



October 26, 2023

Ms. Swaathi Joseph  
Community Development Department  
City of Cambridge  
344 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Ms. Joseph,

Homeowners Rehab, Inc. (HRI) is pleased to submit revisions to our proposal (the “Proposal”) for the creation of a 100% income-restricted housing development of 29 rental apartments to be located at 4 Mellen Street (an address recently assigned by DPW) / 1627 Massachusetts Avenue.

As part of the Affordable Housing Overlay process, we have taken comments from CDD staff, the Planning Board, and public comment and incorporated them into an updated design presented in this submission. In addition to the formal comments taken from CDD and Planning Board memos, we have met with CDD Urban Design, Housing, Transportation, and Zoning staff and Cambridge Historical Commission staff numerous times throughout the summer to further enhance our building and site design – their feedback has greatly informed our revised project design. We believe that the changes have resulted in a better project for all – both from a neighborhood design context and, most importantly, for the benefit of our future residents. We have also been in contact with the City Arborist, DPW, and CHC’s color consultant to inform select changes to the initial design. Included in this submission is a memo that details our project team responses to all the comments we received from our first AHO submission along with comments we heard from CDD and CHC staff during our recent meetings.

The HRI team looks forward to city staff input and appreciates the opportunity to present to the Planning Board for input this fall as the team works to advance the Proposal.

Regards,

Sara E. Barcan



# VOLUME I - FORMS & NARRATIVE

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1627 MASS AVE  
CAMBRIDGE, MA  
10/26/23



# **VOLUME I - FORMS & NARRATIVE**

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The below table organizes comments received by the development team for 4 Mellen/1627 Mass Ave following the team's submission of an AHO Design Review package to the Planning Board on May 2, 2023, and presentation to the Planning Board at the public hearing on July 18, 2023. The table is organized into "Comments", identifies the source(s) of the comments, and the right column outlines the design team's response to the comments.

Comments were received from the City of Cambridge Community Development Department memo to the Planning Board dated July 13, 2023, Public comments received in advance of the 7/18/23 Planning Board hearing and following the team's presentation to the board, Planning Board member comments following the team's presentation, and an Initial Report on the AHO Design Consultation from CDD dated August 7, 2023.

**Comments are organized into thematic groups:**

1st AHO Submission:

- New Building Design
- Roof Design
- Site Design
- Civil/Stormwater
- Sustainability
- Circulation

Source Key

- PB Memo - Planning Board Memo (8/7/23)
- CDD – UD - Urban Design Staff Report (7/13/23)
- CDD – Zoning - Zoning Staff Report (7/13/2023)
- TC - Planning Board Comment - Ted Cohen
- AT - Planning Board - Ashley Tan
- TS - Planning Board - Tom Sieniewicz
- LB - Planning Board - Louis Bacci
- SB - Suzanne Blier
- BJJ - Billie Jo Joy
- MM - Marilee Meyer
- CH - Charles Hefling
- DB - David Blumburg
- BZ - Beth Zeitlin
- SL - Stephen LaPointe

City Staff feedback during design consultation post-1st AHO submission:

- Color Scheme of New Building
- Articulation of New Building
- Misc.

**Responses to Comments made in connection with 1st AHO Submission to CDD/PB**

	Comment	Source	Response
<b>New Building Design</b>	Consideration could be given to setting the new building's sixth floor, including its elevator, back from its west side, and/or breaking up the continuity of the sixty-floor façade by changes in plane, and eliminating the sixth-floor portion of the corner bay window/tower	CDD - UD	ICON agrees to moving the bay down by 1 level. The elevator cannot move while still providing accessibility to both the mansion and the new construction portion. We had set back the 6th floor originally and city advised against it. Enhancing the size of the cornice, which separates the fifth and sixth floor gives the 6th floor the appearance of being slightly set back. Materiality was also updated for further visual separation



<p>New Building Design</p>	<p>Adjusting the first-floor height along Mellen Street which appears too tall to be compatible with neighboring first floor heights along Mellen Street. To accommodate this, the Planning Board suggests a half-stop for the elevator system so that the existing and proposed structures' first floors would not need to perfectly align.</p>	<p>PB Memo</p>	<p>This option has been studied by the design team. The maximum amount that the second floor, and therefore total building, could be lowered is 18". In doing so, a tunnel effect would be created between the new construction portion and existing building, where even upon reducing height of structural steel, the head height at the top of the stairs connecting the two areas would be 6'-9". Additionally, stairs between L2 new and existing would be required which would reduce the feeling of community and connection between the two buildings. Reducing the total amount lowered by an amount of less than 18" would have little to no effect on how tall the building is perceived to be.</p>
<p>New Building Design</p>	<p>Design should better integrate mansion and the new building, and find ways to integrate motifs from mansion into the new building. HRI should consider different exterior materials for the new construction that complement the existing building</p>	<p>Public Comment(s)- BJJ, MM, SB</p>	<p>As recommended by the city and CHC, the intent of the new construction is to be distinct from the existing building. The newly enhanced cornice now better reflects that horizontal element on the mansion, and the inset area for the entry reflects the same purpose and proportion of the mansion porch. The design team agrees that the coloration of the new construction portion could be more compatible with the existing building, and worked with CHC's color consultant to come up with historically appropriate colors for the new construction building. This can be achieved with the same siding material as previously proposed.</p>
<p>New Building Design</p>	<p>Consideration could be given to deemphasize its upper cornice and give the lower cornice more projection</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report</p>	<p>Agreed and incorporated.</p>
<p>New Building Design</p>	<p>Consideration could be given to utilizing lap siding for the detail and shadow it provides</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report</p>	<p>Project team discussed materials with CDD and CHC staff.</p>
<p>New Building Design</p>	<p>Care should be taken when specifying and installing panelized system to ensure a successful appearance</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report</p>	<p>GC is very familiar with these products and successfully installed similar materials at HRI's Finch Cambridge among many other projects.</p>



