GRANTED, with Conditions.

Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17 of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after filing of the above referenced decision with the City Clerk. Copies of the complete decision and final plans, if applicable, are on file with the Community Development Department and the City Clerk.

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Swaathi Joseph

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, or [lpaden@cambridgema.gov](mailto:lpaden@cambridgema.gov).

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on 9/6/2016, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Community Outreach Summary, Project Narrative, plan set titled Concord 605, prepared by Piatt Associates, Inc., dated 9/6/2016.

### City of Cambridge Documents

2. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department staff, dated 10/19/2016.
3. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department staff, dated 10/17/2016.
4. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Department of Public Works staff, dated 12/5/2016.
5. Draft Findings and Conditions prepared by Community Development Department staff, undated.

### Other Documents

6. Letter to the Planning Board from Fresh Pond Residents Alliance, dated 10/25/2016.

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing bank building to construct a six-story building with retail use on the ground floor and 49 residential units on five floors above that. The new building will be Phase II of the Concord-Wheeler project, for which the completed Phase I has 61 residential units and retail use on the ground floor (Planning Board case #269). The project also proposes to add new balconies and a residential management office to the Phase I building, using the combined gross floor area allowance for the two sites. The two buildings will also share a total of 145 parking spaces proposed both at grade behind the buildings and in a single level basement garage accessed by two shared driveways, one on Concord Avenue and the other on Wheeler Street. The site is located in the Business A (BA) zoning district as well as in an Alewife Overlay District (AOD-5) and Parkway Overlay District. The Applicant reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission, who did not find the existing buildings to be significant and therefore no demolition review hearing was required. The requested special permits are discussed in detail in the Findings below.

## FINDINGS

After review of the Application Documents and other documents submitted to the Planning Board, testimony given at the public hearing, and review and consideration of the applicable requirements and criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance with regard to the relief being sought, the Planning Board makes the following Findings:

### 1. Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20)

*(19.25.1) Traffic Impact Findings. Where a Traffic Study is required as set forth in Section 19.24 (3) above the Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area as analyzed in the Traffic Study. Substantial adverse impact on city traffic shall be measured by reference to the traffic impact indicators set forth in Section 19.25.11 below.*

*(19.25.11) Traffic Impact Indicators. In determining whether a proposal has substantial adverse impacts on city traffic the Planning Board shall apply the following indicators. When one or more of the indicators is exceeded, it will be indicative of potentially substantial adverse impact on city traffic. In making its findings, however, the Planning Board shall consider the mitigation efforts proposed, their anticipated effectiveness, and other supplemental information that identifies circumstances or actions that will result in a reduction in adverse traffic impacts. Such efforts and actions may include, but are not limited to, transportation demand management plans; roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvements; measures to reduce traffic on residential streets; and measures undertaken to improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles, particularly at intersections identified in the Traffic Study as having a history of high crash rates.*

*The indicators are: (1) Project vehicle trip generation weekdays and weekends for a twenty-four hour period and A. M. and P.M. peak vehicle trips generated; (2) Change in level of service at identified signalized intersections; (3) Increased volume of trips on residential streets; (4) Increase of length of vehicle queues at identified signalized intersections; and (5) Lack of sufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The precise numerical values that will be deemed to indicate potentially substantial adverse impact for each of these indicators shall be adopted from time to time by the Planning Board in consultation with the TPTD, published and made available to all applicants.*

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was prepared by the Applicant's transportation consultant, VHB, and certified complete and reliable by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T) on February 9, 2016. It was noted that the TIS studied impacts of the proposed 605 Concord Avenue project in the context of cumulative impacts of ongoing development projects in the vicinity.

According to the TIS report and commentary provided by TP&T in a memo dated October 17, 2016, the traffic resulting from the project will not significantly alter peak hour trips on the major roads in that area. The TIS indicated that the project had two (2) Planning Board special permit transportation exceedances with no change in level of service.

