



To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: 7/15/26

Re: Special Permit **PB- PB-412, 9&25 Birch Street/30-36 Bay State Road**

Overview

Submission Type:	Special Permit Application
Applicant:	BSR Birch LLC
Zoning District(s):	Residence C-1A (C-1A)/ Mixed Use Residential (MXR) Overlay
Proposal Summary:	Construct a 6-story residential building of approximately 91,585 square feet gross floor area with 85 residential units, 15 off-street parking spaces, 89 long-term and 10 short-term bicycle parking spaces.
Special Permits Requested:	Project Review Special Permit (19.20); Reduction of Green Roofs requirement (22.35.3)
Other City Permits Needed:	Tree Removal Permit, Stormwater Control Permit
Planning Board Action:	Grant or deny requested special permits.
Memo Contents:	CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report
Other Staff Reports:	Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Public Works (DPW), in separate documents.

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Urban Design Staff Report

Urban Design Comments

Introduction:

Project Description

The 9 & 25 Birch Street/30-36 Bay State Road project proposes combining and redeveloping three parcels in the block bounded by Birch Street, Bay State Road, and Concord Avenue to construct a single 6-story, 85-unit, 91,585 GFA multifamily residential building. Fifteen off-street parking spaces are proposed within both an at-grade parking garage and as tuck-under parking, which are accessed via a one-way drive connecting from Bay State Road to Birch Street. The project's design is subject to Article 19.30 - Citywide Urban Design Objectives of the Zoning Ordinance, the Citywide Urban Design Guidelines (2025), and the Multifamily Design Guidelines (2025).

Context

The project site is located towards the western end of Neighborhood Nine near where Concord Avenue, Fresh Pond Parkway, and New Street intersect at Brodette Circle. It's situated between two of the largest open spaces in Cambridge, with Danehy park to the northeast and Fresh Pond Reservation to the southwest. Additional nearby public resources include the recently rebuilt Tobin Montessori School / Darby Vassall Upper School and Callanan Playground, the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway, and the Cambridge Universal Playground.

Both Bay State Road and Birch Street contain a mix of building uses and scales, ranging from 1-3 story commercial and light industrial uses to 3-4 story multifamily residential buildings. A large, low industrial building featuring a broadcast antenna lines the east side of Birch Street and houses a range of uses including Cambridge Self Storage. The southern end of Birch Street terminates on-axis with the Cambridge Armory.

The area immediately to the north of Bay State Road along New Street is transitioning from primarily industrial to multifamily residential uses, most recently with the opening of 52 New Street. Beyond New Street is the Fresh Pond Mall, a suburban-style mall with a mix of retail uses and a grocery store.

Existing Conditions

30-36 Bay State Road is a through-block parcel currently occupied by a small, 3-story commercial building fronting Bay State Road and an associated parking lot along Birch Street. 9 Birch Street contains one small 2-bay garage structure and is primarily used as parking and storage for a landscaping company, and 25 Birch Street sports a small, single-story brick commercial building. No housing is currently accommodated on any of the three parcels, and roughly half of their combined area is used for surface parking. The consolidation of these parcels results in a single, irregularly-shaped through-block site with 70' of frontage along Bay State Road and roughly 185' of frontage along Birch Street.

Proposed Site and Landscape Design:

Building Siting

The building rationalizes the irregular shape of the site by organizing itself into two wings that intersect to form an acute L-shaped building. The longer, deeper wing orients parallel to Birch Street, creating a coherent street wall with an indented portion in the middle that modulates the length of the building and aligns with the building entrance. The smaller wing extends perpendicular towards Bay State Road, with a width that mirrors the adjacent buildings. Both the Bay State Road and Birch St facades have 10 foot front yard setbacks from the property line, and the side setbacks vary between 5 feet and 15 feet and are primarily landscaped.

