CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: 10/19/2021

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

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Overview

Submission Type:	Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Advisory Design Review
Developer:	Just A Start
Zoning District(s):	Industry A-1 (IA-1)
Proposal Summary:	Demolition of an existing building and construction of a 129,230-square-foot residential building with 107 permanently affordable rental apartments and approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The new building will be six stories above grade with a height of 70 feet. The development will provide 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces.
Planning Board Action:	Review and comment on conformance with AHO Development Standards, City Development Guidelines for the proposal area, Design Guidelines for AHO, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives. Note that an additional design consultation will be required for the developer to respond to the Board's initial comments.
Memo Contents:	CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report
Other Staff Reports:	Parking and Transportation Dept. (TP+T), Department of Public Works (DPW), in separate documents.

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11.207.5 – 11.207.7 AHO Development Standards

Development Standard	Requirements for an AHO Project in IA-1
Building Height & Stories Above Grade	• Maximum six stories / 70 feet.
Density	• No maximum FAR or minimum lot area per dwelling unit.
Yard Setbacks	• No required front yard in IA-1. • 10’ minimum side yards for residences in IA-1, may be reduced to 7.5’ by AHO. • 10’ minimum rear yard for residences in IA-1.
Open Space	• No required open space in IA-1.
Existing Buildings	• Not applicable to the proposed development.
Parking and Bicycle Parking	• No minimum off-street parking. • Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures are required if there are 20 or more units and less than 0.4 spaces per dwelling unit are provided. • Bicycle parking is required per Article 6.100, with flexibility in the location and type (long-term and short-term), and the number of spaces may be reduced if a Public Bicycle Sharing Station is provided.
Site Design and Arrangement	• Front yards may be landscaped or hardscaped but cannot be used for off-street parking. • Pedestrian entrances shall be visible from the street. • Buildings with front facades in excess of 250’ in length parallel to a street shall provide forecourts to break up massing.
Building Facades	• Building facades facing a public street or public open space shall have a minimum 20% clear glass. • Building facades shall incorporate projections/recesses at regular intervals to promote visual interest.
Ground Stories and Below Grade	• Ground stories shall be at mean grade or no more than 4 feet above, with entrances to non-residential uses accessible at grade, unless the City Engineer determines that a higher ground story elevation is necessary for flood protection. • Structured parking within a ground story shall be set behind residential units, common areas, or other populated areas of the building. • Facades of ground stories cannot have expanses of more than 25’ with no windows or pedestrian entryways. • Ground stories with non-residential uses must have a height of at least 15’, average depth of 35’ from the front façade, and at least 30% clear glass frontage.

Development Standard	Requirements for an AHO Project in IA-1
	• Bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms in dwelling units cannot be located below grade.
Mechanical Equipment, Refuse Storage and Loading Areas	• Mechanical equipment shall be generally screened from view. Rooftop mechanical equipment must be set back from the roof line equal to its height.
Environmental Design Standards	• Green Building Requirements as set forth in Section 22.20 apply to AHO Developments of 25,000 square feet or more. • New outdoor light fixtures shall be fully shielded and directed to prevent light trespass onto adjacent residential lots. • AHO Developments are exempt from the Green Roofs Ordinance.

AHO Design Guidelines

Site Design Objectives	
1. Response to Context	• Design site layouts to harmonize with the neighborhood context.
2. Open Space & Landscape Design	• Design open space to enhance the lives of residents and the broader community by offering aesthetic and environmental benefits. • Offer useful amenities to residents, provide opportunities to minimize the impact of new development on neighbors' privacy and quality of life, and contribute to the beauty of the city.
3. Circulation	• Promote non-motorized mobility by prioritizing pedestrian-friendly and bike-accessible site design.
4. Parking	• Minimize the impact of parking and driveway.
5. Utilities	• Minimize the visual, acoustical, and environmental impacts of essential utilities and services.
6. Outdoor Lighting	• Provide lighting for safety and functionality while minimizing energy use, light pollution, and other negative impacts.
7. Public Art	• Enrich the visual environment and strengthen the sense of place by incorporating art.
Building Design Objectives	
1. Massing	• Configure massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. In evolving areas, configure new developments to help realize the City's vision for urban form.
2. Facades	• Design facades to enhance and enliven the public realm. In established areas, emphasize compatibility and reinforce sense of place. In evolving residential and commercial districts, contribute to the transformation of urban form by setting precedents for design excellence.

