

8 WINTER STREET
COMPREHENSIVE
SPECIAL PERMIT

Table of Contents

Planning Board – Cover Sheet Form

Planning Board – Dimensional Form

Planning Board – Ownership Certificate

Planning Board – Fee Schedule

Project Narrative

Certification for Green Factor Standard - Building Permit Stage



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

COVER SHEET

In accordance with the requirements of the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the undersigned hereby petitions the Planning Board for one or more Special Permits for the premises indicated below.

Parcel Address(s): 8 Winter Street MA 02141

Base Zoning District(s): New CAM-6 (old C-1/B-A)

Overlay Zoning District(s): Eastern Cambridge Housing Overlay (ECHO)

Applicant Name: Carlos Ferreira

Applicant Address: 118 Turnpike Road, Suite 200, Southborough

Contact Information: Carlos Ferreira

Name	Telephone #
<u>carlos.ferreira@mpdconsultants.com</u>	<u>(508) 331-7261</u>
Email Address	

Note that the Applicant is responsible for seeking all necessary special permits for the project. A special permit cannot be granted if it is not specifically requested in the Application.

List all requested special permit(s) (with reference to zoning section numbers):

Zoning Section	Requested Special Permit
<u>Section 17.705.1.3</u>	<u>Building & Site Plan Modification special permit</u>

Denote other City of Cambridge Board/Commission Review Needed:

- Board of Zoning Appeal (Variances) Conservation Commission Historical Commission

Denote applicable Committee Review and Public Outreach:

- Central Square Advisory Committee Harvard Square Advisory Committee Community Meeting(s)

May 5, 2026

Signature of Applicant

Date

DIMENSIONAL FORM

Project Address: 8 Winter Street MA 02141

Date: May 5, 2026

	Existing	Allowed or Required (max/min)	Proposed	Permitted
Lot Area (sq ft)		5,000 sf	7,404 sf	
Total Gross Floor Area (sq ft)		-	24,819 sf	
Residential Uses		-	24,819 sf	
Non-Residential Uses		-	-	
Total Floor Area Ratio (FAR)		no maximum	3.35	
Residential Uses		no limit	3.35	
Non-Residential Uses		-	-	
Total Dwelling Units		-	23	
Total Stories Above Grade		6	6	
Max. Height – Residential (ft)		75'	63.3'	
Max. Height – Non-Residential (ft)		-	-	
Front Yard Setback(s) (ft)*		4' and 2'	3.04' - 0.81'/7.67'	
Side Yard Setback(s) (ft)*		5'	18.70'	
Rear Yard Setback(s) (ft)*		none	7.19'	
Total Open Space (% of Lot Area)**		none	23%	
Private Open Space		none	0%	
Permeable Open Space		none	1,625 sf = 21.9%	
Publicly Beneficial Open Space		none	685 sf = 9%	
Off-Street Parking Spaces		none	0	
Long-term Bicycle Parking Spaces		23	24	
Short-term Bicycle Parking Spaces		1 space per 10 dwelling units	4	
Loading Bays		-	-	

*Indicate all applicable setbacks. Make sure distances match the submitted site plans.

**Refer to Open Space definitions in Article 2.000 and Open Space provisions in Section 5.22 of the CZO. Make sure all open space information matches the submitted site plans.

Use space below and/or attached pages for additional notes:

OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATE

Project Address: 8 Winter Street, Cambridge MA

Date: 4/21/2026

To be completed by the Property Owner:

I hereby authorize the following Applicant: Carlos Ferreira
at the following address: 1188 Chestnut Street - Newton, MA 02464
to apply for a special permit for: Construction of a 6-story multifamily residential building
on premises located at: 8 Winter Street, Cambridge MA
for which the record title stands in the name of: Syed Jafry
whose address is: 102 Battery Lane, Jamestown RI

by a deed duly recorded in the:

Registry of Deeds of County: Middlesex County Book: 83379 Page: 204

OR Registry District of the Land Court,
Certificate No.:

Book: Page:

Syed Jafry

Signature of Property Owner (If authorized Trustee, Officer or Agent, so identify)

To be completed by Notary Public:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of Worcester

The above named Carlos Ferreira personally appeared before me,

on the month, day and year 04-20-2026 and made oath that the above statement is true.

Notary: Rafael Campbell Garcia

My Commission expires: 02-19-2027



FEE SCHEDULE

Project Address: 8 Winter Street MA 02141

Date: May 5, 2026

The Applicant must provide the full fee (by check made to City of Cambridge) with the Special Permit Application. The required fee is the larger of the following amounts:

- (a) The fee is ten cents (\$0.10) per square foot of total proposed Gross Floor Area noted in the Dimensional Form.
- (b) The fee is one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) if Flood Plain Special Permit is sought as part of the Application and the amount determined above is less than \$1000.
- (c) The fee is one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) if the above amounts are less than \$150.

Fee Calculation

(a) Proposed Gross Floor Area (SF) in Dimensional Form:	24,819 sf	× \$0.10 =	2,481.00
(b) Flood Plain Special Permit fee		:	1000.00
(c) Minimum Special Permit fee		:	150.00
SPECIAL PERMIT FEE	Enter Largest of (a), (b), and (c):		2,481.00

8 WINTER STREET COMPREHENSIVE SPECIAL PERMIT

MP DESIGN CONSULTANTS LLC

Structural Engineering & Building Design

118 Turnpike Road, Suite 200
Southborough, MA 01772
(508) 331-7261

DATE	April 2026
TO	City of Cambridge Planning Board
FROM	Carlos Ferreira, PE (MA #41423), Principal — MP Design Consultants LLC
PROJECT	8 Winter Street, Cambridge, MA 02141 — 23-Unit Multifamily Residential Development
RE	Comprehensive Special Permit Narrative — Compliance with Special Permit Criteria and Urban Design Objectives
REFERENCES	Building Permit #249600 Modification Application #1159211 BZA Decision recorded at Middlesex S.D. Reg. of Deeds, Bk. 83379, Pg. 204