Open Space

The project proposes four discrete open spaces. The first is at the entrance along Birch Street, created in part by recessing the middle portion of the building an additional 12 feet. Here a paved entry plaza creates a shallow courtyard flanked by seating and nestled within landscaping, with the building's canopy shading the rear of this space. The second is at the southern mid-block, comprised of a pet relief area and small seating patio for residents. The inclusion of a 6-foot wooden fence and a row of evergreen trees along its southern edge is intended to reduce noise and increase privacy for the adjacent neighbors. The third open space occurs within the setback at the entrance along Birch Street, where a small portion of the building is recessed an addition 4 feet to create a small, paved entry plaza flanked by landscaping. The fourth space is a substantial roof deck for residents of the building. Its location along the south side of the building will allow for views towards the Fresh Pond Reservation.

Circulation

The building equally addresses both Bay State Road and Birch Street with pedestrian entrances and lobbies. Short-term bicycle parking is provided along both frontages, and the long-term bicycle parking can be accessed from either street. The fifteen at-grade parking spaces are visually shielded from the public realm, with nine contained in an enclosed parking garage and the remaining six as tuck-under parking behind the Bay State Road lobby space. They are access via a one-way drive aisle that minimizes both the width of the garage entrance and curb cuts.

Comments on Site and Landscape Design

The project's approach to the building siting, circulation, and landscape design generally conform to the recommendations and strategies outlined in both the Citywide and Multifamily Design Guidelines. It reinforces the continuity of the streetwall, creates landscaped edges that enrich the pedestrian experience, includes entrances, short-term bike parking, and long-term bicycle access from both frontages, creates a small courtyard/plaza along Birch Street, and generally diminishes the impact and visibility of vehicular circulation. Landscaping and seating is provided at both entrance areas, as well as in the setback along Birch Street. The project generally represents an improvement over the existing conditions, especially along Birch Street where the majority of the use is currently surface parking.

Additional suggestions include:

- Along Birch Street, coordinate with DWP regarding the material treatment of the sidewalk planting zone between the street tree pits. There may be an opportunity to include permeable paving that would allow for increased stormwater infiltration and aid street tree health.
- Along Birch Street, coordinate with DWP to explore if an additional street tree can be installed at the northernmost portion of the site.
- Clarify if the 6' tall wooden fence extends along the property line between the site and 20-24 Bay State Road perpendicular to Bay State Road (included on elevations but not landscape plan).

Proposed Building Design:

Massing

The building form is manipulated in both plan and section to modulate its scale and create stronger contextual relationships with the adjacent buildings despite its larger size. In plan, the longer Birch Street elevation is indented across all floors towards the middle to create a reading of two smaller conjoined volumes. This is reinforced in section through varied upper-level setbacks that diminish the building's perceived height and step down to the adjacent context. On the Birch St elevation, upper-level setbacks create visual variety along the streetwall, with a taller, thinner volume to the south and a lower, longer volume to the north. On the Bay State Road elevation, a substantial upper-level setback above the 4th floor creates a strong relationship with the shorter surrounding buildings.

Floorplans

On the ground floor, the project equally addresses both Bay State Road and Birch Street with pedestrian entrances, lobby spaces, and access to internal vertical circulation in alignment with the recommendation of the City's Design Guidelines. Active spaces line the majority of both frontages, and the transformer is internal to the building. The location and configuration of the Bicycle Room allow it to be easily accessed from both lobby spaces. While the placement of the parking garage along Birch Street isn't optimal, its width is diminished by being a single-stall configuration.

On the upper floors, the internal hallway extending towards Birch Street and the elevator lobby near Bay State Road allow access to daylight. Additionally, many units benefit from a bay or double exposure.

Façade Composition

The façade is primarily clad of metal panel deployed in a variety of colors, scales, textures, and orientations that reinforce the articulation of the massing. The ground floor and streetwall zones are composed of a brown/bronze horizontal cladding, while the upper levels above the setbacks are clad in a vertical medium-tone warm gray that helps them visually recede. Light gray accents are employed at unique moments like projecting bays, corners, cornices, and lobby entrances.

Depth and façade rhythm are created through the inclusion of projecting bays, which feature windows on both the front and sides. Canopies at both the Bay State Road and Birch Street provide shade and shelter while visually identifying the entries. Taller windows and a higher percentage of glazing at the ground floor signal the different program within and help activate the public realm. The project overall has an appropriate window to wall ratio.