New Building Design	Windows should be more recessed, the mullions are confusing.	Public Comment - MM	ICON agrees that the renderings could better reflect the actual install of the windows, which will be inset from the face of the exterior siding, and will update the representation so that the mullions also read better.
New Building Design	Elaboration of corners and surfaces and focus on entry terrace – one could probably remove the top floor unit on the east side, and relocate it to 6 <sup>th</sup> floor southwest corner	CDD - UD Comment	The setback on the 6th floor is set by zoning - the east side of the new construction building can only be 5 stories tall within 35' feet of zoning C-1.
New Building Design	Further break down massing on eastern side.	CDD - UD Comment	Bay along east side was lowered to 3 stories to help it relate better to 8 Mellen abutter.
New Building Design	Consideration should be given to articulating the western portion of the Mellen Street façade	CDD - UD Report Public Comment - SB	Western and eastern portion of the Mellen Street facade are now distinct, and separated by a 2' deep inset. This is further emphasized by the change in material and drop in cornice line on the east side.
New Building Design	Consideration could be given to further stepping down the eastern portion of the fifth-floor volume back from the typical plane of the façade	CDD - UD Report	The design team studied this option and did not find it a successful move as it would result in a reduction to the overall bedroom count of the project.
New Building Design	Consideration should be given to giving the windows on the Mellen Street façade a larger role in organizing the facade	CDD - UD Report	This has been updated - the living rooms were given another single window and the kitchen window became the same size, increasing the overall glazing on this facade by 7%
New Building Design	Diagram of proposed transparency percentages for façade facing Mellen Street (new addition).	CDD- Zoning	Included in Volume 2.
New Building Design	Diagram of proposed projecting/recessing architectural elements on the façade facing Mellen Street (new addition) to determine compliance with Section 11.207.7.3.b of the AHO	CDD- Zoning	Included in Volume 2.



New Building Design	Mass Ave façade is flat, understands the concept of a flat background for the mansion but it ought to relate to the mansion to a greater extent. Whether they could have the same paint color or thread more design elements through both.	PB Comment - TC	A 2' deep inset has been added to the facade to help emphasize the verticality of the corner tower and break up the Mass Ave facade. The bay was also reduced in height to help relate to the context. Colors for the two bulks were chosen in coordination with CHC's color consultant.
Roof Design	Design isn't clear about whether interior spaces will be through-wall or rooftop vents.	CDD - UD Report	All vents except range hoods (recirculating) go to the roof.
Roof Design	Mechanical equipment visibility from ground level should be evaluated and screening provided if indicated.	CDD - UD Report	Mechanical equipment is a minimal as possible, though a central system and also located at the very center of the roof itself. It is not visible from the sidewalk within a 200' radius from the building. All mechanical systems are essential to it being an all-electric building and Passive House certified.
Roof Design	Consider specifying a light-colored roof or a green roof, and incorporating rooftop solar panels as part of the initial construction.	CDD - UD Report	Roof will be light and HRI is working with Resonant Solar for a Solar PV array.
Roof Design	Consider terrace on fifth floor.	PB Comment - AT	The limited roof space will be occupied by mechanicals and the solar PV array.
Roof Design	Additional details on the proposed rooftop mechanical screening, including measurements of setback line and perspective views from adjacent public streets to confirm mechanical equipment is fully hidden from view.	CDD- Zoning	Roof dimensions included in Volume 2. All perspective views included in Volume 2 have roof equipment modeled, and the roof equipment is not visible from those perspectives.
Site Design	Consider providing the following on the terrace: table to encourage use of terrace for casual dining or as an outdoor workplace, electrical outlets, additional built-in benches on eastern end.	CDD - UD Report	Electrical outlets and several tables have been added to the patio area. A seat wall has been added to the perimeter of the patio and parallel to the entrance walkway, providing 40 additional linear feet of built- in seating.
Site Design	Provide subtle lighting from indirect sources instead of the proposed strip lighting.	CDD - UD Report	Recessed lighting is included in the ceiling of the overhang, strip lighting is an accent. HRI will continue to consider other site lighting as well.



<p>Site Design</p>	<p>Consider relocating the transformer, if possible, to be better screened.</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report PB Comment - TS, LB, TC</p>	<p>Given the access required by the utility company, pushing the transformer further into the site is not possible. Based on CDD, PB, and public comment, we have decided to locate the transformer in a vault underground, HRI would need Eversource final approval.</p>
<p>Site Design</p>	<p>Consider extending the hedge the full length of the project's Mellen street frontage</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report</p>	<p>In consultation with CDD and CHC staff, the new site plan includes low plantings to fill the gap from the hedge to the main entrance path - additional hedge would have meant adding in more non-native species which we are hoping to avoid. Low plantings will both make for a more welcoming entrance and allow the entrance to be more visible from Mass Ave</p>
<p>Site Design</p>	<p>Provide additional curbside trees on the Mass Ave and Mellen Street sidewalks</p>	<p>CDD - UD Report</p>	<p>HRI met with an arborist from the City Arborist's Office and we are looking into the possibility of adding a tree pit and curbside tree on Mellen Street. HRI was advised to hold off on any additional curbside trees on Mass Ave due to the upcoming city work on Mass Ave.</p>
<p>Site Design</p>	<p>Consider opportunities to increase the usable open space on the site with a special focus on opportunities for small recreational areas for children and families</p>	<p>PB Memo</p>	<p>With the relocation of the transformer underground, the Southwestern corner of the site opens up for picnicking and passive recreation with additional tables included. The proposed lawns provide opportunities for residents to engage in yard games and activities, bring out chairs or blankets for picnics. Our resident services staff will provide opportunities for residents to borrow items to be used outside, items such as hula hoops, nature guides, and corn hole. In addition to on-site open space, this project is ideally situated for nearby playground and park access, there are several open spaces within a 5 minute walk.</p>





Site Design	Maintain the front walkway to preserve direct access from Mass Ave and preserve the front entryway of the Saunders House as an access point for the Project.	PB Memo	ICON's code consultant confirmed that MAAB would not allow this to be an entrance since it is not accessible.
Site Design	Concerned about the green spaces on the property - not clear about whether there will be trees near Mass Ave.	Public Comment - CH	The three oaks that are on the southern property line are remaining. We are also adding several new trees along with many new perennials and native, shade tolerate ground cover that will run along the entire perimeter of the new building.
Site Design	Saunders House should be moved onto the parking lot and the new building should be built on the Mass Ave portion of the site.	Public Comment - DB, BZ	The project team has worked closely with the Cambridge Historical Commission and understands that part of the historic nature of the Saunders House is its location on Mass Ave as part of the North Avenue Mansions. HRI acquired the property with the understanding that the mansion would not be moved per CHC Landmark Designation.
Site Design	Would hope that the ornamental stair is to remain and not demolished.	PB Comment - TS	Yes, absolutely. We have always planned on keeping the ornamental stair in front of the Saunders House.
City/ Stormwater	Concern about sewer system as many systems in Cambridge back-up into the Alewife Brook, Charles River, and back into people's basements.	Public Comment - BJJ	The Project is designed to meet the City of Cambridge's 25-year to 2-year rate reduction which reduces the rate and volume of flow into the 15-inch drain main in Mellen Street compared to the existing condition. The drain main heads easterly before transitioning into a combined sewer main in Oxford Street, so the stormwater improvements will also benefit the City sewer system.