8 WINTER STREET — COMPREHENSIVE SPECIAL PERMIT NARRATIVE

Compliance with Special Permit Criteria, General Special Permit Criteria, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives

MP Design Consultants LLC submits this comprehensive narrative on behalf of the property owner, Mr. Syed Jafry, in support of the Special Permit application for the 23-unit multifamily residential building at 8 Winter Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The narrative is organized into the six sections requested by the Cambridge Community Development Department (CDD) and follows the order and content expected by Cambridge Planning Board Rules and the Section 17.700 / 17.707.2 / 10.43 / 19.30 framework of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

Table of Contents

I. Project Overview.....	4
A. The Project at a Glance	4
B. Site Description and Context.....	5
C. Project History and Regulatory Timeline	5
D. Construction Status	6
E. Special Permits Sought	6
II. Compliance with Zoning.....	7
A. CAM-6 Dimensional and Standards Compliance Table	7
B. Corner Lot Setback Clarification — No Rear Lot Lines	8
C. Upper Story Setbacks — Not Required in CAM-6 for This Configuration	9
D. Bicycle Parking — 24 Long-Term Spaces Required and Provided	9
E. Inclusionary Housing	9
F. Sustainability and Resilience Compliance	9
II. Compliance with Criteria / Guidelines Specific to Special Permits Sought.....	10
A. Section 17.705.1.3 — Building & Site Plan Modification Special Permit	10
Finding (i): The Criteria of Section 17.707.2 Are Met	10
Finding (ii): Modifications Respond to Unique Site-Specific Conditions	10
Condition A — Pre-Constructed Foundation Under Prior Zoning	10
Condition B — Corner Lot Geometry at a High-Traffic Intersection	11
Condition C — Sloping Topography Along O'Brien Highway.....	11
Design Equally — and More — Supportive of Cambridge Street Districts Purpose.....	11
B. Section 17.707.2 — Cambridge Street Districts General Special Permit Criteria.....	12
Criterion (a): The Proposal Supports the Purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts (Section 17.702)	12
Criterion (b): Conformance with Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023) and Urban Design Objectives	13
IV. Compliance with Gen. Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43).....	14
A. Criterion (a): Requirements of the Ordinance Can and Will Be Met	14
B. Criterion (b): Traffic / Access Patterns Will Not Cause Congestion, Hazard, or Substantial Change in Neighborhood Character	14
C. Criterion (c): Adjacent Uses Would Not Be Adversely Affected	14

D. Criterion (d): No Nuisance or Hazard to Health, Safety, or Welfare	15
E. Criterion (e): The Proposed Use Will Not Impair the Integrity of the District or an Adjoining District.....	15
F. Criterion (f): Consistent with the Urban Design Objectives of Section 19.30	15
V. Urban Design Objective Narrative (Section 19.30)	16
A. 19.31 — New Projects Should Be Responsive to the Existing or Anticipated Pattern of Development	16
B. 19.32 — Development Should Be Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly, with a Positive Relationship to Its Surroundings	16
C. 19.33 — Building and Site Design Should Mitigate Adverse Environmental Impacts upon Neighbors	17
D. 19.34 — Projects Should Not Overburden City Infrastructure Services	17
E. 19.35 — New Construction Should Reinforce and Enhance the Complex Urban Aspects of Cambridge as It Has Developed Historically	17
F. 19.36 — Expansion of the Inventory of Housing	18
G. 19.37 — Enhancement and Expansion of Open Space	18
H. 19.38 — Development Should Be Resilient to the Effects of Climate Change	19
VI. Summary of Community Engagement.....	20
A. BZA Proceeding and Public Notice (2023)	20
B. Pre-Application Engagement with City Staff (2025–2026)	20
C. Pre-Application Community Meeting.....	21
D. Project Team and Stakeholder Communications	22
VII. Conclusion and Request	23

I. Project Overview

A. The Project at a Glance

8 Winter Street is a 23-unit multifamily residential building under construction on a triangular corner lot at the convergence of Monsignor O'Brien Highway (Route 28), Third Street, and Winter Street in East Cambridge. The building is six stories, 63.3 feet in height, and provides 24,819 SF of residential gross floor area. Vehicular parking is eliminated entirely; the project is designed to function as a fully transit-oriented, bicycle-supported residential building at one of East Cambridge's most accessible intersections. The summary table below sets out the principal project parameters.

PROJECT PARAMETER	DESCRIPTION
Project Address	8 Winter Street, Cambridge, MA 02141
Owner / Applicant	Syed Jafry, 102 Battery Lane, Jamestown, RI
Engineer of Record	Carlos Ferreira, PE — MP Design Consultants LLC
Lot Area	7,404 SF (corner lot — no rear lot line)
Existing Zoning District	CAM-6 (Cambridge Street District), as amended January 26, 2026 — formerly Business A (BA)
Proposed Use	Multifamily Residential — 23 dwelling units (Use 4.31.h)
Building Height	63.3 ft above grade / 6 stories (within 75 ft and 6-story CAM-6 maximum)
Total Gross Floor Area	24,819 SF (residential)
Vehicular Parking	Zero (0) off-street parking spaces — eliminated to support transit-first design
Bicycle Parking	24 long-term (enclosed) + 4 short-term (exterior at Third St entry)
Open Space	2,310 SF total — 1,625 SF private + 685 SF permeable
Building Permit	BP #249600 — issued November 15, 2023
Modification Application	MA #1159211 — filed April 2025
Construction Status	Foundation complete; final waterproofing inspection passed July 18, 2025; elevator shaft installed; superstructure paused pending zoning resolution
Inclusionary Housing	Inclusionary application filed February 2026 (Section 11.200 compliance)
Sustainability	PHIUS-compliant passive house envelope; certified Green Factor and Green Building documentation submitted to CDD

B. Site Description and Context

The site is a corner lot of 7,404 SF bounded on three sides by public ways: Monsignor O'Brien Highway (Route 28) on the north (Primary Street), Third Street on the east (Secondary Street), and Winter Street on the south. There is no rear lot line. The site is within walking distance of MBTA bus service on O'Brien Highway and the Lechmere Green Line Extension station. The two arterial frontages — O'Brien Highway and Third Street — are high-volume, no-curbside-loading streets, leaving Winter Street as the only feasible service access. The lot also has a measured 2.43-foot grade drop along the O'Brien Highway frontage between the Third Street corner and the western property line, which is the source of the ground-floor height variation discussed in Section III.