Along Birch Street, the southernmost and northernmost portions of the ground floor façade contain the parking garage and transformer respectively. Ventilation and access for the transformer room has been achieved through the incorporation of vertical brown/bronze louvers that read as a purposeful element of the overall design composition. While the Design Guidelines recommend screening parking with building uses, the inclusion of a moderate amount of parking at this location seems appropriate, and the irregular shape of the site poses spatial challenges. The applicant has committed to incorporating artwork to enliven the associated blank wall and garage door; its design should be developed in coordination with the Director of Arts and Cultural Planning.

Comments on Building Design:

The building's design generally conforms to the recommendations and strategies outlined in both the Citywide and Multifamily Design Guidelines. It modulates the massing to step down to the adjacent context and break down the scale of longer facades, introduces upper-level setbacks that relate to the surrounding buildings, introduces rhythm through projecting bays, and reinforces these manipulations through changes in cladding color, texture, and orientation. The transformer is housed within the building and artfully screened to diminish its visibility.

Additional suggestions include:

- Canting/sloping the top of the northern stair tower above the roof away from Birch Street to reduce its visibility.
- Ensure the bike repair station isn't an impediment to circulation within the Bike Room while maintaining the necessary clearances.

Continuing Review

The following are additional recommendations for ongoing design review by staff if the Board decides to grant the special permit:

- Review of all exterior materials, colors, and details. A visual mock-up of all materials should be installed on the site and reviewed and approved by staff and the Planning Board, prior to any exterior materials being ordered.
- Landscape design details, including species, and planting standards for trees and other vegetation, locations of trees, bicycle racks, and details of hardscape, benches, etc.
- Further development of the mural proposed for the Parking Garage along Birch Street should be coordinated with Cambridge's Director of Arts and Cultural Planning.
- Ensure exterior lighting is programmable, dimmable, directional, and dark-sky compliant to minimize glare and light trespass.
- Coordinate the location, species, and size of the proposed street trees with the Cambridge Department of Public Works.
- Coordinate the reconstruction of the sidewalk and roadway with the Cambridge Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation.

Zoning Section	Required Planning Board Findings <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Project Review Special Permit (19.20)	• Traffic Impact Findings. Special permits will be granted if the project has no substantial adverse impact on city traffic as analyzed in the Traffic Study. • Urban Design Findings. The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30.
Reduction of Required Green Roof Area (22.35.3)	The Planning Board may grant a special permit to reduce the required Green Roof Area provided that each square foot so reduced be compensated by a unit price contribution to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust.
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43: (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or (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 (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 (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 (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