	• Where appropriate, incorporate ground level retail spaces and common areas to foster a lively enliven the urban environment. • Provide daylight to interior spaces, avoid excessive energy use, and protect the privacy of residents of neighboring buildings. • Design facades to relate to the residential scales and patterns of Cambridge's diverse and historic neighborhoods. • Design street facades to offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and visual interest as appropriate to their role in defining public space.
3. Architectural Details, Materials, Color, and Finishes	• Use materials that are warm, inviting, and compatible with surrounding existing buildings and the neighborhood context. Develop building facades of high-quality, durable materials and with colors, finishes, and textures appropriate to building contexts.
4. Building Interiors	• Affordable housing, like all housing, should serve the needs of its residents while contributing to the residential character and sense of neighborhood within the area at large.
Sustainable Design Objective	
1. Site and Building Design	• Achieve resilience measures to the maximum extent possible, including energy efficiency and measures to promote the health and wellness of residents.

The complete set of Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing, 28 July 2020 can be found at: https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend_aho_designguidelines_20200728v2.pdf

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	• 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.	• 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	• Location/impact of mechanical equipment • Location/impact of loading and trash handling • Stormwater management

development upon its neighbors.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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

C I T Y O F C A M B R I D G E
Community Development Department

Date: 10/19/2021

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

Site & Zoning Context

Site Context

The site is located at the northwestern edge of Neighborhood Nine north of Concord Avenue and west of Alewife Brook Parkway between Danehy Park and Fresh Pond (see Figure 1). It marks a transition from the residential neighborhood tucked between Concord Avenue and Danehy Park to the commercial strip that starts on Concord Avenue and continues up Alewife Brook Parkway to the Fresh Pond Mall. As a result, the area is comprised of a mix of older single- and two-family houses, newer multifamily apartment buildings, legacy industrial businesses, auto-oriented commercial retail, and recreational open space. Most of the older buildings in the area are low-lying – only one or two stories tall – while the newer buildings tend to be three or four stories in height.

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the area surrounding 52 New Street. (Source: Nearmap, March 27, 2021)

Site Zoning

The site is in the Industry A-1 zoning district. It borders an Open Space district to the north and a Residence C-1A district with a Mixed-Use Residential overlay to the south. The Industry A-1 district allows a variety of residential, office, business, and light industrial uses that have a limited impact on people and the environment. Unlike most industrial districts, Industry A-1 allows most residential uses as-of-right; it is also the only industrial district where some types of light industry are expressly prohibited. Industry A-1 promotes moderate-density development and is typically located in transition areas throughout Cambridge.

Comments on Proposal

Project Description

The developer, Just A Start, proposes to construct a 129,230-square-foot residential building with 107 permanently affordable rental apartments. The building will include approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space at the ground story. The existing building, which was last used as a fitness center, will be demolished. The new building will be six stories above grade with a height of 70 feet. The project is pursuing Passive House Institute (PHI) certification for environmental sustainability.

The residential units will be a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedrooms with two-bedrooms comprising over half of the total number of units. The income eligibility is similarly varied, with 10% of the apartments reserved for households with incomes below 30% of the area median income (AMI), approximately 10% of the apartments reserved for households with incomes between 80-100% AMI, approximately 20% of the apartments reserved for households with incomes below 80% AMI, and the majority of remaining apartments reserved for households with incomes below 60% AMI.