TP&T recommended transportation infrastructure improvements as well as transportation demand management (TDM) measures to minimize the project's traffic impacts. The mitigation measures proposed by TP&T in the memo dated October 17, 2016, and agreed to by the Applicant, are aimed at addressing the transportation impacts associated with the project in addition to enhancing the overall transportation network in the vicinity and advancing the transportation objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan. Therefore, after consideration of the traffic impacts indicated in the TIS and mitigation measures proposed for the project, the Planning Board finds that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic.

*(19.25.2) Urban Design Findings. The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30. In making that determination the Board may be guided by or make reference to urban design guidelines or planning reports that may have been developed for specific areas of the city and shall apply the standards herein contained in a reasonable manner to nonprofit religious and educational organizations in light of the special circumstances applicable to nonprofit religious and educational activities.*

The Board finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30, as described below. In considering these Findings the Board also relies on the additional guidance provided in the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines, which are applicable in this district.

*(19.31) New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development....*

The anticipated pattern of development in the area is established in the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines. The site is located within the “Shopping Center” subdistrict of the Alewife Overlay Districts, where the main goals are to support additional housing development but continue to allow commercial uses at a lower density, and to provide a transition from largely commercial areas to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Being subject to the Concord Avenue Subdistrict requirements in the Parkway Overlay District zoning, the building massing steps down from 85 feet on its north side to 55 feet along Concord Avenue. The project’s overall massing and scale fits very well within the context, providing an appropriate transition to the neighborhood, and is further enhanced by the improvements to the streetscape and front yard landscape treatment. The siting and orientation of the building is consistent with existing streetscape patterns in the area.

*(19.32) Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings. . . .*

The project enhances the pedestrian and bicycle activity in the immediate area. Entries are oriented toward anticipated routes of pedestrian and bicycle movement and transparency is maximized on the ground floor, which promotes an active street edge. The front yard landscape with terraces, outdoor seating areas, and a range of plantings provides an expanded pedestrian experience. The project further addresses the urban design objectives of the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines through site design that prioritizes pedestrian access and bicycle access to the proposed building. The proposed design provides open space and landscaping that enhance the visual and environmental quality of the area. Exterior (short-term) and interior (long-term) bicycle parking is also provided per zoning requirements.

*(19.33) The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors. . . .*

Rooftop mechanical equipment will be set back from the roof edge and shielded from public view by a combination of walls, louvers and metal screening in order to prevent adverse impacts on adjacent uses. Throughout the pre-application review process, significant attention was given to the treatment of façades and landscape areas to make them more attractive to passersby, and to respond to the finer grain scale of the adjoining residential neighborhood. The exact material treatments will be subject to ongoing review by City staff. Trash and other service functions are housed internally and serviced through the driveway in the rear of the building. Though the exact location of electrical transformer equipment has not been determined, the Applicant will coordinate with the electrical utility provider to locate such equipment in as unobtrusive a location as possible. The proposed solar panels on the roof will help promote the City’s sustainability goals.

*(19.34) Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system. . . .*

Traffic impacts have been discussed previously in these Findings. The project will be designed to meet strict Department of Public Works (DPW) stormwater standards applicable as per City of Cambridge Wastewater and Stormwater Drainage Use Regulations. Open space permeability will increase as a result of the development, which will assist in minimizing stormwater run-off from the site. Roof runoff and ground runoff will be collected and appropriately treated before being discharged into the municipal system. There are no anticipated impacts on water supply. The project will meet the Green Building Requirements set forth in Section 22.20 of the Zoning Ordinance.

*(19.35) New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically. . . .*

The project will transform a currently underutilized site into a new mixed-use block with a small node of retail activity, resulting in the creation of a more pleasant and lively pedestrian environment. The project is located in an area undergoing significant redevelopment and transformation. The project supports the principles embodied in the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines by contributing to a mixed-use area, with 49 residential units, as well as retail and small landscaped setbacks at the ground floor to contribute to the sense of place on Concord Avenue. The new building's design and use will be harmonious with surrounding buildings, which include a diverse mix of uses in buildings of different ages and styles along Concord Avenue.