Zoning & Development Staff Report

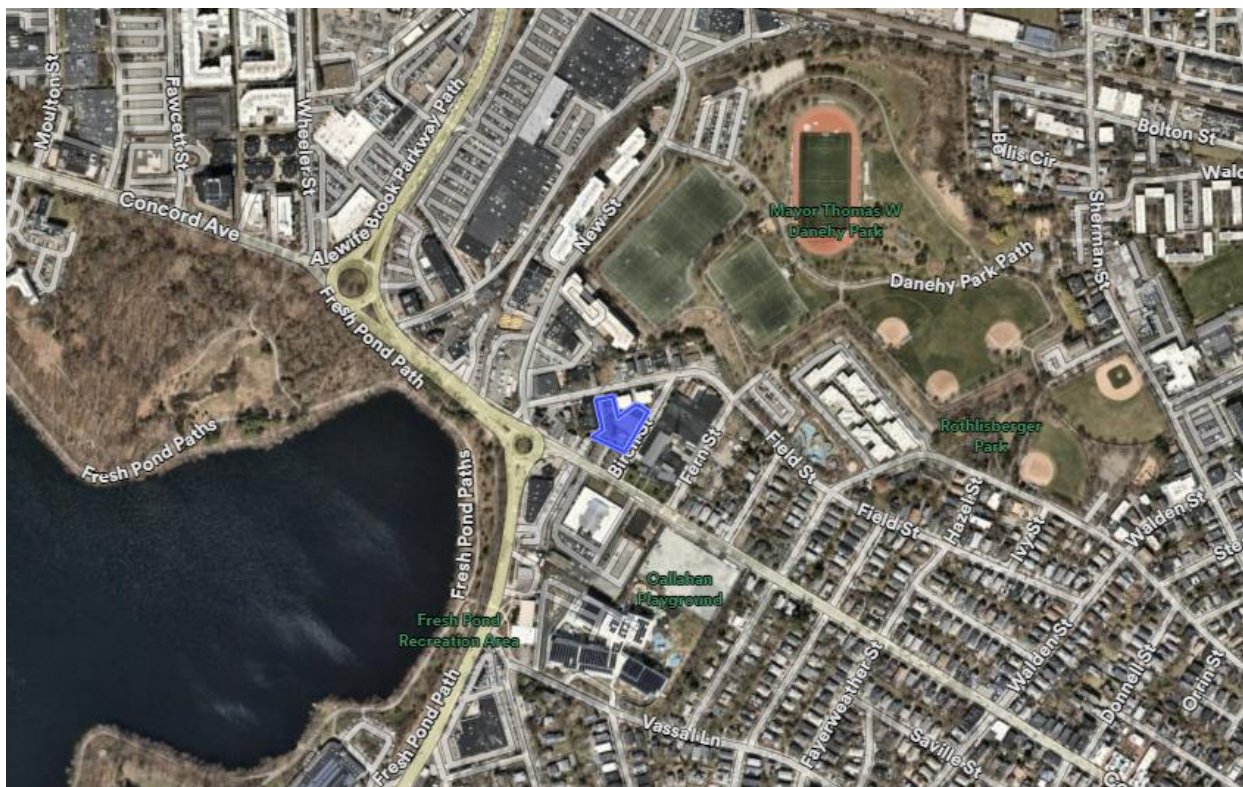
Area Planning and Zoning

Site Context

Neighborhood/Area: Neighborhood Nine/Concord Ave. Corridor

Development Patterns: Mix of legacy industrial and small office uses with emerging higher-density multifamily stock. Significant public open space parcels nearby with regional commercial locus on Alewife Brook Parkway.

Nearby Features: Fresh Pond Reservation lies immediately West, Danehy Park directly Northeast. Transit service is available via the 74 and 78 MBTA bus lines on Concord Ave. The closest rapid transit is the MBTA Red Line Alewife stop roughly 1 mile to the North. The Fresh Pond Mall provides significant retail access, including multiple grocery stores.

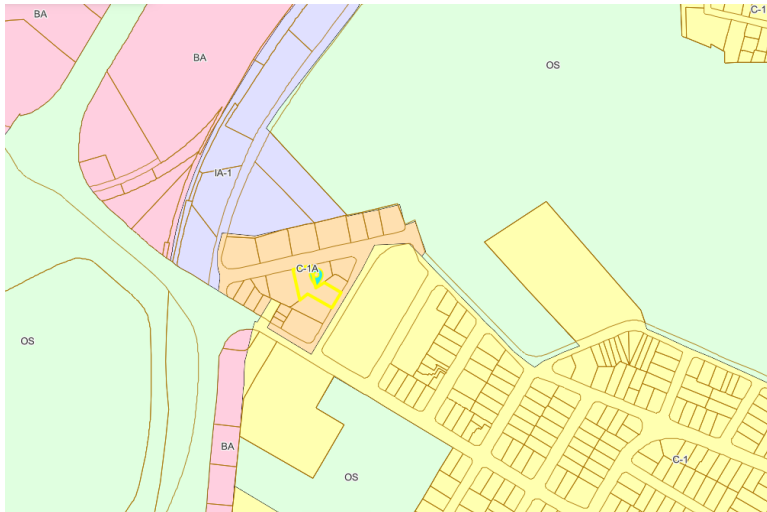


Aerial Context Map showing 9 & 25 Birch Street/30-36 Bay State Road. Source: Nearmap, 2026.