The development will include 43 on-site parking spaces along with 112 long-term bicycle parking spaces and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The number of vehicle parking spaces is the equivalent of a 0.4 parking ratio. The building will be wired so that all vehicle parking spaces are able to charge electric vehicles, with 25% of the vehicle parking spaces equipped with Level 2 electric vehicle chargers from day one.

Consistency with AHO Development Standards

The project is proposed to be consistent with the standards set by the AHO, which are set forth in Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The AHO standards apply "as-of-right," meaning that no special permit or discretionary approval is needed. Upon completing the advisory design review procedure, the developer can seek a building permit.

The AHO development standards applicable to this project are summarized in the table in the introductory section of the memo. Most standards relate to basic development characteristics such as height, setbacks, and parking. The following are some notable aspects of the proposal in relation to the AHO development standards:

- The AHO does not set a minimum requirement for vehicle parking spaces, but it does require projects with over 20 units to either meet a 0.4 parking ratio or implement Transportation Demand

Management (TDM) measures. Since the proposed project has a parking ratio of 0.4, TDM measures are not required.

- The AHO zoning does not require an active non-residential space at the ground story in this district, but the creation of a retail space is a positive feature that supports the mixed-use character of the area. The AHO zoning allows any permissible non-residential use at the ground story, which includes a broad range of uses in IA-1 (as noted above). The space is identified as "Retail," but it would be helpful to learn more about what range of use types might be envisioned in that space.
- The site is not within the Flood Plain Overlay District, but the developer has worked with the City Engineer's staff to understand the future flood risks on this site based on 2070 projections. This has resulted in elevating retail and lobby uses above grade, floodproofing the ground story up to the projected 1%-probability long-term flood elevation, and locating dwelling units above the ground story. Although the intent of the AHO zoning is to locate non-residential uses at grade, in this case it was determined by the City Engineer that elevating the space is necessary. Additional comments are provided in the DPW memo.
- The AHO zoning requires pedestrian entrances to be visible from the street. While the proposed residential entrance is set back from New Street, it remains visible from the northern approach along New Street and is accessible by a terraced pedestrian/bicycle entry route directly from New Street and separate from the entry to the parking garage. Given the nature of the site, this entry location provides a way to make the elevated lobby accessible and to accommodate the inclusion of retail space along the site's narrow frontage.
- Though many requirements are waived by the AHO, this proposal remains subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20. The pursuit of PHI certification allows the development to comply with Section 22.20 in a way that is especially supportive of the City's climate goals. The developer submitted an initial package of Green Building Review materials that was certified by CDD staff as sufficient to demonstrate compliance with Section 22.20 at the current stage of design. Revised materials will be reviewed at the Building Permit and Certificate of Occupancy stages.

C I T Y O F C A M B R I D G E

Community Development Department

Date: 10/19/2021

Urban Design Report: **AHO-1, 52 New Street**

The creation of Danehy Park began the transformation of New Street from an access road serving small auto-oriented industrial and commercial retail buildings to a mixed-use street with substantial multi-floor residential buildings. The proposed Affordable Housing Overlay project at 52 New Street will further this transformation.

Nearby amenities include Danehy Park, the Fresh Pond Reservoir, other parks and recreational areas, and the Fresh Pond Shopping District. Transportation options include the Alewife T Station, the Minuteman Trail, the Linear Park, and several bus routes.

The 52 New Street site is atypical for Cambridge, a long deep parcel that parallels the southwestern border of Danehy Park but is separated from it by a fence and a steep slope up to the level of the playfields. The narrow northwestern end of the site faces New Street. Its southeastern end extends close to existing small scaled residential and commercial buildings along Bay State Road. Single-floor buildings and surface parking lots occupy the parcels along the southern portion of New Street, but It seems likely that buildings of a more substantial scale may be developed at some point in the future.