Sustainability	Consider embodied carbon of building materials	CDD - UD Report PB Comment - TS	<p>Reducing embodied carbon is a priority for HRI and ICON. For this project, we have contracted with ICON to do some additional carbon analysis which includes exploring different materials and scenarios to further reduce embodied carbon in this project.</p> <p>A specific question was raised about the fiber cement siding. Rainscreen envelope systems have the least embodied carbon as compared to other facade systems such as masonry, curtain wall or insulated panels. Within the options for rainscreen systems, fiber cement falls within the middle range - those with lower CO2e would be either thin stone/brick or wood. The intent is to match the look of the neighborhood's siding, which would exclude the brick options. Wood would cause durability issues.</p>
Circulation	Reduce the impact of the proposed bicycle racks on other uses of the terrace.	CDD - UD Report	In consultation with CDD Transportation Planners and TPTD, moved the short-term bike parking to reduce impact on patio.
Circulation	Some of the long-term bicycle parking spaces appear to be compromised by columns. The clearance should be reviewed.	CDD - UD	This was overlooked in the drawings, the long-term bicycle parking room drawing is now updated.
Circulation	Project lacks pick-up, drop-off spaces, Cambridge transit must certify that it will greenlight loading zone.	Public Comment - DB	TP+T has reviewed the project and agrees that a loading zone can be accommodated on-street. HRI has requested a temporary loading zone on Mellen Street, TP+T has indicated that certification will happen at the Building Permit stage.
Circulation	Would like to see off-street parking included in the design	Public Comment - SL, BZ	HRI conducted a parking study in November 2022 and concluded that additional off-street parking is not necessary. This decision was made based on the study's finding of available on-street parking within 500 feet of the project site, the numerous available public transportation options, and nearby bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths.



**Responses to feedback heard during meetings with City Staff post-Planning Board meeting**

Color Scheme of New Building	Encourage the emphasis of the Northeastern corner as separate, through color	CDD UD Comment CHC - SM	In consultation with CHC's Color Consultant, Susan Maycock, we have chosen a bold red color, that is in the historic color family, for the Northeastern corner. This helps it to read as a separate mass, rather than part of the larger building.
Color Scheme of New Building	Use color rather than wood accent to articulate the façade and have it be more contextually appropriate	CHC - SM	This has been updated, and CCD and CHC agreed with this approach.
Color Scheme of New Building	Since the mansion has a straightforward color scheme (just two colors: the body and the trim), the new structure should be simplified in terms of color, would rather see warm tones that work together rather than wood accents here and there.	CHC - SM	The project team chose a series of warm beiges, in consultation with Susan Maycock, to provide a simple but appropriate backdrop to the historic mansion.
Color Scheme of New Building	Consider lightening the elevator overrun to reduce visibility, look into the possibility of reducing the size of the elevator overrun.	CDD UD Comment	The elevator overrun is now a lighter color to reduce its visibility.
Articulation of New Building	Consider dropping cornice on Northeastern corner	CDD UD Comment	We agree that this helps reduce the impact of the building along the Mellen Street façade. This has been updated in current design.
Articulation of New Building	Encourage the design trajectory of two box massing on Mellen Street	CDD UD Comment	This has been updated, addressed through the dropped cornice at the northeast corner, a 2' inset at the middle of the facade and change in material color between the two sides.
Articulation of New Building	Find another location for the short-term bike parking on-site to allow for more patio space.	CDD UD Comment	In conversation with CDD's Urban Design and Transportation staff as well as the City's Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department, we decided to relocate the short-term bike parking to be adjacent to the main building entrance and next to the Mellen Street sidewalk. This new layout achieves several goals of the



			project: the patio has more space for resident use and the bike parking is easier to access for bicycle riders coming off of the street.
Articulation of New Building	Emphasize the base, middle, top of the massing	CDD UD Comment	This has been addressed in the updated design, the base material of the building is distinct and separated from upper floors with a band of trim. The top of the building is separated even at the 5 story portion of the building since the cornice now steps down.
Articulation of New Building	Keep corner bay tower at Northwestern corner simple, to not draw attention away from the Saunders House	CHC Comment CHC - SM	The design team used the recommended colors from our CHC Color Consultation for the Northwestern corner bay, adjusted the window placement to reduce the corner panel width, dropped the bay down to the 5th floor, and removed accent colors to keep the bay streamlined and not draw attention from the Saunders House.
Articulation of New Building	Consider moving the plants to the East of the patio closer to the sidewalk.	CDD UD Comment	The project team agrees that aligning the plants along the sidewalk edge works well to integrate the project into the streetscape. We have moved the larger perennials closer to the sidewalk and added groundcover in front of the amenity space to increase overall plantings.
Articulation of New Building	Consider moving indent on the Mass Ave façade to the other side of the elevator overrun	CDD UD Comment	HRI looked at this and there isn't the space in the unit there to properly inset. This change also hurt the proportions of the two volumes instead of helping them.
Articulation of New Building	Lighten up the cornice profile	CHC Comment CDD UD Comment	ICON has revised the cornice design to be less bulky but remain a prominent feature that reflects some of the historic features from the Saunders House and the larger neighborhood context.
Misc.	Is there any way of reducing the elevator overrun?	CDD UD Comment	Massachusetts code now requires a penthouse for the elevator.
Misc.	Consider revising the connector a bit more to make it more separate from the existing building.	CDD UD Comment	ICON is working on addressing this with the siding on that portion of the facade. HRI discussed that the mansion detailing at the cornice would remain intact and



			detailing between two buildings would be straightforward.
Misc.	Differentiate the penthouses of the two "buildings"	CDD UD Comment	This has been addressed – they are now different siding colors and orientations.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW

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*These forms are intended to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (CZO). Refer to the CZO for detailed provisions.*

### Submission Checklist

*Note: Review Section 11.207 of the CZO carefully before submitting a design review package for an AHO project. This checklist and accompanying forms are intended only to assist in assembling and organizing application materials.*

**Project Address:** 4 Mellen Street / 1627 Massachusetts Ave.

**Applicant:** HRI 1627 Mass Ave LLC

**Contact Name:** Eleni Macrakis, Project Manager

**Contact Phone:** 617-868-4858 x209

**Contact Email:** emacrakis@homeownersrehab.org

#### FOR STAFF USE

Complete Submission Received on Date:

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW

*These forms are intended to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (CZO). Refer to the CZO for detailed provisions.*

### Project Phase: First AHO Design Review Meeting

Submit these items to CDD for the first AHO Design Review meeting with the Planning Board. Plans and drawings should be presented at a schematic design stage.