Site Zoning

General description: Residence C-1A Zoning allows moderate-density multifamily up to six stories by-right and low-density non-residential development, limited to institutional use and some small-scale retail by special permit. The MXR Overlay permits additional non-residential uses as allowed in the Industry A-1 zone provided those uses do not displace existing residential development and subject to dimensional standards as described in Article 20.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

	Base District	Overlay District(s)
District(s):	Residence C-1A	Mixed Use Residential (MXR)
Allowed Uses:	Residential, Institutional and Healthcare & Social Service Uses by-right. Convenience stores, Groceries, Personal Services and some other limited commercial by special permit.	Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Office/Lab Uses
Max. Building Height	Residential: 6 stories/75 feet Non-residential: 45 feet	N/A (Base requirements continue to apply)
Max. FAR/GFA	Residential: None Non-residential: 1.25 FAR	Residential: None Non-residential: 1.0 FAR Any single retail establishment exceeding 2500 GFA requires Planning Board approval.
Required Setbacks	Residential Front: 10 ft. Residential Side/Rear: 5 feet Non-residential Front: H+L/4 Non-residential Side/Rear: H+L/7	N/A (Base requirements continue to apply)
Required Open Space	15% of lot area	N/A (Base requirements continue to apply)
Other District Standards or Requirements	N/A	Retail uses are only permitted on the ground floor or basement level. Non-residential uses allowed under MXR Overlay may not displace current residential use. See 20.20 for more detail.



Base Zoning District Boundaries. The MXR Overlay is fully contiguous with the C-1A base zone.

The proposed project is fully residential and, therefore, does not trigger any of the provisions of the Mixed Use Residential Overlay District (MXR).

Development Plans and Guidelines

[The Neighborhood Nine Study Update \(2010\)](#) provides goals for the area in which the project sits.

This plan additionally notes relevant zoning history in the area. For instance, the City Council passed the Woodford Petition (page 19) in the 2000s to rezone the area abutting the Cambridge Self Storage facility, specifically including Birch Street, Concord Avenue, Fern Street, Field Street, and Bay State Road.

- **Use Limitations:** The rezoning generally limited the use to residential and established the C-1A MXR District.
- **Non-Residential Restrictions:** Any existing non-residential uses currently on-site could be replaced, but they are allowed without the option of expansion.

The area at Birch Street and Concord Avenue was formally rezoned from an industrial designation (IA-1) to the Residence C-1A district to encourage housing development. These changes were made to facilitate the neighborhood transition from industrial to residential uses.

[The 2025 Multifamily Design Guidelines](#) provide standards for this type of residential project:

- Respond to context of neighboring buildings
- Define and articulate the public realm
- Incorporate sustainable and resilient design

The following priorities from [Envision Cambridge 2030](#) are relevant to this project:

- “Development at the edges of residential neighborhoods should expand the high-quality pedestrian environment, offer housing options, add amenities not already offered in adjacent neighborhoods, and provide transition between traditional neighborhood fabric and denser mixed-use and commercial districts.”
- Net-Zero GHG Emissions from buildings by 2050
- Increase overall housing supply
- Encourage affordable housing production for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households through regulatory and zoning incentives.

Current Proposal

Overview

The site consists of four contiguous parcels with three non-residential structures, ranging from one to three stories. The remainder of the site is paved surface parking with some scattered trees, mostly around the site perimeter.

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing structures to construct a 6-story, 85-unit residential building. The approximately 91,585 sq ft building would include 15 motor vehicle parking spaces and 89 long-term bicycle parking spaces. Entrances would be located both along Birch Street and Bay State Road. Most existing trees would be retained, and some landscaping and usable open space would be constructed at grade and on the roof.

Proposed Uses

The Application proposes the following uses on the site:

Proposed Uses	Location/Size	Allowed/Special Permit?
Multifamily Dwelling (4.31.g)	85 dwelling units	Allowed

Proposed Dimensions

The Application proposes the following dimensions for development on the site:

Dimension	Proposal	Relief Sought?
Gross Floor Area (GFA)	91,585 square feet	Project Review Special Permit (19.20) required
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	3.7	Complies (no residential FAR restrictions)
Height and Stories	6 stories, 69'-10"	Complies with Res C-1A standards
Setbacks	Front – 10' Sides – varies 5' to 18'-6"	Complies with Res C-1A standards
Open Space	29.1% total open space	Complies with Res C-1A standards

Proposed Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading

The Applicant proposes to provide:

- 15 motor vehicle spaces for tenant use. No motor vehicle parking spaces are required per zoning. For more information on the traffic impacts of this project's parking provision, refer to the attached DOT memo.
- 89 long-term bicycle parking spaces located on the interior ground floor of the project. 5 of the long-term bicycle parking spaces are designed for larger electric or cargo bicycles. Additionally, the applicant proposes providing a bike repair station and a bike battery storage/charging area.