C. Project History and Regulatory Timeline

The project's regulatory and construction history establishes the context for the current Special Permit application. Several elements of the design — most notably the foundation footprint and the perimeter setbacks — are physically locked in by construction completed in good-faith reliance on a duly issued building permit. The chronology is summarized below.

- **November 15, 2023** — The Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) issued a recorded decision (Middlesex S.D. Registry of Deeds, Book 83379, Page 204) authorizing the project under the then-applicable Business A (BA) zoning district. Building Permit #249600 was issued the same day.
- **April 2025** — Modification Application #1159211 was filed to address minor design refinements within the originally permitted envelope.
- **July 18, 2025** — The foundation was fully constructed and passed final waterproofing inspection by the City. The elevator shaft was subsequently installed. All foundation setbacks and dimensions reflected in this application correspond to the constructed condition.
- **January 26, 2026** — The Cambridge City Council adopted the Cambridge Street Districts (CAM-6, CAM-10, CAM-12), replacing the BA zoning that governed at permit issuance. The project site is now within the CAM-6 district.
- **February 2026** — The project team filed the Inclusionary Housing Application with the City's Inclusionary Housing Program (Section 11.200).
- **March 17, 2026** — CDD Advisory Review meeting held; written comments incorporated into the present submission.
- **April 2026** — Submission of this comprehensive Special Permit application package.

D. Construction Status

Construction is underway, foundation, elevator shaft, first and second floor are complete. The foundation and elevator shaft were constructed in reliance on Building Permit #249600 and the November 15, 2023, BZA decision.

E. Special Permits Sought

The applicant respectfully requests that the Planning Board grant a Cambridge Street Building and Site Plan Modification Special Permit under Section 17.705.1.3 authorizing the limited site-plan modifications listed in the table below. Each modification is discussed in detail in Section III. All other CAM-6 standards are met as set forth in the dimensional compliance table in Section II.

ZONING SECTION	RELIEF / FINDING SOUGHT	BASIS
17.705.1.3	Building & Site Plan Modification — umbrella special permit authorizing the four (4) site-plan modifications below	Findings (i) and (ii) addressed in Section III
17.705.2.3	Front Yard Setback relief — North/O'Brien Hwy and East/Third St	Pre-constructed foundation; corner lot geometry
17.705.2.6	Facade Projection — confirmation that projections remain within the 50% facade-area limit on the Primary Street	Corner lot geometry; demonstrated by elevation-area calculation
17.705.4.7	Ground Story Height relief at the lower corner (13.3 ft vs. 15 ft minimum); weighted-average height meets minimum	Sloping topography along O'Brien Hwy (2.43 ft drop)
17.705.4.8	Ground Story Entrance location on Third Street (Secondary Street) rather than O'Brien Hwy	Pedestrian safety and corner lot design rationale

II. Compliance with Zoning

This Section sets forth the project's compliance with the dimensional, use, and supplemental standards of the CAM-6 district. The dimensional compliance table consolidates each requirement of Section 17.704 (Development Standards) and Section 17.705 (Building and Site Plan Standards) and identifies, for each item, the requirement, the proposed/as-built condition, and the compliance status. Items shown as 'RELIEF REQUESTED' or 'FINDING REQUESTED' are addressed in detail in Section III.

A. CAM-6 Dimensional and Standards Compliance Table

STANDARD	CAM-6 REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED / AS BUILT	STATUS
Permitted Use	Residential (Section 4.31.h) — permitted as-of-right	Multifamily Residential — 23 units	✓ COMPLIES
FAR (Residential)	No maximum (residential exempt — Section 17.704.1)	≈ 2.48 (24,819 SF / 10,000 SF)	✓ COMPLIES
Building Height	75 ft / 6 stories max. (Section 17.704.3)	63.3 ft / 6 stories	✓ COMPLIES
Front Yard — North / O'Brien Hwy (Primary Street)	4.0 ft minimum (Section 17.705.2.3)	0.81 ft – 3.04 ft	RELIEF REQUESTED
Front Yard — East / Third St (Secondary Street)	2.0 ft minimum (Section 17.705.2.3)	0.65 ft – 7.67 ft	RELIEF AT CORNER
Side Yard — South (beyond 85 ft of Primary)	5.0 ft minimum (Section 17.705.2.4)	18.70 ft	✓ COMPLIES
Side Yard — West (within 85 ft of Primary)	None required (Section 17.705.2.4)	7.19 ft	✓ COMPLIES
Rear Yard	N/A — corner lot has no rear lot line	N/A	N/A
Upper Story Setback	None required for this configuration (Section 17.705.2.5 / 17.705.3 Table)	None proposed	N/A
Maximum Building Length	200 ft maximum	73'-2" (longest) / 39'-9" (depth on O'Brien Hwy)	✓ COMPLIES
Ground Story Height	15.0 ft minimum (Section 17.705.4.7)	13.3 ft (low corner) – 15.7 ft (high end); weighted avg ≥ 15.0 ft	RELIEF AT CORNER