### Requirements

#### Narrative Volume (8.5"x11" portrait orientation)

Provided Forms: *Approximate figures may be provided where necessary*

- Design Review Submission Checklist (this form)
- Parcel Dimensional Form [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiii.)]
- Building Dimensional Form for each existing or proposed building on the site [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiii.)]
- Tenure and Affordability Summary [Section 11.207.3]
- Initial Development Budget [Section 11.207.8(d)(v.)]

Written Sections:

- Project Narrative [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiv.)]
- Design Statement [Section 11.207.8(d)(v.)]
- Description of Transportation Demand Management programs offered, if applicable [Section 11.207.6.5]
- Summary of Community Engagement Process [Section 11.207.8]

#### Graphics Volume (11"x17" landscape orientation)

- Context map [Section 11.207.8(d)(i.)]
- Context analysis [Section 11.207.8(d)(ii.)]
- Existing conditions site plan including tree survey [Section 11.207.8(d)(iii.)]
- Proposed conditions site plan including tree survey [Section 11.207.8(d)(iv.)]
- Schematic first floor plan and typical floor plan of all new buildings and existing buildings to remain [Section 11.207.8(d)(vi.)]
- Schematic elevations and cross-section drawings of all new buildings and existing buildings to remain [Section 11.207.8(d)(vii.)]
- Schematic landscape plan [Section 11.207.8(d)(viii.)]
- Plans of parking and bicycle parking facilities [Section 11.207.8(d)(ix.)]
- List of anticipated materials of proposed façade and landscape materials [Section 11.207.8(d)(x.)]
- Photographs of existing conditions [Section 11.207.8(d)(xi.)]
- Massing plan, schematic views, and sketch renderings of proposed conditions [Section 11.207.8(d)(xii.)]
- Viewshed analysis and shadow studies [Section 11.207.8(d)(xv.)]

*Note: Use attached "Graphics Checklist" to ensure that all necessary information is provided.*

#### Other Submissions (as applicable)

- Green Building Requirements – if Section 22.20 of the CZO applies, submit a statement of intent that says what Green Building Rating System will be used and other sustainable design objectives for the project
- Flood Resilience and Green Factor Standards – note if Sections 22.80 and/or 22.90 of the CZO apply and provide preliminary materials indicating how the standards will be met
- Flood Plain Requirements – note if Section 20.70 of the CZO applies based on the project being within the Flood Plain

Last Updated: March, 2023

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

*These forms are intended to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (CZO). Refer to the CZO for detailed provisions.*

### Project Phase: Second AHO Design Review Meeting

Submit these items to CDD for the second AHO Design Review meeting with the Planning Board. Plans and drawings should be at an advanced design development stage.

### Requirements

#### Narrative Volume (8.5"x11" portrait orientation)

Provided Forms: *Updated and detailed from prior submission*

- ✓ Design Review Submission Checklist (this form)
- ✓ Parcel Dimensional Form [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiii.)]
- ✓ Building Dimensional Form for each existing or proposed building on the site [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiii.)]
- ✓ Tenure and Affordability Summary [Section 11.207.3]
- ✓ Initial Development Budget [Section 11.207.8(d)(v.)]

Written Sections: *Updated and detailed from prior submission*

- ✓ Project Narrative [Section 11.207.8(d)(xiv.)]
- ✓ Design Statement [Section 11.207.8(d)(v.)]
- ✓ Description of Transportation Demand Management programs offered, if applicable [Section 11.207.6.5]
- ✓ Summary of Community Engagement Process [Section 11.207.8]

#### Graphics Volume (11"x17" landscape orientation)

- ✓ Context map [Section 11.207.8(d)(i.)]
- ✓ Context analysis [Section 11.207.8(d)(ii.)]
- ✓ Existing conditions site plan including tree survey [Section 11.207.8(d)(iii.)]
- ✓ Proposed conditions site plan including tree survey [Section 11.207.8(d)(iv.)]
- ✓ Floor plans of all new buildings and existing buildings to remain [Section 11.207.8(d)(vi.)]
- ✓ Elevations and cross-section drawings of all new buildings and existing buildings to remain [Section 11.207.8(d)(vii.)]
- ✓ Landscape plan [Section 11.207.8(d)(viii.)]
- ✓ Plans of parking and bicycle parking facilities [Section 11.207.8(d)(ix.)]
- ✓ Materials palette of proposed façade and landscape materials [Section 11.207.8(d)(x.)]
- ✓ Photographs of existing conditions [Section 11.207.8(d)(xi.)]
- ✓ Perspective views and renderings of proposed conditions [Section 11.207.8(d)(xii.)]
- ✓ Viewshed analysis and shadow studies [Section 11.207.8(d)(xv.)]

*Note: Use attached "Graphics Checklist" to ensure that all necessary information is provided.*

#### Other Submissions (as applicable)

- ✓ Green Building Requirements provide all materials required in Section 22.20 of the CZO (if applicable). CDD will review and certify materials before the second meeting is scheduled.
- ✓ Flood Resilience and Green Factor Standards – provide all materials required in Sections 22.80 and/or 22.90 of the CZO (if applicable) for the initial stage of review. DPW and/or CDD will review and certify materials before the second meeting is scheduled.
- ~~☐ Flood Plain Requirements – provide all materials required in Section 20.70 of the CZO (if applicable). The City Engineer will review and certify materials before the second meeting is scheduled.~~

Last Updated: March, 2023

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

**Parcel Information – Provide one form for the entire parcel**

	Existing	District Zoning Standards	AHO Zoning Standards	Proposed
Base Zoning District(s)	C-2A			
Overlay Zoning District(s)	Mass Ave Overlay, Affordable Housing Overlay			
Uses on Adjacent Lots	C-1 zoning, residential. Easement to Eversource building			
Lot Area, in sq. ft.	14,465	14,465	No Min	14,465
Lot Width, in feet	90.37 – 90.47	90.37 – 90.47	No Max	90.37 – 90.47
Number of Buildings	1	1	N/A	2
Existing to be demolished				0
Existing retained/moved/enlarged				1 retained
New construction				1
Gross Floor Area (GFA), in sq. ft.	5,355	5,355	68,061 Max (See attached explanation/calculation)	34,707
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	.37	2.5	No Max	2.4
Dwelling Units	0	0	No Max	29
Affordable Dwelling Units	0	0		29
Total Open Space, in sq. ft. <sup>1</sup>	3,950	3,950	15% min = 2,170	4,800
Private Open Space	3,950	3,950	15% min = 2,170	3,366
Permeable Open Space	3,950	3,950	All private open space	4,800
Open Space above Ground Story	0	0	<25%	0
Total Off-Street Parking Spaces	21	21	0	0
Provided on-site	21	21	0	0
Provided off-site <sup>2</sup>	0	0	/	0
Long-Term Bicycle Parking Spaces	0	0	30	20
Short-Term Bicycle Parking Spaces	0	0	0	4
Provided on-site	0	0	/	4
Fund contribution <sup>3</sup>			/	
Public Bicycle Sharing Stations <sup>4</sup>	0	0		0
Provided on-site	0	0		0
Provided off-site	0	0		0
Loading Bays	0	0	N/A	0