*(19.36) Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged. . . .*

The project includes residential development with a range of unit types, including three-bedroom units, as encouraged in the planning for the area. In addition, the retail area at the proposed scale is appropriate, as it will not overwhelm adjacent residential buildings and will benefit residents of the area as well.

*(19.37) Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city. . . .*

The project enhances the streetscape along Concord Avenue. The addition of retail uses will activate Concord Avenue, thereby enhancing the experience of pedestrians to Fresh Pond Reservation. The project also will provide landscaped open space on all sides abutting public streets, improving the appearance and amenity of streetscape edges. The project will also provide a roof deck as an open space amenity for occupants of the building.

2. Special Permits to increase FAR and height and waive yard requirements in Alewife Overlay Districts (Section 20.95)

The Board finds that the proposal meets the criteria for issuance of special permits for FAR, height, and waiver of yard requirements in the Alewife Overlay Districts. The Board finds

that the proposal advances the General Purpose and the specific requirements of Section 20.90, as set forth below.

*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;*

The proposal will add housing to an area that is predominantly commercial in character, thus contributing to the overall mix of uses. The building has been sited on the lot to reinforce pedestrian movement along the streetscape of Concord Avenue, and provides streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle enjoyment of the street. The proposal includes improvements to the pedestrian realm and the building includes facilities to support and encourage bicycle use. In addition, the Applicant performed a traffic study that was certified by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, which found that the impact of the project on vehicular traffic in the area will be negligible.

- 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;*

The proposal will meet applicable flood retention requirements, as well as the City's stormwater management standards and the permeable open space requirements of the zoning district.

- 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;*

The proposal is sited at a substantial distance from the Highlands neighborhood and will have minimal impacts.

- 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;*

The development site is relatively small and therefore it would be infeasible to contribute the space needed to create additional public paths, roads or open spaces. However, the project will make financial contributions to transportation improvements, including further work toward creating a future pedestrian/bicycle railroad crossing and potential commuter rail station, and the project provides a main building entry point and landscaped area that is prominently featured along the façade and enhances the pedestrian and bicycle experience on Concord Avenue.

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*

The proposal will add a significant amount of housing to the area and will provide retail uses to serve neighborhood residents, visitors to the Fresh Pond Reservation and others.

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.*

The proposal is oriented in a way to enhance the streetscape, respond to its neighbors, and relate to other recent housing projects in height and massing. The proposal will strengthen the residential streetscape presence and character of the area, and will also create retail use, which will be beneficial to the building residents and to the general public.

The proposal is consistent with the scale of development authorized in the district, as set forth below.

*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.*

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4. *Shopping Center District: 1.25 for non-residential uses; 2.0 for residential uses.*

The proposed residential project will have a total floor area ratio of 2.40. The maximum total floor area ratio allowed for residential use on this property is 2.6 when accounting for the inclusionary housing bonus.

*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:*

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5. *Shopping Center District: 55 feet for all uses. However, these heights are modified further as set forth below:*
  - (a) *For non-residential uses the height may be increased to 70 feet provided the building floorplate above 55 feet is limited to 15,000 square feet or less and those*

*portions of buildings above 55 feet are separated by at least 50 feet; for residential uses the height may be increased to 85 feet provided the building floorplate above 55 feet is limited to 10,000 square feet or less and those portions of buildings above 55 feet are separated by at least 50 feet.*

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The maximum building height allowable by special permit for residential use on this property is 85 feet. The proposed residential project will have a building height of 85 feet that steps down to 55 feet along Concord Avenue. The building floorplate above 55 feet is less than 10,000 square feet and the portions of the two buildings above 55 feet, the fifth and sixth floors, are separated by more than 50 feet.