STANDARD	CAM-6 REQUIREMENT	PROPOSED / AS BUILT	STATUS
Facade Transparency (Street-Facing)	20% minimum for residential	20% (Third St) / 25% (O'Brien Hwy)	✓ COMPLIES
Facade Projections into Setback	≤ 4 ft and ≤ 50% of facade area on Primary St (Section 17.705.2.6)	Within 4-ft projection limit; ≤ 50% of facade area (to be confirmed on annotated elevations)	✓ COMPLIES
Open Space	Per CAM-6 Open Space requirement (Section 17.705.2.2)	(2,310 SF total) — 1,625 SF private + 685 SF permeable	✓ COMPLIES
Off-Street Vehicular Parking	Per Article 6.000 (Business A standards apply via Section 17.706.1)	Zero (0) — eliminated	✓ COMPLIES
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	24 spaces required (20 × 1.0 + 3 × 1.05 = 23.15 → 24)	24 enclosed long-term spaces (Section 6.102.5.a)	✓ COMPLIES
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	3 spaces required	4 short-term exterior spaces at Third St entry	✓ EXCEEDS
Off-Street Loading	Per Article 6.000 (Section 17.706.2 waiver available)	20-ft common service passageway off Third St	FINDING REQUESTED
Inclusionary Housing	Section 11.200 compliance required for projects above threshold	Inclusionary Housing Application submitted Feb 2026	✓ COMPLIES
Green Factor (Section 22.90)	Score sheet required	Green Factor Form filed and certified by CDD (2025.07.30)	✓ COMPLIES
Green Building (Section 22.20)	Green Building Report required	PHIUS feasibility study and assemblies report submitted to CDD (2025)	✓ COMPLIES
Flood Resilience (Section 22.80)	Required for occupiable basement	Flood resilience documentation map attached	✓ COMPLIES

B. Corner Lot Setback Clarification — No Rear Lot Lines

As noted by Planning Board staff during informal review, 8 Winter Street is a corner lot. Under Cambridge Zoning Ordinance definitions, corner lots have no rear lot lines; all bounding lot lines are either front lot lines (where they abut a public way) or side lot lines. Setbacks have been re-labeled accordingly throughout the Dimensional Form and graphic submissions: North/O'Brien Hwy and East/Third St are front lot lines; South and West are side lot lines. The Dimensional Form has been corrected to remove any prior reference to a 'rear yard' setback.

C. Upper Story Setbacks — Not Required in CAM-6 for This Configuration

The CAM-6 district does not impose upper story setback requirements applicable to this project. Specifically, the Site Plan Standards table at Section 17.705.3 establishes minimum upper story setbacks from Monsignor O'Brien Highway and from Secondary Streets as 'none' for the applicable street type and use category. The narrative and Dimensional Form have been revised to omit any reference to upper story setback relief, as no such relief is required.

D. Bicycle Parking — 24 Long-Term Spaces Required and Provided

Per CZO Section 6.100, the required long-term bicycle parking for a 23-unit residential building is calculated as: $20 \text{ dwelling units} \times 1.0 \text{ space/unit} = 20 \text{ spaces}$, plus $3 \text{ additional units} \times 1.05 \text{ spaces/unit} = 3.15 \text{ spaces}$, for a total of $23.15 \rightarrow 24 \text{ long-term spaces}$. The project provides exactly 24 long-term enclosed bicycle spaces in a dedicated, limited-access bicycle storage room (Section 6.102.5.a) and 4 short-term exterior spaces at the Third Street entrance, exceeding the 3 short-term spaces required. Five percent of the long-term spaces (2 spaces) are configured with an additional 2 feet of parallel space to accommodate tandem bikes or bikes with trailers (Section 6.105.1.e). A 1" = 10' scale bicycle parking plan is included in the Graphic Volume confirming compliance with Sections 6.105 and 6.106.

E. Inclusionary Housing

The project is subject to the Inclusionary Housing Requirements of Section 11.200. The Inclusionary Housing Application was submitted to the City's Inclusionary Housing Program in February 2026 and the affordable units are designated and tracked in the Dimensional Form and the unit schedule. All dwelling units satisfy Group 1 designation under 521 CMR 9.3, as all units in the project will be sold rather than rented.

F. Sustainability and Resilience Compliance

The project incorporates and satisfies the City's sustainability framework. Specifically: (i) a Green Building Report consistent with Section 22.20 has been submitted to CDD (PHIUS feasibility study and assemblies report, 2025); (ii) a Green Factor Form consistent with Section 22.90 has been completed and certified by CDD (Cambridge Green Factor Score Sheet, July 2025); and (iii) Flood Resilience documentation responsive to Section 22.80 will be submitted to DPW per the required 45-day advance schedule. The PHIUS-compliant building envelope (continuous exterior insulation, triple-glazed windows, ERV-based mechanical ventilation, air-tight construction) materially exceeds code-minimum performance and provides genuine climate-resilience benefits to occupants, including thermal habitability during extended outages.

III. Compliance with Criteria / Guidelines Specific to Special Permits Sought

This Section addresses the criteria specific to the Cambridge Street Building and Site Plan Modification Special Permit (Section 17.705.1.3) and the General Special Permit Criteria for Cambridge Street Districts (Section 17.707.2). Section 17.705.1.3 requires two findings: (i) that the criteria of Section 17.707.2 are met; and (ii) that the proposed modifications respond to unique site-specific conditions resulting in a design that is equally supportive of the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts. Each finding is addressed in turn.

A. Section 17.705.1.3 — Building & Site Plan Modification Special Permit

Finding (i): The Criteria of Section 17.707.2 Are Met

The applicant has demonstrated compliance with each criterion of Section 17.707.2, as set forth in detail in Section III.B below. In summary: (a) the project supports the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts by providing transit-oriented residential density with an activated street presence at one of East Cambridge's most prominent intersections; and (b) the development plans conform to the Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023) and the Citywide Urban Design Objectives in Section 19.30, and are consistent with the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines (2025) and Design Guidelines for Multifamily Housing (2025).