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Open Space provisions in Section 11.207.5.2.4 of the CZO.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to off-site parking provisions in 11.207.6.2 of the CZO.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Public Bicycle Parking Fund provisions in Section 6.104.2(b.) of the CZO.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Public Bicycle Sharing Station provisions in Section 11.207.6.4(d) of the CZO.

**Attach additional calculations as necessary to explain any figures above.**

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

### **Explanation of GFA Allowable under AHO Zoning Standards**

Under Section 11.207.5.2.1 (f), an AHO Project may exceed the allowable height limitations of 11.207.5.2.1 with no maximum floor area ratio (FAR) if District Dimensional Standards establish a maximum FAR exceeding 1.00. In C-2A, the District Dimensional Standard sets the max FAR at 2.50.

Under Section 11.207.5.2.1(g), the total gross floor area on the AHO Lot will not exceed 70% of the total lot area multiplied by the maximum number of stories otherwise permitted under Section 11.207.5.2.1.

### **4 Mellen Street Total Allowable Floor Area Calculation**

70% of (Lot Area – Minimum OS)\*Max Stories Allowed

Total Lot Area: 14,465

Minimum OS: 15% (Saunders House is an existing building on the State Register of Historic Places that will be preserved and protected as part of this project)

Max Stories Allowed under AHO: 9 stories in C-2A, 4 stories within 35' of C-1

Lot Area outside 35' of abutting residential C-1 district: 11,306 SF

Lot Area within 35' of abutting residential C-1 district: 3,159 SF

70% of (Lot Area – 15% minimum OS) \* maximum number of stories = Total Allowable Floor Area

$0.7 * ((11,306 \text{ SF} - 1,696 \text{ SF}) * 9 \text{ stories} + (3,159 \text{ SF} - 474 \text{ SF}) * 4 \text{ stories}) = \mathbf{68,061 \text{ SF}}$

**Total Allowable Floor Area = 68,061 SF**



AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

**Building Information – Provide *one form for each existing or proposed building***

	Existing	District Zoning Standards	AHO Zoning Standards	Proposed
<b>Building Designation (per plans)</b>	1627 Mass Ave: Proposed Building			
<b>Type of Alteration Proposed</b>	Use change			
<b>Building Use(s)</b>	None	C-2A	Aff. Housing	Multi-family
Ground Story Use(s)	None	C-2A	Aff. Housing	Multi-family
<b>Gross Floor Area (GFA), in sq. ft.</b>	5,420	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	29,352
<b>Dwelling Units</b>	0	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	25
Affordable Dwelling Units	0	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	25
<b>Stories Above Grade<sup>1</sup></b>	0	60' max	No Max*	5/6
<b>Building Height, in ft.</b>	0	60' max	No Max*	59'-4"/69'-8"
Ground Story – floor-to-floor, in ft.	N/A	N/A	15' if non-residential use – N/A	17'-9"
<b>Building Setbacks, in ft.<sup>2</sup></b>				
Front/Side/Rear Yard	/	(H+L)/4 = 20' +/-	10'	10' Mellen St
Front/Side/Rear Yard	/	(H+L)/6 = 13' +/-	10'	26.9' Mass Ave
Front/Side/Rear Yard	/	(H+L)/6 = 13' +/-	7.5'	7.6'
Front/Side/Rear Yard	/	(H+L)/5 = 16' +/-	7.5'	7.6'
<b>Distance to nearest building, in ft.</b>	0	/	/	7.6' to abutting brick façade (no windows)
<b>Building length along street, in ft.</b>	0	/	/	73'
<b>Fenestration, as % of façade area facing public street or open space</b>	0	/	20% at public street	28% at Mellen St
Ground Story only	0	/	30% if non-residential use – N/A	35% at Mellen St
<b>Where Ground-Story non-residential uses are proposed in a Business district:<sup>3</sup></b>				
Frontage, as % of total façade length	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Depth from facade, in feet	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Definitions in Article 2.000 of the CZO.

<sup>2</sup> Where the proposal is applying front yard setback standards per Section 11.207.5.2.3(b) of the CZO, attach an area plan identifying the four nearest pre-existing principal buildings that contain at least two Stories Above Grade and directly front the same side of the street as the AHO Project, and a table providing the front yard setbacks for each building and calculating the average of the four.

<sup>3</sup> See Section 11.207.7.4(e) of the CZO.

\* See Sections 11.207.5.2.1(g) and 11.207.5.2.2(a)

**Attach additional calculations as necessary to explain any figures above.**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

**Building Information – Provide one form for each existing or proposed building**

	Existing	District Zoning Standards	AHO Zoning Standards	Proposed
<b>Building Designation (per plans)</b>	1627 Mass Ave: Existing building			
<b>Type of Alteration Proposed</b>	Use change			
<b>Building Use(s)</b>	Office	C-2A	Aff. Housing	Multi-family
Ground Story Use(s)	Office	C-2A	Aff. Housing	Multi-family
<b>Gross Floor Area (GFA), in sq. ft.</b>	5,355	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	5,355
<b>Dwelling Units</b>	0	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	4
Affordable Dwelling Units	0	(calculated for lot)	(calculated for lot)	4
<b>Stories Above Grade<sup>1</sup></b>	3	60' max	No Max*	3
<b>Building Height, in ft.</b>	41' +/-	60' max	No Max*	41' +/-
Ground Story – floor-to-floor, in ft.	11'-10"	N/A historic structure	N/A historic structure	11'-10"
<b>Building Setbacks, in ft.<sup>2</sup></b>				
Front/Side/Rear Yard	26.9'	(H+L)/4 = 20' +/-	10'	26.9'
Front/Side/Rear Yard	16.4'	(H+L)/6 = 13' +/-	10' side street	16.4'
Front/Side/Rear Yard	27.5'	(H+L)/6 = 13' +/-	7.5'	27.5'
Front/Side/Rear Yard	73.1	(H+L)/5 = 16' +/-	N/A corner lot	11' to New Construction
<b>Distance to nearest building, in ft.</b>	40' +/-	/	/	11' to New Construction
<b>Building length along street, in ft.</b>	76' +/- (total)	/	/	76' +/- (total)
<b>Fenestration, as % of façade area facing public street or open space</b>	16% average	N/A historic structure	N/A historic structure	16% average
Ground Story only	22% (average)	N/A historic structure	N/A historic structure	22% (average)
<b>Where Ground-Story non-residential uses are proposed in a Business district:<sup>3</sup></b>				
Frontage, as % of total façade length	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Depth from facade, in feet	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Definitions in Article 2.000 of the CZO.

