



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	408
Address:	36-64 Whittemore Avenue
Zoning:	Special District 3/ Parkway Overlay District/ Flood Plain Overlay District
Applicant:	IQHQ-Alewif LLC 201 Washington Street, Suite 3920 Boston MA 02108
Owner:	IQHQ-Alewif LLC 674 Via de La Valle, Suite 206 Solana Beach, CA 92075
Application Date:	April 9, 2025
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	May 6, 2025
Date of Planning Board Decision:	May 6, 2025
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	June 10, 2025
Application:	Special Permit for Modification of Bicycle Parking Requirements (Section 6.108) and Flood Plain Overlay District Special Permit (Section 20.73) to improve the area around Jerry's Pond with pedestrian paths, boardwalks, pavilion, and landscaping.
Decision:	GRANTED with conditions.

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

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Swaathi Joseph

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Swaathi Joseph at 617-349-4668, or [sjoseph@cambridgema.gov](mailto:sjoseph@cambridgema.gov).

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
2025 JUN 10 PM 3:10

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application dated 3/17/2025, containing Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Narrative, Community Outreach Summary, plan set titled Jerry's Pond, prepared by Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, Inc., dated 8/12/2024, and Order of Conditions from Conservation Commission.
2. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 5/6/2025.

### City of Cambridge Documents

3. Memorandum to the Planning Board from James Wilcox, City Engineer, Department of Public Works (DPW), dated 4/29/2025.
4. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 4/30/2025.

### Other Documents

5. Email communication to the Planning Board from Michael DeMello, dated 4/22/2025.
6. Email communication to the Planning Board from Maria Flanagan, dated 5/1/2025.
7. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Cambridge Bicycle Committee, dated 5/1/2025.

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

The proposal is to improve the natural area around the water feature called “Jerry’s Pond” and provide public access around it, as a condition of approval for the IQHQ Project at 36-64 Whittemore Ave. The IQHQ project was approved with a Project Review Special Permit (PB-387) in August of 2022 and includes several laboratory buildings that will make up the campus called Alewife Park. The publicly accessible parts of the site will include boardwalks that bring people close to Jerry’s Pond through pathways around and above the pond with viewing stations, areas for educational programming and community gatherings, boardwalks, benches and lighting. No development is proposed other than the open space improvements. Cambridge Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions for this project in 2024.

## FINDINGS

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

### 1. Flood Plain Overlay District Special Permit (Section 20.73)

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

- 1. No filling or other encroachment shall be allowed in Zone A areas or in the floodway which would impair the ability of these Special Flood Hazard Areas to carry and discharge flood waters, except where such activity is fully offset by stream improvements such as, but not limited to, flood water retention systems as allowed by applicable law.*
- 2. Displacement of water retention capacity at one location shall be replaced in equal volume at another location on the same lot, on an abutting lot in the same ownership, on a noncontiguous lot in the same ownership, or in accordance with the following requirements.*
- 3. All flood water retention systems shall be suitably designed and located so as not to cause any nuisance, hazard, or detriment to the occupants of the site or abutters. The Planning Board may require screening, or landscaping of flood water retention systems to create a safe, healthful, and pleasing environment.*
- 4. The proposed use shall comply in all respects with the provision of the underlying zoning district, provisions of the State Building Code, Wetlands Protection Act, and any other applicable laws.*
- 5. Applicants for development in the Alewife area shall be familiar with area-specific and general city-wide land use plans and policy objectives (e.g. Concord-Alewife Plan, A*

*Report of the Concord Alewife Planning Study, November 2005; Toward a Sustainable Future, Cambridge Growth Policy, 1993, Update, 2007; Section 19.30 - Urban Design Objectives of this Zoning Ordinance) and shall demonstrate how their plan meets the spirit and intent of such documents in conjunction with the requirements of this Section 20.70 - Flood Plain Overlay District and Section 20.90 – Alewife Overlay Districts 1-6.*

6. *The requirement of Section 20.74(3) has been met.*

The project is not expected to result in any negative impact on flood storage. A communication from the City Engineer dated April 29, 2025 indicates that the proposed improvements will have the ability to meet all requirements associated with being located in the Flood Plain and will also provide mitigation to address flood level impacts.

The Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions on March 18, 2024 approving the project as proposed in compliance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, confirming that the project will not impair the ability of the applicable flood hazard areas to carry and discharge flood waters. Proposed compensatory storage established as part of this approved work shall serve at the baseline/existing condition for any future work in the Flood Plain.

Based on these reports, the Board finds that the proposal meets the criteria set forth in Section 20.75.

2. Modification of Bicycle Parking Standards (Section 6.108)

*(6.108.3) Findings and Approval. Upon granting a special permit to modify any requirements of this Section 6.100, the Planning Board shall make a general determination that the proposal is consistent with the purpose of this Section 6.100 and that the Bicycle Parking Plan proposes a quantity, design and arrangement of bicycle parking that will serve bicycle users in a way that is sufficiently comparable, given the circumstances of the specific project, to the bicycle parking that would be required under the regulations of this Section 6.100. The Planning Board shall also make specific determinations applicable to the modifications being sought as set forth below:*

- (a) Where an alternative design or layout of Bicycle Parking Spaces is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that such design or layout shall be durable and convenient for the users whom it is intended to serve. Where new technologies are proposed, the Board may require that the Applicant demonstrate such technologies for review by City staff.*
- (b) Where modifications to the location or quantity of bicycle parking is proposed, the Planning Board shall determine that the Bicycle Parking Plan will satisfactorily serve the needs of all expected users, based on quantitative and/or qualitative evidence provided by the Applicant. Such a modification may be appropriate for a campus master plan or*

*other large development site within which bicycle parking is planned comprehensively across an area instead of on a specific site-by-site basis.*

The Board finds that the proposal for bicycle parking is consistent with the purpose of the bicycle parking requirements in Section 6.100, and the city's standards will be met. The requested modification is to address any future question of interpretation around how much bicycle parking would be required for this project. Since much of the site is being used for flood water management, it is difficult to determine the area that the requirement should be based on. Assuming 44,795 square feet that is publicly accessible and 18 bicycle parking spaces as proposed, the proposed ratio is around 1.2 spaces per 3,000 square feet of land area which exceeds the minimum requirement for non-residential uses in the Zoning Ordinance.