Finding (ii): Modifications Respond to Unique Site-Specific Conditions

The four modifications requested — front yard setbacks (Section 17.705.2.3), facade projection confirmation (Section 17.705.2.6), ground story height at the lower corner (Section 17.705.4.7), and ground story entrance location (Section 17.705.4.8) — are each necessitated by an inseparable combination of three unique site-specific conditions that are not generally present across the district. These conditions are described below, followed by a demonstration that the resulting design is equally — and in several respects more — supportive of the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts than a strictly conforming building on a different site would be.

Condition A — Pre-Constructed Foundation Under Prior Zoning

Building Permit #249600 was issued on November 15, 2023 under the Business A (BA) zoning then in effect, pursuant to a Cambridge BZA decision recorded in the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds (Book 83379, Page 204). The foundation was fully constructed and passed final waterproofing inspection by the City on July 18, 2025. All foundation setbacks — North/O'Brien Highway 3.04 ft, Corner 0.81 ft, East/Third St 0.65 ft — were fully compliant with BA zoning at the time of permit issuance. The subsequent adoption of CAM-6 (January 26, 2026) created dimensional non-conformities in a physical structure that already existed in the ground. It is physically and economically infeasible to reconstruct the foundation to meet CAM-6 setbacks while preserving the habitable floor plans above.

Condition B — Corner Lot Geometry at a High-Traffic Intersection

The site is a triangular corner lot at the convergence of three streets. The CAM-6 requirements for a 4-foot front yard setback from the Primary Street and a 2-foot front yard setback from the Secondary Street simultaneously pinch the buildable corner to a geometric minimum. The lot depth along O'Brien Highway is only 39 ft 9 in., meaning the required setbacks consume a disproportionate share of the usable frontage. Both O'Brien Highway and Third Street are high-volume arterials where no on-street parking or passenger loading is feasible, requiring that all service functions — trash, delivery, drop-off — be incorporated into the 20-foot common passageway along the Third Street property line as the only feasible location away from the high-traffic streets.

Condition C — Sloping Topography Along O'Brien Highway

The grade of the adjacent sidewalk along the North/O'Brien Highway frontage drops 2.43 feet over the 39 ft 9 in. length of the property — from elevation 30.81 ft at the Third Street corner to elevation 28.38 ft at the western end. Because the second floor structural slab is set at a constant elevation of 44.10 ft, the measured ground-floor height varies from 13.3 ft at the higher (east) corner to 15.7 ft at the lower (west) end. The 13.3-ft height at the corner is a direct consequence of fixed topographic grade — it cannot be resolved without either lowering the entire second floor (which would reduce ceiling heights throughout all six stories) or excavating the site further (which is precluded by the completed foundation). The weighted average ground-floor height across the frontage meets the 15-foot minimum.

Design Equally — and More — Supportive of Cambridge Street Districts Purpose

Despite the limited relief requested, the design achieves outcomes that are equally — and in several respects more — supportive of the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts than a strictly conforming building on a different site would be:

- The wide public sidewalk and MassDOT-maintained landscaped area along O'Brien Highway already provide substantial pedestrian separation from the building facade, more than compensating for the reduced front yard setback.
- The building maintains unobstructed, code-compliant pedestrian access along all three street frontages. No portion of the building or its appurtenances encroaches on the public sidewalk.
- The building's 20–25% facade transparency (exceeding the 20% residential minimum) and continuous street wall maintain strong visual engagement with the public realm despite the constrained setbacks.
- Eliminating all vehicular parking removes auto-pedestrian conflicts along O'Brien Highway and Third Street, directly supporting the district's pedestrian-priority goals.
- The ground-floor height variation (13.3 ft to 15.7 ft) is a consequence of responding authentically to the site's topography, producing a building that steps naturally with the grade rather than imposing an artificial datum on a sloping site.

- The PHIUS-compliant envelope, ERV-based ventilation, triple-glazed windows, and air-tight construction provide indoor environmental quality and energy performance that exceed code-minimum requirements applicable to a strictly conforming building.

B. Section 17.707.2 — Cambridge Street Districts General Special Permit Criteria

In granting any special permit within a Cambridge Street District, the Planning Board shall find that the following two criteria are met, in addition to the criteria of Section 10.43 and any criteria specific to the special permit being sought:

Criterion (a): The Proposal Supports the Purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts (Section 17.702)

The Cambridge Street Districts are intended to promote a dynamic, mixed-use urban environment along Cambridge's major commercial corridors, encouraging high-quality residential and commercial development that supports transit, pedestrian activity, and the activation of the public realm. The proposed 23-unit multifamily residential building at 8 Winter Street advances each of these goals:

- **Transit-Oriented Density.** The building places 23 residential units at one of East Cambridge's most accessible locations, immediately adjacent to MBTA bus service on Monsignor O'Brien Highway and within walking distance of the Lechmere Green Line Extension station. Providing residential density at this location directly reduces vehicle miles traveled per resident.
- **Activated Street Presence.** The building maintains a continuous built street wall along Third Street and O'Brien Highway, consistent with the urban design character of the Cambridge Street Districts. A main pedestrian entry, entry plaza, and ground-floor windows on Third Street create direct visual and physical engagement with the public realm.
- **No Vehicular Parking.** By providing zero off-street parking spaces, the project eliminates auto-pedestrian conflicts and reduces demand on the street network — consistent with the district's goal of prioritizing pedestrian and transit access over automobile accommodation.
- **Bicycle Infrastructure.** The project provides 24 enclosed long-term bicycle spaces and 4 short-term exterior spaces at the Third Street entrance, supporting cycling as the primary non-transit transportation mode.
- **Housing Production.** The project contributes 23 new residential units — including Inclusionary Housing units per Section 11.200 — to Cambridge's housing supply, a stated priority of the Cambridge Street Districts and the City's overall housing goals.