Overall Urban Design Concept:

1. The proposed 129,230 gross-square-foot six floor building will accommodate 107 affordable units, a significant addition to Cambridge's housing stock.
2. The building's footprint occupies most of the site, leaving little ground level open space. The building's entry terrace/courtyard on its northeast side is open to Danehy Park; a second-floor courtyard provides a deck and green roof open to the southwest, and a small fifth floor terrace on the southeast end of the building overlooks Bay State Road. None of these spaces are very large relative to the number of residents, but perhaps should be seen in the context of the open space and recreational opportunities offered by nearby city parks and reservations.
3. Its massing and height are conceived in relation to the scale of Danehy Park and the developing character of New Street. Its long northeast façade will provide an architectural edge along Danehy Park. While it is taller than the new residential buildings on the west side of New Street, it shares with them the general principle of spatially framing the street with its height and massing.
4. The New Street façade is stepped and angled in plan to relate on the north to the walkway along Danehy Park and on the south to anticipate the streetwalls of future buildings on the east side of New Street.
5. The building's first floor facing New Street accommodates retail space.
6. A small plaza between the building and New Street provides seating and low planting, and includes trees that approximately continue the line of the trees along the east side of New Street.

7. Parking is at grade, covered by the building's residential floors, separated from the street by the intervening first floor retail space, and screened from the adjoining sites by walls and louvers.
8. Short term bicycle parking is provided in the entry terrace/courtyard. Long term bicycle parking is at grade, accessed by path along building's northeast side.
9. Parking, trash, service, and electrical equipment are located internal to building and are not visible from New Street.
10. The building will have minimal impact on existing nearby buildings. Its upper floors, visible from the western playfields of Danehy Park, will be partially screened by the trees on the park's southern edge and slope.
11. There appear to be no existing trees on the site, the project adds numerous trees and other plantings around the edges of the site, and includes upper-level terraces and green roofs.

Consistency with AHO Design Guidelines

As noted in the Zoning and Development memo, the project is proposed to be consistent with the standards set by the Affordable Housing Overlay, which are set forth in Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. These guidelines are intended to ensure that AHO projects are of high quality and are compatible with their neighborhoods in terms of massing, façade development, ground floor uses, circulation, and site design.

The AHO Design Guidelines are meant to:

- Promote the creation of context-sensitive 100% affordable housing developments that enhance their neighborhoods and the public realm.
- Promote the creation of new affordable housing developments that incorporate urban design best practices and strive for design excellence, including integrating green infrastructure and green building design.
- Provide design guidance for new construction, rehabilitation, and additions to existing buildings.
- Provide affordable housing developers, property owners, the Planning Board, neighbors, City staff, and the Affordable Housing Trust with a framework to guide the advisory design review process for affordable housing development under the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Accordingly, the Guidelines recommend that Affordable Housing Developments:

- Respond to their contexts, reinforcing and enhancing their existing shared and unique architectural and urban design character.
- Contribute to Cambridge as a visually rich, beautiful, and safe pedestrian environment through their architectural, site, and landscape design.
- Provide a sense of comfort by making new buildings and additions inviting and compatible with their neighbors.
- Use construction materials that are compatible in scale, texture, and color with those of the surrounding context.
- Incorporate architectural details and subtle embellishments to relate to human dimensions and scale.
- Organize building facades into base, middle, and top.

- Incorporate common spaces to foster a sense of community.
- Harmonize new buildings and additions in appearance and scale with historically significant buildings.
- Contribute to Cambridge as an energy efficient and resilient community.
- Respond to the urban, architectural, and landscape character of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provide street facades that offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and incorporate architectural details to provide visual interest appropriate to their roles in defining public space.

In addition, the design review process is intended to incorporate the Citywide Urban Design Objectives in Section 19.30 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance and other area-specific guidelines, which in this case would include the Alewife Design Guidelines created during the recent planning process. The design generally follows these principles and the guidelines that flow from them.