*20.95.34 Waiver of Yard Requirements. The yard requirements of the applicable base or Overlay districts may be reduced or waived as set forth below.*

*1. Side and rear yard requirements of any applicable base zoning district may be waived, subject to the minimum requirements of Section 20.95.31 above, and front yards may be reduced to a minimum of fifteen (15) feet after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board (and in the Parkway Overlay District after making the findings required of the Planning Board in Section 20.63.7)*

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*3. The Planning Board shall consider the following in making its findings:*

- a. The objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan continue to be met.*
- b. The stormwater management objectives for the area continue to be met both on the site and as the site may be a part of a larger system for managing stormwater runoff.*
- c. The reduction or waiver of yard requirements provides for more efficient development of land; encourages or facilitates a more logical pattern of buildings, streets, parks and open space; or enhances the urban, pedestrian character of the areas as envisioned in the Concord-Alewife Plan.*

The project proposes a new side yard of 15 feet on the west and maintains the minimum side yard of 12.21 feet in the north for the Phase I building, with a slightly greater setback for the Phase II building. These side yards do not meet the minimum side setbacks for residential use in BA zoning district, which are determined by a formula calculation consistent with the Residence C-2B zoning district. Hence a waiver is required for the side setbacks. The front yard setback for the new residential building along Concord Avenue conforms to the 25-foot minimum required by the Parkway Overlay District. The Board approves the proposed setbacks shown on the project plans. The project will meet the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan with the creation of a retail and residential streetscape along Concord Avenue and will have green open space and mature trees in the yards. The stormwater report indicates that the project will meet the stormwater management objectives for the area. The proposed waiver will allow more efficient development of land with minimum conflict with the pattern of buildings in the vicinity in addition to enhancing the urban character and pedestrian experience of the area as envisioned in the Concord-Alewife Plan.

The Board finds that the project is generally consistent with the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan and the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines, in particular those for the “Shopping Center” area in which the project is located, as set forth below.

*Concord-Alewife Plan Goals for Quadrangle:*

- *Introduce a mix of uses, including housing, in the Shopping Center area.*  
The project includes a mix of uses, including housing close to the Alewife T station.
- *Encourage small-scale neighborhood retail.*  
The project provides small-scale, neighborhood commercial space with transparent façades at ground level.
- *Use building and site design to create a vibrant, walkable environment.*  
The building and site design promote a vibrant, walkable environment, with brick-paved walkways, terraces and landscaped outdoor seating areas
- *Improve circulation within the Shopping Center with a clearly visible roadway system.*  
The project site is connected to the main Shopping Center area via Concord Avenue.
- *Enhance overall accessibility to and from the Quadrangle, Alewife Station, the Highlands, and North Cambridge via improved and new pedestrian walkways.*  
The project site improves pedestrian connectedness throughout the area with enhanced streetscape improvements and the project will make contributions to support additional pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure in the district.
- *When the Watertown rail line ceases to be active, create a multiuse path along the right of way and connect it to the rich regional path system created by Linear Park, Minuteman Path, and Belmont Path.*  
The project is not in proximity to the proposed Watertown Branch bike path, but will enhance overall bicycle connections in the area.
- *Encourage improvements within the Shopping Center that support housing as well as a mix of uses.*  
The project provides housing and neighborhood retail.

*Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines – Areawide:*

- *Break up large blocks into smaller blocks, of sizes similar to those in surrounding Cambridge neighborhoods, to improve circulation and be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.*

The site is already small compared to others in the area, and is more consistent with block sizes in other Cambridge neighborhoods.

- *Vary the design of individual buildings to create an architecturally diverse district.*

The project takes cues from nearby recent residential development, but incorporates architectural styles with a different visual character. The façades are designed to provide scale and texture with a variety of materials being used to accentuate changes in massing.

- *Street level facades should include active uses such as frequent residential entrances, with setbacks for stoops and porches; neighborhood-serving retail including shops, restaurants, cafes; services for the public or for commercial offices such as fitness centers, cafeterias, daycare centers; community spaces such as exhibition or meeting spaces; and commercial lobbies and front entrances.*

The street level façade includes a largely transparent retail area and residential lobby, and the site frontage includes a landscaped area meant to be enjoyed by residents and the larger public.