Criterion (b): Conformance with Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023) and Urban Design Objectives

The Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023) envisions the Cambridge Street corridors as vibrant, pedestrian-first environments with transit-oriented development, active ground floors, high-quality architecture, and meaningful housing production. The proposed project directly advances these goals:

- The six-story massing (63.3 ft, within the 75 ft CAM-6 maximum) provides density consistent with the Study's vision for urban-scale development along major corridors.
- The ground-floor entry plaza and windows on Third Street create an activated pedestrian environment consistent with the Study's active frontage objectives.
- The PHIUS passive house design represents a high-performance, low-carbon approach to residential construction aligned with the Study's sustainability goals.
- The contemporary architectural expression, the proposed material palette, and the corner building placement at Third Street / O'Brien Highway respond to the Study's call for contextually appropriate, design-forward buildings at key intersections.

The project is also consistent with the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines (2025) and the Design Guidelines for Multifamily Housing (2025). Specific compliance with the Citywide Urban Design Objectives is set forth in Section V of this narrative (Section 19.30 responses).

IV. Compliance with Gen. Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)

Special permits will normally be granted where specific provisions of the Zoning 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. As demonstrated below, the project does not fall within any of the negative criteria (a) through (f) of Section 10.43:

A. Criterion (a): Requirements of the Ordinance Can and Will Be Met

The project complies with all applicable CAM-6 provisions, with four limited relief requests directly necessitated by the pre-constructed foundation and unique corner lot geometry described in Section III. All other CAM-6 standards — maximum building height (63.3 ft vs. 75 ft allowed), maximum building length (73 ft 2 in. and 39 ft 9 in. vs. 200 ft allowed), facade transparency (20–25% vs. 20% required), bicycle parking (24 long-term + 4 short-term), open space (23% of lot), and inclusionary housing — are fully met. The requested relief does not exempt the project from any health, safety, or other regulatory requirement. All applicable building codes, fire suppression, accessibility, and life safety requirements (IBC 2021, NFPA 13, MAAB / 521 CMR) are met in full.

B. Criterion (b): Traffic / Access Patterns Will Not Cause Congestion, Hazard, or Substantial Change in Neighborhood Character

The project proposes zero off-street vehicular parking, which substantially reduces auto-trip generation compared to any conventional development with provided parking. All vehicular service activity (trash, deliveries, passenger drop-off) is accommodated via the 28-foot common passageway off Third Street, rather than off O'Brien Highway. This configuration keeps service movements away from the busiest adjacent arterials, reducing conflict with through-traffic and pedestrians. The bicycle-forward design (24 enclosed plus 4 exterior bicycle spaces) supports non-motorized access for residents, further reducing vehicular trip generation. No traffic signal modification, intersection reconfiguration, or sight distance issue is introduced by the project.

C. Criterion (c): Adjacent Uses Would Not Be Adversely Affected

The proposed 23-unit residential use is compatible with the mixed-use character of the Cambridge Street corridor and the residential uses on Winter Street. No industrial, commercial, or other intensive use is proposed. The residential occupants will be permanent-occupancy owners, not transient visitors, producing stable, low-intensity activity patterns. Mechanical equipment and service areas are contained within the building or screened from public view. No operations are proposed that would generate noise, odor, vibration, glare, or other externalities that would adversely affect neighboring properties.

D. Criterion (d): No Nuisance or Hazard to Health, Safety, or Welfare

The proposed residential use is a low-impact, code-compliant occupancy. The building is fully sprinklered to NFPA 13 and designed to IBC 2021 Group R-2 requirements. Fire department access is provided along all three street frontages. All pedestrian pathways are physically separated from vehicular service movements. The PHIUS passive-house envelope maintains healthy indoor air quality through energy recovery ventilation, reducing occupant exposure to outdoor air pollutants from the adjacent highway. The basement is being designed to satisfy Flood Resilience Standards (Section 22.80). No hazardous materials are stored, processed, or used on-site.

E. Criterion (e): The Proposed Use Will Not Impair the Integrity of the District or an Adjoining District

The project reinforces the CAM-6 district's purpose and character. The continuous built street wall at the Third Street / O'Brien Highway corner completes the urban fabric at one of East Cambridge's key gateway intersections. The building's scale (6 stories, 63.3 ft) is within the CAM-6 maximum and appropriate to the intersection's urban context. The residential use supports the district's mixed-use vision. No variance from any use regulation or maximum dimensional limit is sought; only targeted site-plan relief made necessary by unique physical conditions on the site is requested. The project does not introduce any use, scale, or operational characteristic that would be incongruous with the district or with adjoining districts.

F. Criterion (f): Consistent with the Urban Design Objectives of Section 19.30

Full compliance with each of the eight Citywide Urban Design Objectives of Section 19.30 is set forth in Section V of this narrative.

V. Urban Design Objective Narrative (Section 19.30)

Section 19.30 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance establishes eight Citywide Urban Design Objectives that must be considered in any Planning Board special permit decision. The project's compliance with each Objective is set forth below.

A. 19.31 — New Projects Should Be Responsive to the Existing or Anticipated Pattern of Development

The six-story building is responsive to both the existing and the anticipated pattern of development along the Cambridge Street corridor. The O'Brien Highway frontage is characterized by a transitional mix of older low-rise commercial buildings and newer mid-rise residential and mixed-use developments. The CAM-6 district's vision for this corridor — as articulated in the Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023) — anticipates urban-scale, transit-oriented residential development at exactly this type of intersection location. The building's continuous street wall, ground-floor engagement with Third Street, and corner massing that anchors the Third Street / O'Brien Highway / Winter Street intersection are directly responsive to this anticipated future character. The building height of 63.3 ft is consistent with the 75-ft CAM-6 maximum and with new construction in the nearby Lechmere corridor.