Site Design

As recommended by the AHO guidelines:

1. The site's vegetative cover will be greatly increased, including street trees that relate to the existing trees on New Street.
2. The building's front setback and the plaza on New Street relate to the site layouts of the residential projects on the west side of New Street.
3. Planting and benches are provided in the plaza on New Street and the entry terrace/courtyard.
4. Pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes are distinct and separated.
5. Parking is screened from the street by intervening programmed spaces, and from the neighboring parcels by the design of the ground level facades.
6. Trash and building electrical equipment are hidden from view, inside the building.
7. Mechanical equipment is located on the rooftop and the taller components are screened.
8. The building's massing is arranged to create courtyards. The entry terrace/courtyard on its northeast side, and the second-floor terrace on its southwest side will engage Danehy park and future development in the southern Portion of New street, and provide amenity, light, and air to residential units.

Further development of the following elements could bring the project into greater accord with the guidelines:

9. The AHO Design Guidelines recommend that building entrances be located to address public streets. Due to the configuration of the 52 New Street parcel, the residential lobby and the entry terrace/courtyard is not located directly on the street, but instead deeper within the site. This offers benefits to the building massing, internal circulation, and connection to the proposed vehicular dropoff, but it poses the challenge of creating an inviting route to the building's entrance. Additional design attention should be given to strengthening and emphasizing the sequence of spaces between the street and the building's lobby entrance.

10. The guidelines discuss the importance of projects' contribution to the pedestrian experience along public streets. Improvements could be made to enhance the amenities of the plaza on New Street and to increase its contribution to the street's pedestrian character.

- The guidelines recommend that on-site open spaces be designed in relation to adjacent public open spaces. The possibility of further developing the entry terrace/courtyard relative to Danehy Park could be further explored.

11. The driveway should be screened from the adjoining property, and shading could be considered to minimize its contribution to the urban heat island effect.

Recommendations for Site Design:

- The design of the building's entry sequence - from the plaza facing New Street, through the passage/loggia along the building's northeast side, to the entry terrace/courtyard itself, and to the residential lobby - should be revised to be more inviting and to more strongly link the lobby with the street. The plaza on New Street should make a greater contribution to the pedestrian character of the street. Both the spatial connection and the pedestrian character would benefit from:
    - An additional street tree in the northern half of the New Street frontage (the tree spacing adjusted to locate one at the north property line and to avoid blocking the loggia/passage).
    - Additional low plantings, potentially including vines on the ground floor façade.
    - The addition of a trellis that would recall the ground level trellis at 77 New Street, and would both link the building's New Street frontage with the loggia/passage that leads to the entry and would emphasize the New Street plaza as a sheltered nook adjacent to the sidewalk.
    - Additional recommendations for the development of the plaza on New Street and other components of the building's entry sequence follow in the discussion of facades.
- The entry terrace/courtyard is elevated three feet above existing grade. It is visually open to Danehy Park, but separated from it by a chain link fence on the property line and by the existing city-owned "methane trench" that runs along the toe of the slope, which is used to monitor methane generated by the landfill that underlies the park. The trench is covered by gravel and has the appearance of a pedestrian path. The Alewife District Plan proposes an off-street bicycle and pedestrian path at this location, connecting between Bay State Road and New Street, but this is only a future possibility. The city is evaluating the methane trench and considering options for it, but it needs to remain off-limits for public use at least for the duration of the study and until changes that might be indicated are achieved. Taking into account these uncertainties, it would be preferable if a clearer relationship could be established between the courtyard and the park and the potential path.
    - On the one hand, the separation between them could be more strongly emphasized - with denser and more substantial planting and a more sensitively designed fence.
    - On the other hand, if a pedestrian and bicycle path is a possibility in the long term, the north edge of the plaza could be designed in anticipation of future connection to it, with steps and a ramp down to grade, or with provisions for them to be added later.