<sup>2</sup> Where the proposal is applying front yard setback standards per Section 11.207.5.2.3(b) of the CZO, attach an area plan identifying the four nearest pre-existing principal buildings that contain at least two Stories Above Grade and directly front the same side of the street as the AHO Project, and a table providing the front yard setbacks for each building and calculating the average of the four.

<sup>3</sup> See Section 11.207.7.4(e) of the CZO.

\* See Sections 11.207.5.2.1(g) and 11.207.5.2.2(a)

**Attach additional calculations as necessary to explain any figures above.**

**Tenure:**

- Rental housing
- Homeownership housing

**Unit Affordability Summary <sup>1</sup>**

	Units at or Below 80% AMI	Units 80% to 100 %AMI	Total
<b># of Units:</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>% of Units:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Section 11.207.3 in Article 2.000 of the CZO

**Unit Size Summary:**

	0-bedrooms	1-bedrooms	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4+bedrooms	Total
<b># of Units:</b>	N/A	10	12	7	N/A	29
<b>Average size range (sf):</b>		619	832	1077		
<b>Smallest unit size (sf):</b>		547 (existing building)	787	957 (existing building)		
<b>Largest unit size (sf):</b>		733 (Barrier Free)	844	1132		

*Please describe other anticipated affordability limitations, if applicable (voluntary):*

HRI has committed to a 100% affordable development that focuses on larger unit sizes, with 19 of the 29 units proposed as 2BR and 3BR apartments (65.5% of all units) and the remaining as 1BR apartments. The current income restriction projections range from 30% AMI to 60% AMI, however those restrictions may be further refined, as permitted under the AHO and as allowed by the CAHT acquisition and pre-development loans, depending on expected project costs and available non-City of Cambridge financing sources. The specific allocation of units to the proposed income tiers will continue to take shape as the project proceeds through permitting and financing and will comply with all Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) requirements for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) that is published and updated annually.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DESIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

**Initial Development Budget (see Section 11.207.8 of CZO):**

<b>Anticipated Uses/Costs*:</b>	
Acquisition**:	\$7,200,000
Construction/Hard Costs:	\$15,909,485
Other Costs/Soft Costs:	\$3,961,888
Capitalized Reserves:	\$406,731
Developer Overhead/Fee	\$2,222,801
<b>Total Uses/Costs:</b>	<b>\$29,700,905</b>

<b>Anticipated Sources*:</b>	
Tax Credit Equity	\$11,091,127
City of Cambridge (Not Yet Applied For)	\$7,859,942
MA EOHLC (Not Yet Applied For)	\$2,900,000
First Mortgage	\$5,000,000
Deferred Developer Fee	\$324,442
Seller Note	\$2,525,394
<b>Total Sources:</b>	<b>\$29,700,905</b>

*\* Anticipated Sources & Uses: Final Sources & Uses will fluctuate until construction loan closing especially due to currently volatile interest rate and construction pricing environments, therefore these are current well-informed estimates. The sources currently listed here have not yet been applied for, as that will happen after successful Planning Board review.*

## Graphics Checklist

Review Section 11.207 of the CZO for all submission requirements.

Make sure that submitted graphic materials include the following information, at a minimum, to verify compliance with applicable sections of the AHO:

### All maps, plans and elevation drawings should include:

- Graphic scale
- North arrow / orientation

### Context maps should include:

- Streets and pedestrian/bicycle routes leading to and from the site
- Distance to public facilities in vicinity, including transit
- Buildings and uses on adjacent sites
- Distance to off-site parking, where proposed

### Site plans or landscape plans should include:

- Lot boundaries
- Adjacent streets (labeled) and dimensions of adjacent public sidewalks
- Building footprints with locations of entrances/exits, labeled areas of ground story uses, dimensioned façade lengths, setbacks, and distances to nearest buildings
- Natural and other landscape features including trees and plantings
- Open space, dimensioned and labeled by type (private, green area, permeable, publicly beneficial)
- Proposed locations of light fixtures, specifying type
- Locations, dimensions, and screening of all mechanical equipment located on-site, including all screening (Section 11.207.7.5 of the CZO)
- Pedestrian and bicycle travel routes, dimensioned
- Curb cuts, vehicular drives, off-street parking, loading and service facilities, dimensioned (Section 6.50 of the CZO)
- Pick-up/drop-off area(s), if project contains 20 units or more and no off-street parking spaces (Section 11.207.6.1(b) of the CZO)
- Features of adjacent lots and buildings that abut the project site

### Building floor plans, elevations, and cross-sections should include:

- Dimensioned floor plans labeling the uses in each portion of the building
- Dimensions (length and depth) of articulation and breaks in the façade plane (Sections 11.207.7.2(c) and 11.207.7.3(b) of the CZO)
- Dimensions of fenestration on façades facing public streets and open spaces (Section 11.207.7.3(a) of the CZO)
- Length of separation between windows and entrances on the ground story (Section 11.207.7.4(c) of the CZO)
- Dimensions (length, height, and depth from façade) of non-residential uses and parking proposed on the ground story (Section 11.207.7.4 of the CZO)
- Rooftop plans, elevations, and perspective views showing the locations, dimensions, and screening of all mechanical equipment (Section 11.207.7.5 of the CZO)



### Affordability Limitations

HRI has committed to a 100% affordable development that focuses on larger unit sizes, with 19 of the 29 units proposed as 2BR and 3BR apartments (65.5% of all units) and the remaining as 1BR apartments. The current income restriction projections range from 30% AMI to 60% AMI, however those restrictions may be further refined, as permitted under the AHO and as allowed by the CAHT acquisition and pre-development loans, depending on expected project costs and available non-City of Cambridge financing sources. The specific allocation of units to the proposed income tiers will continue to take shape as the project proceeds through permitting and financing and will comply with all Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) requirements for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) that is published and updated annually.

