

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Christopher Cotter, Housing Director
Cassie Arnaud, Senior Housing Planner
Date: August 4, 2022
Re: Planning Board review of Conversion of 49 Sixth St/Sacred Heart

Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), a Boston-based non-profit has been working on plans to convert of a portion of the Sacred Heart church property at 49 Sixth Street in East Cambridge to affordable housing. CDD staff has worked with POAH as the team developed its plan, held several community meetings, and recently completed the advisory design review process with the Planning Board under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO).

The Planning Board held its second advisory design consultation meeting on June 28th to review and comment on the revised designs for POAH's proposed redevelopment. This was the second of the two advisory design consultation meetings required under the AHO, and the Board had provided initial comments on the proposal earlier this year.

The proposed design was favorably received by the Board which noted in its report that POAH had addressed most of the concerns raised at the initial review. Additionally, the Board commended the project for advancing the goals of creating affordable housing and preserving an historic structure. The Planning Board advised additional consultation with CDD, which is outlined in the attached report and is primarily directed at additional trees, landscaping, short-term bike storage and the retainage of a World War II memorial.

The AHO provides for the results of the design review process to be shared with the Affordable Housing Trust. The Planning Board report is attached and includes:

- Planning Board Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation (7/14/22), including:
 - Cambridge Historical Commission Memo (6/27/22);
 - CDD Staff Memo (6/22/22);
- Planning Board Initial Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation (4/5/22), including:
 - Department of Public Works memo (3/22/22).

Project Overview:

The Sacred Heart property consists of a school building, convent, rectory, chapel, and church facility. The current development plan involves creating 47 new affordable rental units in the school, rectory, and convent buildings, while the church and chapel would continue to be used by the Archdiocese. The project is being permitted under the Affordable Housing Overlay.

Over the last few months, POAH has made significant progress advancing their design and planning for a building configuration that will create 46 new units, including 14 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedroom, 11 three-bedroom and 1 four-bedroom unit in the existing buildings.

Staff have been working with POAH on their request for funding from the Trust, and, once the full request is finalized and reviewed, will bring it to the Trust at an upcoming meeting.

More information on POAH's proposed redevelopment, including material POAH submitted to the Planning Board and presentation materials, can be seen on CDD's 49 Sixth Street project page at:

[49 6th Street - CDD - City of Cambridge, Massachusetts \(cambridgema.gov\)](https://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/49-6th-street)

POAH has worked closely with their architect and historical consultant to update the interior plans to ensure the livability of all the units, including improved and increased common space in the family-sized units to accommodate the needs of larger households.

The following table provides a summary of the updated unit mix:

Bedrooms	# Units	% of Total	Average Size
Studios	0	-	-
1BRs	14	30.4%	630 sf
2BRs	20	43.5%	900 sf
3BRs	11	23.9%	1080 sf
4BR+	1	2.8%	1500 sf
Total	46	100.00%	

In order to retain the unit count and increase individual unit sizes, the plans rely on the use of the lowest levels of the school and convent buildings, portions of which are below-grade. However, unlike standard basement units which often have low floor to ceiling spans, small windows, and extra vulnerability to flooding, the proposed below-grade “garden level” space at 49 Sixth is only slightly below street level and would take advantage of existing large, historic windows and good ceiling heights. In terms of flood mitigation, POAH has worked closely with the City’s Department of Public Works (DPW) to ensure that any below-grade living space is protected to the City’s high standards of flood risk prevention. At present, plans call for a series of mitigation measures which DPW has deemed sufficient to address predicted flood risk.

Community Response

Community input at both Planning Board meetings was overwhelmingly positive. The greatest concern was the lack of parking. There is no onsite solution to the lack of parking and parking is not required under the Affordable Housing Overlay. Many supporters indicated that the creation of additional affordable housing was worth the sacrifice of spending an additional 10 minutes looking for parking.