    - In any case, the relationship between the terrace and the view to the park could be enhanced by adjusting the geometry of benches and trees parallel to the north edge of the terrace, facing Danehy Park.
- Shade tolerant trees could be considered in the planters between the sloped walkways down from the entry terrace/courtyard to the vehicular drop-off.
- Planting and/or other types of screening should be provided between the vehicular driveway and drop-off and the adjoining parcel to the south. Consideration could be given to providing a trellis over the vehicular driveway, both to reduce its impact on the units that overlook it, and to reduce its contribution to the urban heat island effect.
- The materials and lighting of the vehicular drop-off under the building should be more fully developed, as they will potentially affect future uses on the adjoining property to the south.
- While species are listed on the Planting Plan, their locations on the site are not specified. The trees along New Street, at least, should be coordinated with the DPW.
- Permeable paving should be utilized where possible.
- The lighting fixtures indicated in the entry terrace/courtyard seem excessively tall.
- The locations of gas meters, if any, and of electric meters should be clarified.
- The incorporation of public art should be investigated.

Building Design

Massing:
The building is approximately 380 feet long. It is six floors tall plus rooftop mechanical, except for a small four-floor portion at the building's southeast end. While it is taller than the new residential buildings on the west side of New Street, it presents only its end to the street, and seems compatible with them in bulk.

The building's massing and façade strategies mitigate its length, yet still respond to the scale of Danehy Park. Courtyards on the building's northeast and southwest sides give the building an elongated S shape. The northeast courtyard faces Danehy Park and serves as a pedestrian entry terrace for the residential lobby. The courtyard is adjoined by first floor retail space and connected by under-building pedestrian passages to New Street and to the vehicular drop-off. At the building's southeastern end, adjustments to massing and façades create smaller scaled elements that relate more closely to the one-to-three-floor buildings on Bay State Road.

As recommended by the AHO Design Guidelines, the project's massing:

- Uses vertical articulations to break down its mass to avoid a monolithic appearance, and to relate its existing and anticipated developing contexts.
- Incorporates courtyards on its northeast and southwest sides to provide light and air to residential units, enrich the building's circulation system, and reinforce its engagement with Danehy Park and potential future development to the southwest.
- Provides terraces at stepbacks for the use of the residents.

Further development of the following elements of the building's massing could bring the project into greater accord with the guidelines:

12. The building's southeastern end.
- The sixth floor.

Recommendations for Building Massing:

- More extensive stepping down of the building's height at its southeastern end could create a more compatible relationship to the smaller scaled existing buildings on Bay State Road.
- Treatment of the building's southeastern end more as a group of semi-separate smaller buildings and less as a unified mass could be beneficial for the same reason.
- Incorporation of more detailed massing articulation at the sixth floor – recesses, changes in plane, balconies, dormers, etc. – would break up its horizontal continuity, add visual interest, and reduce the building's sense of height.

Façades:

The building's façades complement its massing by providing variation that helps mitigate the building's length. Its relatively repetitive but subtly varied northeast façade addresses the Park, its more irregular southwest façade addresses the parcels to the south and will be visible from Bay State Road.

The building's northwest end constitutes its only direct frontage on New Street and presents an opportunity to contribute to the developing street's scale and spatial definition. The importance of this streetwall façade is further emphasized by the proposed connector path between New Street and the "Danehy Connector/New Street Path", currently in the design phase, which follows the former Watertown-Cambridge railroad line. The connector will aim directly at the 52 New Street building, and a crosswalk to it is already in place. The façade's stepped and angled massing responds to views and the geometries of the slight bend in New Street, but its fenestration pattern and wall design continue those of the building's southwest side façade rather than differentiating to address the street.

The portion of the northeast façade closest to New Street is given a contrasting cladding material, picking it out as a special element that marks the corner of Danehy Park.