### Project Narrative Section 11.207.8(d.)(xic.)

Homeowner's Rehab Inc. is proposing an income-restricted development of 29 new affordable rental apartments (the "Proposal"). The Proposal for 1627 Massachusetts Ave includes the renovation of the existing 3-story mansion and a new construction building to its rear in the existing parking lot, which will consist of family-sized affordable housing units that fall under the Affordable Housing Overlay. The overall unit count is 29 units, broken into (10) 1-bedroom, (12) 2-bedroom and (7) 3-bedroom units. (4) of the units will be in the mansion, with (2) 1-bedroom units at the ground floor and (2) 3-bedroom duplexes above. This unit count assumes an amenity space on the ground floor, as community members have noted they would like to see more community space in the neighborhood. This Proposal is possible due to Lesley University's decision to market the property for sale in 2021 and closing of the sale to HRI in August 2022 to facilitate the creation of new affordable housing for the Cambridge community.

All of the apartments are planned to be affordable to families earning up to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), with adjustments to this AMI possible based on available resources from the Commonwealth. The income-restrictions will always comply with those required under the Affordable Housing Overlay, under which this Proposal is being permitted. Since 65% of the apartments are 2-bedroom or larger, the Proposal helps provide new housing stock for families in a housing market which has a well-documented crisis of affordable options. The Proposal also includes an approximately 700sf amenity space / community room on the first (ground) floor that will be able to be programmed for a variety of uses.

HRI expects to finance the Proposal via Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), tax-exempt bonds, state housing tax credits, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) housing resources, Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust (CAHT) funding, Cambridge Historic Commission funding, and a permanent mortgage in addition to seeking possible operating rental subsidies. Depending on timing of permitting and the availability of funding rounds from EOHLC, it may be possible to start construction in spring 2025 for completion in late 2026. HRI is excited to deliver this housing as soon as possible given the great need.

The design team has used the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) design guidelines as well as meetings with the Cambridge Historical Commission, City of Cambridge staff, and the community to inform the

program, building and site design and has received detailed feedback from community members and a variety of City departments.

On March 30, 2023 the Cambridge Historical Commission took two steps at its monthly meeting regarding this Proposal, by (1) approving the tentative designation of the property as a Landmark, thereby forwarding the Landmark Designation to City Council for review and approval and (2) issuing an initial Certificate of Appropriateness approving, in principle, the current design scheme. These steps allowed the Proposal to continue onto Planning Board review.

### **Design Statement Section 11.207.8(d.)(v.)**

The preservation of the existing Second Empire Style Mansion is an important part of this development. The front and side yard adjacent to the mansion on the Mellen St and Mass Ave side will be maintained, keeping the mansion's position as a landmark, and helping to highlight its cultural significance and compatibility with the larger neighborhood fabric. The exterior siding, trim, and moldings will be restored to their original appearance, highlighting their material quality and craftsmanship. The existing building will connect to the new construction building at its rear on the basement, first, and second floors. Two changes to the mansion are proposed and have been discussed with Cambridge Historical Commission. The modern ramp at the front of the building will be removed as it is no longer needed due to the mansion's accessible connection to the new construction portion of the site. That connection is made possible through the removal of the existing 'EII' structure. Cambridge Historical Commission has approved the project in Principle, understanding that details will need to be reviewed in the future to provide a final Certificate of Appropriateness.

The preservation of the mansion and its front and side yard provide the site with ample open space. Given the limited remaining area of the site, the team has employed the minimal allowable side and front yard dimensions to allow for the largest floor plate size possible for the new construction portion. To provide an accessible entrance to the existing building and new construction portion of the site, the main entrance has been established on Mellen Street. This entry is emphasized through an inset on the ground floor as well as numerous design elements including signage, accent lighting, landscaping, a trellis, and seating which provide a gathering space and warm welcome. Pedestrian and bicycle parking follow the same path to the main entry which is separate from vehicles. Bikes have an accessible route through the building to permanent parking in the basement, and short-term visitor bicycle parking is adjacent to the sidewalk near the main building entry. The new construction building is perfectly sited to avoid solar heat gains with its south, east and west sides shaded, and to take advantage of northern daylight on its primary façade on Mellen Street. The building's average glazing percentage is kept to 22% to align with exterior envelope efficiency goals and fit in with the context of the mansion and adjacent smaller scale buildings. The Mellen Street façade has a higher percentage of glazing, at 28%, with the ground floor community room creating a distinct element on the façade with tall expanses of glass.

There is minimal space on site for trash and equipment given the location of the mansion, the new construction, and existing front and side yards. The area to the south of the mansion is the only opportune

space for these to be located. Trash is set beyond the face of the mansion and within a solid wood enclosure, with the trash and recycling separated to help with pest control. The transformer is proposed to be located in an underground vault to help the site to remain as open as possible. Some mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment will be in the basement of the mansion, and with fully central systems there is minimal equipment located on the roof of the new construction building. Roof top equipment will be set back a minimum of 10' from the edge of the building. Views within a 3-dimensional model which includes this equipment have been studied, and roof top equipment is not visible from the sidewalk within a 200' radius from the building.

As a response to the neighborhood height considerations, the maximum height of 7 stories and 80' as of right through the Affordable Housing Overlay is not being pursued. Instead, the new construction building has a half level at 6 stories and the main massing at 5 stories. This strategy helps the building to relate to the larger context of the neighborhood, which consists of six and seven story buildings nearby along Mass Ave, in the C-2A zoning district that this parcel resides within, and shorter three- and four-story buildings in the C-1 zoning district which the parcel abuts. After hearing concerns about the height of the new construction building, HRI and ICON worked with CDD Urban Design staff and Cambridge Historical Commission staff to further articulate the façades of the building in a way that breaks down the mass, without losing any apartments.

We heard from community members that blending the new construction building into the neighborhood context was a top priority. After consulting with CDD Urban Design and Cambridge Historical Commission staff, we came up with a way of breaking up the bulk of the building on the Northern façade (Mellen Street) and the Eastern façade by applying several techniques to the façades and the Northeastern corner. This includes adding a vertical 2-foot inset at the center of the Northern façade to break it into two smaller masses at the transition point in the building where it steps down from 6 to 5 stories. The Northern façade is further differentiated by the inset at the entry, the vertical corner bay on the northwest corner, dropping the cornice on the eastern portion and changing the color of the façade materials. The Northeastern corner is emphasized with a bold color covering three stories of the building, which relates to nearby triple decker style homes. The colors represented in the updated views are appropriate to the period of existing buildings along Mellen Street, including the 1627 mansion. They are compatible with the colors on the existing mansion due in part to their depth and complexity. The Cambridge Historic Commission has successfully used these or similar colors on other buildings in Cambridge that they have consulted on.