- *Encourage awnings/ canopies to provide shelter and enliven ground-floor façades.*

The front entrances to the retail use and residential lobby are sheltered by projecting overhangs of floors above and provide a pedestrian scale.

- *Design residential buildings with individual units and front doors facing street, including row house units on the lower levels of multi-family residences.*

The inclusion of individual ground-floor units is complicated by flood hazard considerations; however, an active residential lobby, retail area, and usable landscaped terrace are located facing Concord Avenue.

- *Utilize low impact development principles in building and site design as a way to meet City, State, and Federal stormwater requirements...*

The project utilized low impact design principles and will be designed to meet the City's stormwater management standards, subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works.

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- *Use site design that preserves future rights-of-way identified in the Circulation Concept Plan.*

The proposal is not in the vicinity of future rights-of-way envisioned in the Concord-Alewife Plan. The project will enhance the streetscape along Concord Avenue by setting the building back with an entry walkway and by including a building entrance along that frontage.

- *Improve existing streets to meet City standards, including streetscape improvements.*

The sidewalk and street edge along Concord Avenue will be improved as part of the project.

- *Strengthen bicycle and pedestrian links to adjacent areas. Provide links that strengthen physical and visual connections to open space resources.*

The project will enhance the bicycle and pedestrian friendly character of Concord Avenue through street improvements, orienting building entrances and active retail area along Concord Avenue, and providing a bicycle parking facility along the street frontage.

- *Screen service areas from major streets.*

Building services will mainly be accommodated within the building, with the exception of an electrical transformer that is required to be accessible from the street but will be screened with an enclosure. All parking is accommodated behind the building and screened sufficiently from Concord Avenue.

- *Parking below-grade is preferred. If above-grade parking is to be provided, design it so it is not visible...from public streets, or from pathways; line above-ground structured parking with active uses...*

Some above-grade parking is proposed, but will be screened by the building in front. Aside from the proposed vehicular access point, most above-grade parking will be buffered from Concord Avenue by lobby spaces, retail spaces and a landscaped area.

- *Design and locate lighting and signage in support of the district's pedestrian-friendly quality.*

Signage will be minimal given that it is primarily a residential project with a small retail area. Exterior lighting on the site will be pedestrian-scaled as the retail use is located at the first floor level.

- *Use site design to minimize shadows on other buildings or on public streets, open spaces, parks, and plazas.*

Within the constraints of the lot, the provided shadow studies show that the proposed arrangement of massing on the site will not result in excessive shadow impacts on neighboring buildings and spaces.

- *Design residential development to include a range of units of various sizes and with various numbers of bedrooms...*

The proposal includes a variety of different residential unit sizes and types, including three-bedroom units.

*Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines – Shopping Center:*

- *Provide pedestrian links to create strong physical and visual connections to Danehy Park.*

The project is not located in the vicinity of Danehy Park.

- *Improve the pedestrian connection to Alewife Station and to North Cambridge.*

The streetscape improvements will enhance existing pedestrian connections to Alewife Station and the project will support future pedestrian/bicycle connections to Alewife Station.

- *Create a new street network, including a north-south main street.*

The development of this site does not provide an opportunity to create a new street.

- *Ensure that a significant number of entrances for building(s) face Alewife Brook Parkway and/or new main street.*

The site does not have frontage on Alewife Brook Parkway.

- *Create a strong pedestrian link across the Alewife Brook Parkway to connect the east and west parts of the Study Area.*

The proposed streetscape improvements will complement a future pedestrian link across Alewife Brook parkway.

- *Create building height/façade setbacks between 55' and 85'.*

The proposed building is not more than 85 feet in height and steps down to 55 feet along Concord Avenue.