In accord with the AHO Design Guidelines, the building's facades:

- Are broken up into relatively short sections by the courtyards and by changes in plane and material.
- First floor retail space with large windows is provided on New street and facing the loggia/passage to the entry terrace/courtyard.
- Benches and a canopy at the New Street Plaza emphasize the entrance to the loggia/passage and will be an amenity for residents and visitors.
- The design employs a combination of façade strategies, bringing together relatively repetitive elements and more unique elements in response to the very different conditions on the building's long sides and its ends.

- Fenestration is recessed from the plane of the walls, creating shadows; mullions create patterns within window openings; exterior sunshades add detail; changes in the punched window pattern add variety.
- A variety of wall cladding materials and textures are proposed, visually enriching the facades, and staggered joint patterns add additional detail.
- The subtle variation in the color of cladding materials on the long northeast and southwest facades helps to soften the building's scale.
- The use of full depth brick at the ground floor will provide visual detail and a welcome sense of permanence .
- The ground level parking is screened from view by intervening retail space and by vertical painted aluminum louvers.
- Upper-level terraces provide visual enrichment.
- The basic color scheme of warm light colors, a darker warm colored ground floor, and sunshades and strategically located panels in contrasting bluish colors is compatible with the neighborhood.

<u>Further development of the following elements could bring the project into greater accord with the guidelines:</u>

13. Greater emphasis could be placed on the New Street façade as a civically scaled response to the public realm.
14. The building's entry sequence from New Street to the lobby could be more fully designed to create an ensemble of spaces, linked together to draw pedestrians into the site and to the building's lobby.
15. As noted above, the ground floor facades could more fully developed to create a more engaging pedestrian space at the building's New Street frontage, to suggest a stronger relationship between New Street and the retail space, and to create a more welcoming experience on the pedestrian route up the steps and ramp and through the covered passage to the entry terrace/courtyard.
16. The sixth floor could be more strongly articulated and differentiated from the lower residential floors.
17. The ground floor parking facades could be more fully considered, taking into account that should the adjoining parcel to the southwest be at some point developed, 52 New Street's ground floor may be a prominent feature for that future project.
18. The facades of the building's southeastern end could be more fully developed in response to the smaller scaled existing buildings along Bay State Road.

<u>Recommendations for Facades:</u>

New Street Facade:

- The project could respond more forcefully to New Street: frame it as an important space in the structure of this part of Cambridge, create a stronger sense of connection to the first-floor retail space, and more strongly integrate the loggia/passage to the entry terrace with the plaza on New Street.

- Aside from its angled and stepped faces, the New Street façade is unduly understated with regard to its civic role as the only portion of the building that directly addresses the street. Consideration should be given to giving the façade a scale and organization more in keeping with its role in defining the street.
    a. Means could include larger windows, the introduction of corner windows, the grouping of windows to create a sense of scale that would mediate between that of individual rooms and the façade as a whole, stronger differentiation between the New Street façade and the southeast side façade, the use of different cladding materials or colors, etc.
- The entry sequence from New Street to the building lobby could be enriched by developing the first-floor facades to create a more inviting pedestrian environment.
    - A more continuous horizontal element, such as a trellis and vines along the top of the first-floor façade, would emphasize the pedestrian scale of the plaza on New Street, and could link with the projecting canopy at the loggia/passage under the building, extend to the entry terrace/courtyard, and also extend along the driveway and relate to the driveway's screening from the adjoining property. For reference, similar examples include the trellis at the building entry to 77 New Street, and at Alvar Aalto's Saynatsalo Town Hall, the integration of the trellis with first floor circulation, fenestration, and planting.
    - The space within the loggia/passage could be further emphasized as a significant place by means such as color, materials, column spacing, lighting, etc.
    - The provision of a projecting canopy at the lobby entrance would offer shelter, emphasize the entrance, and help visually link it to the loggia/passage.
    - The wall areas below the retail windows could be recessed to create a sense of larger openings that extend down to grade. Additional mullions could be considered to create a richer pattern.