Next Step

POAH is in the process of revising their financing plan for 49 Sixth Street and we anticipate that they will be submit a revised budget and funding request in the next week for a Trust vote at the next meeting.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: July 14, 2022

Subject: Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design
Consultation Procedure

Project Location: 49 Sixth Street

Date of Planning Board Meeting: June 28, 2022

Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, June 28th to review and comment on the revised designs for 49 Sixth Street, a site known as the Sacred Heart church (the “Site”), proposed for redevelopment under the Affordable Housing Overlay (Section 11.207 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed plan sets submitted by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) dated December 29, 2021 and June 7, 2022, as well as staff memoranda from the Community Development Department (“CDD”), the Department of Public Works, and the Cambridge Historical Commission, which are attached. The Board held its first design consultation on April 5, 2022 and issued an initial report dated April 22, 2022, which is also attached.

Proposal Description

The developer, POAH, proposes to rehabilitate a portion of an existing church complex and adapt it for use as affordable housing. Three of the existing five buildings will be converted into housing; the remaining two buildings on the site will continue to be used by the church. The development will take place inside of the existing buildings. The project is pursuing Enterprise Green Communities certification for environmental sustainability.

The proposed Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the development is 59,400 square feet and there will be 46 permanently affordable rental apartments. The building height will remain at approximately 68 feet. Building entries will be located on the Seventh Street, Thorndike Street, and Sixth Street elevations. The development will provide long-term bicycle parking within the building and two off-street parking spaces on-site. It will also improve an existing courtyard at the corner of Sixth Street and Thorndike Street, as well as an interior courtyard.

Board Comments

Planning Board members expressed support for the changes shown in the revised submission, noting that the applicant had addressed most of their concerns. Board members also commended

the project for advancing the goals of creating affordable housing and preserving an historic structure.

The Board suggested some design details that could be given more attention. Board members asked about the location of the transformer that would be required by the electrical utility, which does not yet have a final location. Board members commented that the transformer should not be located in the proposed pocket park or courtyard. The developer said they were in conversation with the utility about locating the transformer in the sidewalk or street.

Board members expressed support for preserving the memorial plaque, asked if there was a possibility to reuse the memorial's wrought iron gate, and encouraged planting additional street trees if possible. Board members also suggested further coordination with CDD staff on the items listed in the attached Urban Design Report. In addition, Board members encouraged collaboration with the City to contribute to the provision of short-term bicycle parking on the public sidewalk, as would normally be required when short-term parking cannot be accommodated on-site.

This report certifies that POAH has completed the Advisory Design Consultation Procedure in order to comply with the procedures for development under the Affordable Housing Overlay set forth in Section 11.207.8 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Swaathi Joseph".

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Mary Flynn, Vice Chair.



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112 Fax: 617-349-6165

E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>

Bruce A. Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Barton Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Charles Sullivan, *Executive Director*

Joseph V. Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Elizabeth Lyster, Jo M. Solet, Yuting Zhang, *Members*

Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

June 27, 2022

To: Members of the Cambridge Planning board

From: Charles Sullivan
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Advisory Design Review, Project AHO-4: 49 Sixth Street

The Sacred Heart Parish complex at 49 Sixth Street, including the Church, rectory, school, and convent, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 on the basis of its architectural and social significance.

The proposed project by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) and Urban Spaces calls for the adaptive reuse of the former convent, school and rectory into 46 affordable rental apartments. These buildings were constructed between 1885 and 1902 and filled out the remainder of the city block not already occupied by the Sacred Heart Church (1874-1883). Of the three buildings to be converted into housing, the Panel Brick rectory is the oldest (1885) and most architecturally significant. The Neoclassical convent and school buildings were built in 1902 and display similar material and design elements.

CHC staff have consulted extensively with the proponents to ensure that the project meets historic preservation objectives. Among other aspects of the project, CHC staff have recommended that replacement windows reflect original patterns as closely as possible; that the arch at the right of the rectory entrance be reopened based on documentation supplied by CHC; that existing doors and entry details should be preserved and restored; and that CHC staff should be consulted on the details of exterior masonry repair and replacement. CHC staff support the plans for open space at the corner of Sixth and Thorndike streets and do not object to the removal of the chimney. The project team has been highly responsive to these concerns.