3. Special Permits to reduce Green Area Open Space in front yard in Parkway Overlay District (Section 20.63.7)

*20.63.7 ... The Board may grant such a permit upon its determination that the development proposed will better serve the objective of this Section 20.60 than if the standards were followed and that the criteria specified in Section 10.43 will be satisfied.*

*20.62 It is the purpose of this Section 11.60 [sic] to augment base zoning regulations in designated areas in order to create unified identifiable images of designated areas, to enhance public safety by reducing visual confusion and haphazard development, to encourage development which will protect and enhance the use and enjoyments of public open space resources.....*

The project is consistent with the objectives of the district as it will protect the open space resources and will serve as a gateway to the growing residential neighborhood in the Quadrangle area north of Concord Avenue. The proposed front yard treatment aligns with

adjacent residential development in the area to create a consistent street edge, and will enhance public safety.

4. Special Permit to reduce setback for on grade open parking facilities (Section 6.44.1)

*6.44.1 Setbacks for on grade open parking facilities shall be provided as follows:*

*(a) No on grade open parking shall be located within ten (10) feet of that portion of a building wall containing windows of habitable or occupiable rooms at basement or first story...*

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*(g) The Board of Zoning Appeals may grant a special permit to allow for modification of the requirements in 6.44.1 (a) or (b) if site specific factors favor such modification.*

The reduction in setbacks for the on grade parking area allows for a more efficient parking layout, which will be screened from the streetscape and will not cause hazard, congestion or nuisance.

5. General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit (Section 10.43)

The Planning Board finds that the project meets the General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit, as set forth below.

*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 ...*

Upon granting of the requested special permits, it appears that the requirements of the Ordinance will be met.

*(b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or ...*

The proposed construction of 49 new dwelling units with off-street parking spaces shared with the adjacent building is not anticipated to cause particular congestion or hazard. TP&T has approved the shared access from Concord Avenue and reduction of curb cuts on Concord Avenue as improvements for pedestrian and vehicular movement in the neighborhood and assessed the project to have only a minor vehicle traffic impact in the neighborhood.

*(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 ...*

The proposed mixed use complies with allowed uses in this district, and hence will not adversely affect adjacent uses that exist or are anticipated in the future. The proposed project will improve the streetscape with landscape improvements.

*(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 ...*

The proposed uses will not create nuisance or hazard, and all development activity will adhere to applicable health and safety regulations.

*(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 ...*

The proposed use is encouraged by City plans for the area and the Zoning Ordinance. The neighborhood is witnessing a rise in residential use including a variety of multifamily dwellings, which are allowed in the district. The proposed multifamily development of 49 dwellings would fit this existing and anticipated pattern of development.

*(f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.*

The Board finds the project to be consistent with the citywide urban design objectives, as set forth above in these Findings.

## DECISION

Based on a review of the Application Documents, testimony given at the public hearings, and the above Findings, the Planning Board hereby GRANTS the requested Special Permits subject to the following conditions and limitations. Hereinafter, for purposes of this Decision, the Permittee shall mean the Applicant for the requested Special Permits and any successor or successors in interest.

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the Application Documents and other supporting materials submitted to the Planning Board, and the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board are those dated September 6, 2016, which include the new mixed-use Phase II building as well as the addition of Gross Floor Area in the form of balconies on the existing Phase I building (previously approved by the Planning Board in case PB #269), minor changes to the interior spaces within the Phase I building, connection of the below-grade parking facilities in Phase I and Phase II buildings and associated site improvements on the combined Phase I and Phase II parcel. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (“CDD”). Before issuance of each Building Permit for the project, CDD shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that the final plans submitted to secure the Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this Decision. As part of CDD’s administrative review of the project, and prior to any certification to the Superintendent of Buildings, CDD may present any design changes made subsequent to this Decision to the Planning Board for its review and comment.
3. The Permittee shall address the following design comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be subject to CDD review and approval of the final design details:
  - a. Review of landscape details, including pavers and plantings in the front yard, and opportunities to further green the interior of the site.
  - b. Design details of the at-grade trash storage enclosure at the rear of the site.
  - c. Design details of the elevator and stair headhouses visible above the roof.
  - d. Review of all exterior materials, colors, and details, including a clearer representation of the building’s structure, and construction details such as windows and material transitions.
  - e. Revision of the shadow study to differentiate between existing and new shadows and gain a better understanding of impacts on the abutting residential property to the north.
  - f. Review of parking, bicycle parking, access and egress by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department.