- 10 outdoor, short-term bicycle parking spaces distributed near the building's two pedestrian entrances on Bay State Road and Birch Street.

Special Permits

The Applicant seeks the following Special Permits:

- Project Review Special Permit (19.20): Residential development with at least 75,000 square feet of GFA is subject to a project review special permit, which is granted if the project is found consistent with the city's urban design objectives and will not cause adverse traffic impacts considering the findings of a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) and proposed mitigation. Refer to the Urban Design Report and Transportation Department memo for commentary on those topics.
- Reduction of Required Green Roof Area (22.35): New residential buildings with at least 25,000 SF GFA are required to have 80% of the roof area devoted to Green Roof Area or Solar Energy Systems. Areas required for mechanical equipment or maintenance and usable outdoor space are exempted from the calculation. The Application shows 8,390 square feet of total roof area subject to the 80% calculation and propose to provide 6,710 square feet of non-intensive green roof area. This equals approximately 80%.

Although the Applicant proposes to construct a sufficient square footage of non-intensive Green Roof area to meet the requirement, it can be difficult to make an exact determination of whether the proposal complies until the building permit stage. Therefore, it is typical for applicants to seek preemptive approval of a reduction by special permit. That way, if the project is determined not to meet the 80% requirement at the building permit stage, the remainder can be met with a contribution to the Affordable Housing Trust used to install green or solar roofs on affordable housing developments.

Other Zoning Requirements

Based on its size and location, the proposal is subject to the following general standards in zoning:

- Green Building Requirements (22.20): Triggered by at least 25,000 square feet of GFA. The initial stage Green Building Report has been reviewed by CDD staff. Based on the documents submitted, the project is expected to achieve the minimum criteria for certification using the Passive House Rating System. The applicant is pursuing Passive House certification. Because this is a residential project, an embodied greenhouse gas emissions analysis is not required.
- Flood Resilience Standards (22.80): Applies to all new construction. The project provided discussion and graphics outlining how the Standards will be met and obtained Flood Resilience Compliance Confirmation from the DPW as part of this Special Permit Application. Compliance Confirmation will need to be sought by the Applicant again in advance of Building Permit. All habitable spaces are shown above the 1%-LTFE (including an interior transformer), and all occupiable spaces are shown above the 10%-LTFE.

- Green Factor Standard (22.90): Applies to all new construction. The project is proposing to meet the standard with a “Cool Score” of 1.17 through its site design. Among other measures, the project proposes the preservation of existing large canopy trees.
- Inclusionary Housing Requirements (11.203): Triggered by at least 10 units or 10,000 square feet of residential GFA. A minimum of 20% of the project, based on the final net (interior) floor area of dwelling units, must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. Some of the affordable units will be required to be family-sized (3+ bedroom) units. The requirements will be certified by the Housing Department at the building permit stage and enforced through a restrictive covenant.

Non-Zoning Requirements

- Tree Protection Ordinance: As required for a Project Review Special Permit, the Application includes a tree removal plan. The City Arborist reviewed the application and has determined that it meets all of the requirements for certification. The project will mitigate for tree loss with a combination of replanting and payment into the Tree Fund. The project has 43” of DBH to mitigate after proposed planting and will require payment of \$36,550 to the Tree Fund. The issuance of a Tree Removal Permit will be required.

Community Engagement

The Application summarizes the project team’s community engagement program as required by the Planning Board Rules. The team hosted two meetings: the first was an in-person meeting on January 13, 2026 attended by 10 people; the second was a remote Zoom meeting on January 14, 2026 attended by 17 people. These meetings were advertised by a certified mailing sent on December 18, 2025 and an invitation flyer was provided to CDD on December 17, 2025 for posting on the City’s website.