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

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

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

*(a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or ...*

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

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

No new traffic is anticipated that would cause substantial adverse impact in the neighborhood. The project is expected to improve pedestrian access from the neighborhood.

*(c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or ...*

The proposed use as an open space amenity will not adversely impact the operation or development of adjacent uses.

*(d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or ...*

The proposed development will not cause nuisance or hazard and will be conducted in accordance with all applicable health and safety requirements.

*(e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and ...*

The proposed uses are fully consistent with the anticipated development of the district as established in the stated purpose and specific requirements of Special District 3.

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

The proposed use is consistent with the Citywide Urban Design Objectives, with improvements to the natural habitat providing floodplain mitigation and public access to a neighborhood open space amenity.

## DECISION

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

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the Application Documents and other supporting materials submitted to the Planning Board, except as modified by the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board are the plan set titled Jerry's Pond, prepared by Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture, Inc., dated 8/12/2024. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The Planning Board approves the use as open space with public access to the areas as described and depicted in the Application Documents. Any other use shall require approval from the Planning Board.
3. The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department ("CDD"). Before issuance of each Building Permit for the project, CDD shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that the final plans submitted to secure the Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this Decision. As part of CDD's administrative review of the project, and prior to any certification to the Superintendent of Buildings, CDD may present any design changes made subsequent to this Decision to the Planning Board for its review and comment.
4. The Permittee shall address the following comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be subject to CDD review and approval of the final design details prior to issuance of a Building Permit:
  - a. Design and features of the Eco Pavilion.
  - b. Design of the boardwalk, including railings, gates, benches, and other furniture.
  - c. Design of the ramp that runs up the southern slope of the Communal Garden.
  - d. Educational and wayfinding signage.
  - e. Design and location of signage communicating that Jerry's Pond is open to the public, its hours of access and how the public can reserve the outdoor grill.
  - f. Location, details, and dimensions of bicycle parking.
  - g. Design of lighting to minimize impacts on natural areas while maintaining safety.
  - h. System for sign-up to use the Eco Pavilion.
  - i. Collaboration with city staff on aspects of the project affecting publicly owned areas, including both sides of Rindge Avenue.

5. All work proposed to be executed on city property shall be subject to review and approval by appropriate city departments.
6. The Permittee shall coordinate with CDD staff on public communication and management of the publicly accessible space with specific signage to include an 'Open to All' logo, hours of access, and name and contact information for the property owner or manager, subject to review by CDD to ensure it is welcoming, visible, readable, and consistent with City standards for privately owned open spaces that are accessible to the public.
7. The Permittee shall comply with all conditions included in the Order of Conditions issued by Cambridge Conservation Commission.
8. When a permit is required for construction, the Applicant shall provide confirmation to the Department of Public Works (DPW) that all jurisdictional tree removals and mitigation plantings are in conformance with the current Tree Protection Ordinance, subject to review by Urban Forestry Division.
9. All plantings proposed in the public right-of-way shall be in accordance with the Tree Planting Standards and the Urban Forestry Master Plan, subject to approval by DPW.
10. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).



Voting in the affirmative to grant the requested Special Permits were Planning Board Members H Theodore Cohen, Mary Flynn, Mary Lydecker, Diego Macias, Ashley Tan, and Associate Member Daniel Anderson, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Flynn".

Mary Flynn, Chair

A copy of this decision PB-408 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, Massachusetts General Laws, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the above decision has been filed on June 10, 2025 with the Office of the City Clerk, by Swaathi Joseph, duly authorized representative of the Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty days have elapsed since the above decision was filed in the office of the City Clerk and:  
\_\_\_\_\_ no appeal has been filed; or

\_\_\_\_\_ an appeal has been filed within such twenty days.

The person exercising rights under a duly appealed special permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone. This certification shall in no event terminate or shorten the tolling, during the pendency of any appeals, of the periods provided under the second paragraph of G.L. c. 40A, §6.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, City Clerk

Appeal has been dismissed or denied.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, City Clerk

### Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)	407,421	20,000	No Change	No Change
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)	0	47,000*	600	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Uses	0	n/a	0	
Non-Residential Use	0	47,000*	600	
Total Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0	no limit	0.0015	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Uses	0	n/a	0	
Non-Residential Uses	0	no limit	0.0015	
Total Dwelling Units	0	n/a	0	n/a
Total Stories Above Grade	0	n/a	1	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Max. Height – Residential (ft)	0	n/a	0	
Max. Height – Non-Residential (ft)	0	55	15.16	
Front Yard Setback(s) (ft)	0	25	407	
Side Yard Setback(s) (ft)	0	50	95	
Rear Yard Setback(s) (ft)	0	50	335	
Total Open Space (% of Lot Area)	100	20	100	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space (%)	100	n/a	100	
Permeable Open Space (sq ft)	5,666	n/a	392,920	
Publicly Beneficial Open Space	0	n/a	0	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	0	0	0	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	0	2	0	
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	0	8	18	
Loading Bays	0	0	0	

\* Unused GFA from PB-387 development.