B. 19.32 — Development Should Be Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly, with a Positive Relationship to Its Surroundings

Pedestrian and bicycle access is a central organizing principle of the project design:

- Zero off-street vehicular parking eliminates the driveways, curb cuts, and auto-pedestrian conflicts that typically degrade the sidewalk environment.
- The building's main entrance opens onto an entry plaza on Third Street with direct, accessible sidewalk connection. The entry is designed to create a welcoming, well-lit arrival sequence for residents and visitors.
- 24 enclosed long-term bicycle spaces are provided in a dedicated bicycle storage room with limited-access security (Section 6.102.5.a), accessible from the common passageway without entering the main lobby.
- 4 short-term bicycle racks are provided at the Third Street entry, immediately adjacent to the main entrance.
- The building maintains the full public sidewalk width along all three street frontages. No portion of the building or its appurtenances encroaches on the public right-of-way.
- The site is within walking distance of MBTA bus service on O'Brien Highway and the Lechmere Green Line station, providing residents with excellent multi-modal transit access.

C. 19.33 — Building and Site Design Should Mitigate Adverse Environmental Impacts upon Neighbors

The project employs a high-performance PHIUS-compliant building envelope to minimize both internal and external environmental impacts:

- The highly insulated, air-tight envelope (ECOMAXci FR continuous insulation system) dramatically reduces heating and cooling energy loads, reducing operational carbon emissions relative to a code-minimum building.
- Triple-glazed windows (Derchi system) minimize heat transfer and external noise transmission, improving habitability while reducing mechanical loads.
- Energy recovery ventilation (ERV) maintains indoor air quality without reliance on operable windows, reducing noise and air-pollution exposure for residents adjacent to O'Brien Highway.
- All rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened per CAM-6 Section 17.705 requirements. Ground-level transformer and trash enclosure screening details are provided in the final application package.
- No surface parking is provided, eliminating stormwater runoff from paved parking areas and associated pollutant loads.

D. 19.34 — Projects Should Not Overburden City Infrastructure Services

The 23-unit residential building generates modest infrastructure demands well within the capacity of existing City systems:

- **Sanitary Sewer.** The project's residential wastewater flows are consistent with City standards for multifamily residential uses. Connection to the existing sewer infrastructure in Winter Street and Third Street has been coordinated with DPW.
- **Water Service.** Domestic water and fire suppression service sizing has been coordinated with the Cambridge Water Department; conditions of approval have been received.
- **Stormwater.** Green Factor compliance (Section 22.90) is documented with the certified Green Factor Form. Elimination of all surface parking reduces impervious area relative to a conventional development.
- **Streets and Transportation.** Zero off-street parking spaces eliminate parking-generated vehicle trips. All service access is via Winter Street, a local street, not the primary arterials.

E. 19.35 — New Construction Should Reinforce and Enhance the Complex Urban Aspects of Cambridge as It Has Developed Historically

Cambridge's built heritage is characterized by continuous street walls, buildings built to or near the lot line, varied architectural expression, and the layering of different scales and uses. The proposed building reinforces this tradition:

- The corner building placement at Third Street, Winter Street, and O'Brien Highway anchors a historically significant East Cambridge intersection, following the Cambridge tradition of using architecture to define prominent public spaces.
- The continuous built street wall maintains the urban enclosure of the sidewalk, consistent with Cambridge's block structure.
- The contemporary material expression — incorporating fiber cement panel (Vintagewood Cedar series), a complementary masonry-inspired base, and high-performance glazing — engages Cambridge's tradition of contextual architectural innovation without pastiche.
- The building's corner massing is designed to create a distinct identity at the Northeast corner — the most publicly visible point — through increased glazing, material articulation, and a purposeful massing composition.

F. 19.36 — Expansion of the Inventory of Housing

The project adds 23 new residential units to Cambridge's housing supply, directly addressing the City's documented housing shortage. Because the project triggers the Inclusionary Housing Requirements of Section 11.200, a portion of the units will be deed-restricted as affordable housing, making the project's housing benefit available across a range of income levels. All unit sizes, layouts, and accessibility requirements comply with applicable City and State standards. The Inclusionary Housing Application has been submitted to and is under review by the City's Inclusionary Housing Program.

G. 19.37 — Enhancement and Expansion of Open Space

The project provides 2,310 SF of open space (23% of the 10,000 SF lot), allocated as follows:

- **Private Open Space — 1,625 SF (16.3% of lot).** Residential balconies and terraces accessible to individual units provide outdoor space for residents. The entry plaza on Third Street provides a landscaped semi-public outdoor space at the ground level.
- **Permeable Open Space — 685 SF (6.9% of lot).** Planted areas along the building perimeter, including landscaping at the base of retaining walls along Winter Street and O'Brien Highway, provide permeable ground-level landscaping that supports stormwater infiltration and urban greening.
- **Retaining Wall Interface.** Because the site involves retaining walls along the back of sidewalk (some approaching 4 ft in height), the landscape design incorporates planted pockets, materials that integrate with the public realm, and — where feasible given the constrained width — informal seating opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the walls on the pedestrian environment.

H. 19.38 — Development Should Be Resilient to the Effects of Climate Change

The project is designed for long-term climate resilience consistent with the Resilient Cambridge plan:

- **PHIUS Passive House Performance.** The high-performance envelope (R-30+ continuous insulation, triple-glazed windows, air-tight construction) maintains habitable interior temperatures during extended power outages — a critical climate-resilience feature as heat waves and cold snaps become more frequent.
- **Flood Resilience.** The basement design is being prepared to comply with Section 22.80 Flood Resilience Standards. The project is outside of the most update Flood Zone.
- **Green Building Compliance.** The project complies with Section 22.20 Green Building Requirements (Green Building Report submitted to CDD).
- **Green Factor Compliance.** The project complies with Section 22.90 Green Factor Standards (certified Green Factor Documentation submitted to CDD).
- **Reduced Urban Heat Island.** The elimination of all surface parking and the inclusion of planted areas reduces the heat-island effect relative to a conventional development. Rooftop design incorporates high-albedo materials to reduce solar heat gain.