Special Permit Conditions

If the Board decides to grant the special permit, the following list summarizes the general categories of conditions recommended for this development based on the requested special permits:

1. **Approved Development:** Authorized development would need to conform with the submitted application materials. An Approved Dimensional Form would be attached as an Appendix.
2. **Permitted Uses:** The special permit would authorize multifamily residential uses. In the future, uses that are allowed by zoning but not authorized by the special permit would require Planning Board approval, and uses that are limited by the Zoning Ordinance (e.g., requiring a separate special permit from the Planning Board or BZA) would need to seek the necessary relief.
3. **Design Review:** CDD staff would review and approve design details at the construction documents phase, prior to issuance of a building permit, to certify that the plans conform to the Planning Board's approval. Board members may cite specific areas of focus for detailed review, based on the Urban Design Report and Board discussion.
4. **Transportation and Infrastructure:** Work being done on City property would be subject to review and approval by appropriate City departments, including DPW, DOT and CDD. Transportation mitigation measures, as recommended in the DOT memo, would be included as conditions.
5. **Sustainability:** Development will be subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20 and the Green Factor Standard in Section 22.90. These will be reviewed again by CDD staff at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages. CDD would also review for compliance with Green Roof Requirements in Section 22.35, and if the final design is determined not to meet the full Green Roof Requirement, then a payment would be made to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust to account for the difference in required and provided square footage. Development will be subject to the Flood Resilience Standard in Section 22.80, which will be reviewed again by DPW staff at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages.
6. **Housing:** Development will be subject to Inclusionary Housing requirements, which will be certified by the Housing Department at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages.
7. **Construction Management Program:** Per Section 18.20, staff would recommend a Construction Management Program be provided and approved by DOT, DPW, and other applicable City departments before issuance of a building permit. This program would also include a community outreach program designating a point of contact to provide information to the public during the construction process and notification panels posted on the site with project information.

Appendix - Zoning Text Excerpts

General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit

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
- (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or
- (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
- (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
- (g) 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
- (h) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

Project Review Special Permit

19.25 Review Criteria. In granting a special permit under this Section 19.20 the Planning Board shall make the following findings.

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

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

Reduction of Required Green Roof Area

22.35.3 Exemption. The Planning Board may grant a special permit to reduce the required Green Roof Area, Biosolar Green Roof Area, or Solar Energy System below the area required by Section 22.35.2, provided that each square foot so reduced be compensated by a unit price contribution to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust. This unit price shall be determined based on the average costs to design, install, and maintain green roofs and rooftop solar energy systems in Cambridge using actual cost figures to the extent possible, shall be subject to annual adjustment based on

standard construction cost indices, and shall be calculated, and recalculated approximately every three years, by the Cambridge Community Development Department. All such funds contributed to the Trust shall be dedicated to the design and incorporation of Green Roof Area, Biosolar Green Roof Area, or Solar Energy Systems into new or existing affordable housing developments.

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	• Transition to lower-scale neighborhoods • Consistency with established streetscape • Compatibility with adjacent uses • Consideration of nearby historic buildings
Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.	• Inhabited ground floor spaces • Discouraged ground-floor parking • Windows on ground floor • Orienting entries to pedestrian pathways • Safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access
The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.	• Location/impact of mechanical equipment • Location/impact of loading and trash handling • Stormwater management • Shadow impacts • Retaining walls, if provided • Building scale and wall treatment • Outdoor lighting • Tree protection (requires plan approved by City Arborist)
Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.	• Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management • Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service • Efficient design (LEED standards)
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	• Institutional use focused on existing campuses • Mixed-use development (including retail) encouraged where allowed • Preservation of historic structures and environment • Provision of space for start-up companies, manufacturing activities
Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.	• Housing as a component of large, multi-building development • Affordable units exceeding zoning requirements, targeting units for middle-income families
Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.	• Publicly beneficial open space provided in large-parcel commercial development • Enhance/expand existing open space, complement existing pedestrian/bicycle networks • Provide wider range of activities
Development should be resilient to the effects of climate change as anticipated in the <i>Resilient Cambridge</i> plan.	• Up-to-date projections of climate change impacts over the project's anticipated lifespan are incorporated • Flood Resilience Standard in Section 22.80 and the Green Factor Standard in Section 22.90 are met or exceeded • Use of strategies that have environmental co-benefits

	• Integrative approach to climate change resilience that accounts for the existing context and promotes the other design objectives of the area and the City.
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