Northeast Façade:

- While the emphasis given to the corner of Danehy Park by the contrasting treatment of the portion of the northeast façade closest to New Street seems a potentially positive urban gesture, the pattern of windows and other aspects of the façade seem excessively unassuming. Consideration could be given to giving this portion of the building a less anonymous expression.

Top Floor Facades:

- Consideration could be given to breaking down the scale of the sixth-floor facades and to differentiating them from the typical residential floors below by articulating them into smaller elements. Recesses and changes in plane, balconies, bay windows, dormers, larger windows, sunshades, etc. could be investigated.

Typical Facades:

- Further development of exterior wall cladding materials, including the details and locations of smooth vs. textured panels, joint patterns, colors, and their potential to emphasize or differentiate different parts of the facades in response to their varied contexts.
- The color of through-wall vents should match the cladding they're installed in.

- Consideration of projecting or Juliette balconies both as amenities for residents and to further emphasize the building's engagement with its surroundings.
- At the ground floor parking façades, more closely spaced vertical painted aluminum louvers could be considered, and the possibility of continuing them down to grade.

Building Plans:

In accord with the AHO Design Guidelines, the building's floor plans:

- Incorporate street facing retail, common spaces including a community room and a fitness room.
- The building's first floor is elevated above flood level, and the lowest residential units are on the second floor.
- Parking, trash, recycling, utilities are hidden from view.
- Areas of green roof are incorporated at the second floor and fifth floor terraces.

Mechanical equipment is located on the roof, set back from the roof edges by a minimum of 10 feet. Rooftop equipment over 5 feet tall is screened.

Further development of the following elements could bring the project into greater concordance with the guidelines:

- Provide additional common spaces.
- The amount of space usable by residents on the upper-level terraces could be increased.
- The design of the drop-off will have a significant impact on the quality of the entry terrace/courtyard and also on potential future development of the neighboring parcel to the southwest. Details such as soffit design and materials, and lighting should be carefully considered.

Recommendations for Building Plans:

- Consideration could be given to providing a more direct route from the entry terrace/courtyard to the long-term bicycle storage room by moving its entry door to the room's northern corner.
- Consideration could be given to creating a more direct route to the lobby: could a stair be provided directly from the parking level to the lobby?
- Verify clearances in the long-term bicycle storage room and the number of spaces provided.
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- Consider making the green roof at Level 3 above the community room an accessible terrace to create a stronger connection to Danehy Park.
- The retail entrance seems somewhat hidden away from the public street, consideration could be given to further emphasizing it, or to moving it closer to New Street.
- The landscaped green space at the very southeastern end of the site appears to be a play area. It seems remote from the rest of the building's circulation. Consideration could be given to instead locating it at the second-floor roof deck/green roof on the building southwest side.
- Consider providing common spaces adjacent to the full extent of the second-floor deck/green roof, and adjacent to the fifth-floor deck at the southeast end of the building.

Sustainable Design

In accord with the AHO Design Guidelines for sustainability:

- The project proposes to pursue Passive House. It will have an energy efficient exterior envelope including triple-glazed windows, a fairly low window-to-wall ratio, heavily insulated walls, rooftop energy recovery units.
- The first floors are elevated above estimated 2070 100-year flood levels.
- The lowest residential units are on the second floor.
- It's walls and upper roof are light-colored.
- The areas of green roof will help reduce the urban heat island effect.

19. Approximately 10,000 square feet of the roof is available for a PV array.

Further development of the following elements could bring the project into greater concordance with the guidelines:

- Locate the transformer room and other critical equipment above anticipated flood level, or protect it by other means.
- The extent of operable windows in the residential units is not clear from the documents.

Summary of Priority Recommendations:

- Enhance the civic presence of the New Street façade.
- Create a more integrated entry sequence from New Street to the lobby.
- Enhance the pedestrian scale and visual interest of the ground floor façade facing New Street.
- Provide greater articulation of the sixth-floor façade.
- Screen and landscape the driveway.
- More fully develop the details, textures, and colors of the wall cladding.