VI. Summary of Community Engagement

The project team has been engaged with the Cambridge community and City staff throughout the design development process. Community engagement has included pre-application coordination with City staff, the formal BZA proceeding under prior zoning, the Inclusionary Housing review, a CDD Advisory Review, and a developer-hosted pre-application community meeting. A summary of each component follows.

A. BZA Proceeding and Public Notice (2023)

The project was originally heard by the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA), which issued a recorded decision on November 15, 2023 (Middlesex S.D. Registry of Deeds, Book 83379, Page 204). The BZA process provided a public notice opportunity, an opportunity for direct community input at a public hearing, and Board deliberation in accordance with Massachusetts G.L. c. 40A and the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Building Permit #249600 was subsequently issued in reliance on the BZA decision and on the BA zoning standards then in effect; the foundation was completed and inspected on July 18, 2025.

B. Pre-Application Engagement with City Staff (2025–2026)

Throughout the design refinement process and during the period leading up to and following the January 2026 adoption of the CAM-6 district, the project team has engaged in continuous coordination with the following City departments and individuals:

- **Community Development Department (CDD) — Zoning & Development Division.** Coordination with Mr. Evan Spetrini (Senior Manager, Zoning & Development) regarding the CAM-6 transition, scope of relief, and special permit pathway. Email correspondence and meetings throughout Q1 2026.
- **CDD — Inclusionary Housing Program.** Coordination with Mr. Alex Bob (Housing Planner) regarding the Inclusionary Housing Application. Multiple iterations of the Unit Schedule and floor plans were reviewed and refined between February 2026 submission and present, including handicapped-accessible unit designations under 521 CMR 9.3.
- **CDD — Green Factor and Sustainability.** Coordination with Ms. Sophia DeFoe (Environmental Review) regarding the Green Factor certification, Cool Roof scoring, and PHIUS assemblies report.
- **CDD Advisory Review.** Formal Advisory Review meeting on March 17, 2026; written comments received and incorporated into this submission.
- **Inspectional Services Department (ISD).** Coordination with Building Commissioner Peter J. McLaughlin, CBO; a project-status letter was uploaded to Permit #249600 on September 24, 2025.

- **Cambridge Water Department (CWD).** Conditions of approval for water service have been issued by Mr. Innocent Lugumamu; the wet-stamped plot plan has been prepared in compliance with CWD requirements.
- **Department of Public Works (DPW).** Coordination on stormwater, sewer, and Flood Resilience submission.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT).** Coordination regarding parking, loading, and bicycle infrastructure.

C. Pre-Application Community Meeting

Cambridge Planning Board Rules require at least one developer-hosted pre-application community meeting prior to the scheduling of a public hearing. The applicant has satisfied this requirement.

On July 29, 2025, the project team hosted a public community meeting to present the project drawings and discuss the design, construction sequencing, and anticipated impacts of the proposed multifamily residential development at 8 Winter Street with abutters and other interested members of the public. The meeting was held from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. via virtual access.

Public notification of the meeting was provided in advance through two complementary methods, consistent with customary Cambridge community-engagement practice:

- **Direct mailing to abutters.** Written notice of the meeting was mailed in advance to all abutters of the project site, including direct abutters and abutters across the adjacent public ways, using the abutter list of record.
- **On-site posted sign.** A notice sign was posted on the property in advance of the meeting, in a location visible from the public way, providing the date, time, virtual access information, and project contact for any member of the public who wished to attend or to obtain additional information.

At the meeting, the project team presented the project drawings, summarized the proposed scope, and answered questions from attendees regarding the design and the anticipated construction impacts. The principal points of contact identified for follow-up communication were Mr. Syed Jafry (property owner) and Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq. (legal representative). The project team has continued to be available to abutters and members of the public who have requested additional information following the meeting.

D. Project Team and Stakeholder Communications

The project's principal points of contact for community engagement and Planning Board coordination are:

- **Owner / Applicant:** Mr. Syed Jafry.
- **Engineer of Record:** Carlos Ferreira, PE — MP Design Consultants LLC.
- **Project Team:** Akhiris Newlands — MP Design Consultants LLC.
- **Legal Representative:** Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq.

All project team members are available to attend the pre-application community meeting and the Planning Board public hearing. Community questions or concerns received between the date of this submission and the public hearing will be documented and addressed at the hearing.

VII. Conclusion and Request

The proposed 23-unit multifamily residential building at 8 Winter Street, Cambridge represents a high-quality, transit-oriented residential development that advances the goals of the CAM-6 Cambridge Street District and the City's housing, sustainability, and urban design objectives. The four limited site-plan modifications requested are directly necessitated by a pre-constructed foundation, an inherently constrained corner-lot geometry, and sloping topography — conditions that are not generally present across the district. The project complies with all other applicable CAM-6 standards and delivers design outcomes that are equally — and in several respects more — supportive of the district's purpose than would a strictly conforming building on a different site.

The applicant respectfully requests that the Planning Board find that the criteria of Sections 17.705.1.3, 17.707.2, and 10.43 are satisfied, that the project is consistent with the Citywide Urban Design Objectives of Section 19.30, and that the Board grant the requested Special Permit with such conditions as the Board finds appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos Ferreira, PE

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Certification for Green Factor Standard
Building Permit Stage

CDD Determination and/or comments for Special Permit submission

The Community Development Department (CDD) received the Green Factor (GF) documentation for the Building Permit stage. Pursuant to Section 22.96 of the Zoning Ordinance, CDD staff have reviewed the project's GF documentation and provide the following Determination and Summary of Compliance.

CDD Determination: The documentation provided by the Applicant is adequate and demonstrates compliance with the Green Factor Standard applicable to the Building Permit stage.

Summary of Compliance:

- Solar Reflectance Index of Roof – 99
- Solar Reflectance Index of Paving – N/A
- Cool Score – 1.10