- c. The Permittee shall join the Alewife Transportation Management Association (TMA) including access to shuttle buses to/from Alewife MBTA station as provided by the TMA or a comparable shuttle service.
  - d. Install a real-time multimodal transportation display screen to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip or post at a transportation information center located in an area that is central, visible, convenient, and equally accessible to all residents and visitors. The center will feature information on:
    - i. Available pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the Project site.
    - ii. MBTA maps, schedules, and fares.
    - iii. Area shuttle map and schedule, if one exists.
    - iv. “Getting Around in Cambridge” map (available at the Cambridge Community Development Department office).
    - v. Location of bicycle parking.
    - vi. Hubway regional bikeshare system
    - vii. Carsharing/Ride-matching programs.
    - viii. Other pertinent transportation information.
  - e. The Permittee shall designate a transportation coordinator (TC) for the site to manage the TDM program and coordination with the TMA. The TC will also oversee the marketing and promotion of transportation options to all residents at the site in a variety of ways:
    - i. Posting information in a prominent location in the building and on the Project’s website, social media, and property newsletters.
    - ii. Responding to individual requests for information in person and via phone and email.
    - iii. Provide one new resident packet of transportation information to all units upon move-in.
  - f. The TC will participate in any TC trainings offered by the City of Cambridge or local TMA.
  - g. The project should not charge for bicycle parking.
7. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).
8. Throughout design development and construction, the project shall conform to the Green Building Requirements set forth in Section 22.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. CDD shall certify that the applicable requirements are met prior to issuance of a building permit, and again prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, for development authorized by this special permit.

9. Prior to the final selection of colors and textures for façade materials, the Permittee shall erect a mock-up(s) of an exterior wall section on or near the building site to be reviewed by CDD for comment. Members of the Planning Board shall be notified when the mock-up is erected and given an opportunity to view the materials and transmit any comments to CDD.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the requested special permits were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., Steven Cohen, H Theodore Cohen, Mary Flynn, Hugh Russell, and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, appointed by the Chair to act on this case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board, necessary to grant a special permit.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen".

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this decision PB #319 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, Massachusetts General Laws, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the above decision filed with the Office of the City Clerk on December 21, 2016, by Swaathi Joseph, authorized representative of the Cambridge Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty (20) days have elapsed since the filing of the decision. No appeal has been filed.

DATE:

City Clerk of Cambridge

**Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart**

	Existing	Allowed or Required	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	50,700	5,000	No Change	No Change
Lot Width (ft)	240	50	No Change	No Change
Total GFA (sq ft)	66,354	131,820	121,868	121,868
Residential Base	44,319	101,400	85,512	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	8,738	63,375	10,702	
Inclusionary Bonus	13,296	30,420	25,654	
Total FAR	1.31	2.60	2.40	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	0.87	2.0	1.69	
Non-Residential Base	0.17	1.25	0.21	
Inclusionary Bonus	0.26	0.60	0.51	
Total Dwelling Units	61	110	110	110
Base Units	47	84	84	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Inclusionary Bonus Units	14	26	26	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	1056	600	603	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	831	460	460	
Height (ft)	85	85	85	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Front Setbacks (ft)	25	25	25	
Side Setback (ft)	33.8	(H+L)/5 <sup>1</sup>	15 <sup>2</sup>	
Side Setback (ft)	12.21	(H+L)/5 <sup>1</sup>	12.21 <sup>2</sup>	
Rear Setback (ft)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	31	15	33	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space	2521	4109	4109	
Permeable Open Space	4841	8877	8877	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	104	135	145	145
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	65	115	119	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	12	20	20	
Loading Bays	0	0	0	

<sup>1</sup> Minimum side yard setback for residential use in BA zone, which is greater than the proposed side setbacks.

<sup>2</sup> With Planning Board Special Permit to waive side yard requirements per Section 20.95.34.1.

*Note that the dimensional features above include both "Phase I" and "Phase II" building sites.*