**Transportation Demand Management [Section 11.207.6.5]**

The proposed development of 29 units requires compliance under Section 11.207.6.5 as there is no off-street parking proposed. HRI is committing to providing subsidized MBTA passes per Section 11.207.6.5(a) and per CDD guidance of providing a 100% discounted MBTA combined subway and bus pass for three months or pass of equivalent value, to up to two individuals in each household upon initial occupancy of a unit. HRI commits to this as a baseline and will continue to evaluate the opportunity to provide additional TDM measures as this proposal progresses. HRI and its management agent for the property are also committing to Section 1.207.6.5(b) to provide transit information to the residents.

HRI shared the Transportation Demand Management Plan along with the site plan with members of the Traffic, Parking, Transportation Department (TPTD) team during initial reviews in Fall 2022 and February 2023. During this time, TPTD assisted in reviewing site access and layout and has indicated that the plan conforms to Section 11.207.6.1(a) and (b) and that there is no need for off-street facilities for a 29 unit building in a transit rich location. TPTD has indicated that the project can reasonably accommodate its pick-up/drop-off and loading activities on Mellen Street and complies with Section 11.207.6.1 of the AHO. HRI is proposing this pick-up/drop-off/loading zone on Mellen Street, in proximity to the curb cut that HRI will close for the building, which is in front of the Mellen Street building entrance. TPTD staff indicated that the request to use public curb space for a loading zone will be reviewed when the Project is near its occupancy permit stage and will decide if and where a loading zone on Mellen Street is needed. A loading and drop off zone will also help satisfy initial comments from EOHLC about ensuring that residents or visitors with limited mobility have easy access to the curbside and sidewalk to access the building.

**Describe Community Process [Section 11.207.8]**

In accordance with Section 11.207.8 “Advisory Design Consultation Procedure,” two community meetings have been hosted virtually by HRI. Approximately 30 people attended the first virtual meeting, and 50 people attended the second virtual meeting. The first meeting, on September 15, 2022, was used to share information about HRI’s previous projects and partnership with ICON Architecture, its goals for the project, sustainable building practices HRI uses, and plans to learn more about the neighborhood context. At the first community meeting, HRI heard from neighbors who were interested in learning about its plans for activating the green space around the mansion, what type of applicant would be eligible to apply for housing, how HRI would account for transportation access, plans for assessing and protecting trees, and how shadows would impact neighboring buildings.

To follow up on these questions prior to the second community meeting, HRI commissioned a number of studies. HRI hired Vanasse & Associates to conduct a transportation study, which found that there is adequate street parking nearby, even accounting for upcoming changes to Massachusetts Ave with the MassAve4 Cycling Safety Ordinance. Notably, nearby public transit hubs, bike lanes, and bus stops will serve residents, all within a 10-minute walk of the building; HRI will also have 1:1 indoor bicycle parking. Additionally, an arborist prepared a report on healthy and decaying trees on site, finding the oaks to be in relatively stable health, and identifying trees needing to be removed due to poor health. ICON Architecture conducted a shadow study as well. At the second community meeting, the results of these pre-development studies were shared, addressing questions from neighbors with concerns about parking, traffic, trees, and overall site design.

The second community meeting, on March 15th, 2023, included ample time for neighbors to inquire about the building’s design. Elevation from all four sides of the project were shown, with explanations of how the building meets zoning requirements under the AHO. Abutters provided feedback on HRI’s plans for the development, with positive support offered for landscaping plans and increasing the overall amount of affordable housing in Cambridge. Abutters raised concerns about traffic and placement of the trash enclosure, which HRI addressed during the meeting.

HRI has also communicated and/or met with various neighborhood organizations and abutters to discuss the project and plans to continue these conversations throughout the pre-development process.

After the first Planning Board meeting in July, HRI organized a “Meet & Greet” hosted in the Saunders House. At this event, neighbors toured the space, met project team members, and learned about the renovations that would occur in the building. HRI also presented some surveying questions about what historic features residents most preferred, how they would like to see the history of the house and neighborhood celebrated, and some building material options for the new construction portion of the project.

Additionally, HRI maintains a website for the project, [www.1627MassAve.com](http://www.1627MassAve.com), which has an overview of the project, a feedback page, updates for website subscribers, and a timeline of project milestones. The website has over 50 comments from the public responding to questions about the need for affordable housing in Cambridge, how HRI can highlight the community’s history, and giving general feedback on the project.

## Proposal Timeline

August 2022: HRI acquires property from Lesley University

September 2022: 1st AHO community meeting; launch of [www.1627massave.com](http://www.1627massave.com)

Fall/Winter 2022-2023: Housing program discussions with City of Cambridge, staff design review

March 2023: 2nd AHO community meeting

Spring/Summer/Fall 2023: Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC), CDD, and Planning Board review

July 2023: On-Site Community Meet & Greet at the Saunders House

Winter 2024: Ongoing pre-development; seek additional resources from Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development

Spring 2025 – Winter/Spring 2027: Potential construction start & finish allowing resident occupancy in 2027.

This timeline may change and HRI will post updates at [www.1627massave.com](http://www.1627massave.com) and will also provide updates to CDD staff.

## Team Description

HRI is working with ICON Architecture as the lead architect team on this project. ICON and HRI have collaborated on several projects before, including Finch Cambridge, Putnam Green, and Auburn Court, all developed in Cambridge. RBLA Design is a landscape architecture firm owned by Rebecca Bachand focused on multifamily and affordable housing properties. Kevin Quetti is the civil engineer through his firm Quetti Design Group. HRI has also contracted with a number of consultants to support elements of the project requiring a special focus such as sustainability and green certification. CLEAResult is the green consultant, supporting EGC certification, durable and energy efficient building design, PHIUS verification, and HERS rating. Linnean is supporting PHIUS certification and WUFI energy modeling, as well as Mass-Save incentive coordination. A transportation study was conducted by Vanasse & Associates in the fall of 2022, and David Ropes of Tree Specialists, Inc. conducted a tree study in the fall as well. Wingate is the property management team maintaining the property currently and throughout construction. NEI General Contracting, an experienced local builder, is providing pre-construction estimating services to HRI. The formal selection of a general contractor will occur subsequent to receiving financing from EOHL.