The Cambridge Historical Commission strongly supports the proposal to renovate and restore the Sacred Heart Campus' convent, school, and rectory buildings into affordable housing.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: June 22, 2022

Re: **AHO-4, 49 Sixth Street – Advisory Design Consultation Meeting #2**

IRAM FAROOQ

*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

SANDRA CLARKE

*Deputy Director
Chief of Administration*

KHALIL MOGASSABI

*Deputy Director
Chief of Planning*

Overview

Submission Type:	Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Advisory Design Review
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Applicant:	Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH)
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Zoning District(s):	Residence C-1
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Proposal Summary: Rehabilitation and adaptation of an existing church complex into affordable housing, with all development taking place inside of the existing building footprints. The total Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the development is 59,400 square feet and there will be 46 permanently affordable rental apartments. The building height will remain at approximately 68 feet. The development will include two off-street parking spaces, 48 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and no short-term bicycle parking spaces. It will also improve an existing courtyard at the corner of Sixth Street and Thorndike Street, as well as an interior courtyard.

Planning Board	Review revised materials and provide final comments on
Action:	conformance with AHO Development Standards, City Development Guidelines for the proposal area, Design Guidelines for AHO, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives. This is the second of two required advisory review sessions under the AHO.

Memo Contents:	CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report
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11.207.5 – 11.207.7 AHO Development Standards

Development Standard	Requirements for AHO Project in Residence C-1
Building Height & Stories Above Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Stories Above Grade or 45 feet for new construction. • Existing building height is allowed for preservation/reuse.
Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum FAR of 2.00, except in the case of a preservation/reuse project. • There is no minimum lot area per dwelling unit for an AHO Development.
Yard Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For new construction: 10' Front Yard, 7.5' Side Yard, and 20' Rear Yard. • Front yards may be reduced to the average of the four (4) nearest pre-existing principal buildings on the same side of the street. • Existing building setbacks are allowed for preservation/reuse
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally 30% of lot area. • Existing open space is allowed for preservation/reuse; minor reductions are permitted in order to adapt building to meet accessibility standards.
Existing Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The required dimensional characteristics of the existing building and site shall be those existing at the time of conversion to an AHO Development. • Certain modifications may be permitted as-of-right to an existing building for an AHO Development.
Parking and Bicycle Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no minimum off-street parking for an AHO Development. • For AHO Developments of twenty (20) or more units and less than 0.4 spaces per dwelling unit are provided, specific Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures are required, including complimentary annual Bluebikes memberships or 50% discounted MBTA passes for six months, and providing transit information to each household within the AHO Development. • Bicycle parking is generally required per Article 6.100; in an existing building, bicycle parking spaces meeting zoning standards are not required but are encouraged to be provided to the extent practical given the limitations of the existing structure.

Development Standard	Requirements for AHO Project in Residence C-1
Site Design and Arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front yards may be landscaped or hardscaped but cannot be used for off-street parking. • Pedestrian entrances shall be visible from the street. • Buildings with front facades in excess of 250' in length shall provide forecourts to break up massing. • Existing buildings may maintain existing conditions; alterations are allowed if they do not increase nonconformance with standards.
Building Facades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building facades facing public streets shall have a minimum percentage of glazing. • Building facades shall incorporate projections/recesses at regular intervals to promote visual interest. • Facades of ground stories shall have expanses of no more than 25' with no windows or pedestrian entryways. • Existing buildings may maintain existing conditions; alterations are allowed if they do not increase nonconformance with standards.
Ground Stories and Below Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground stories with non-residential uses must have a height of at least 15' and a depth of 35'. • Ground stories must contain a non-residential use when located in a Business base zoning district, or where a retail/consumer service establishment has existed on the site in the last two (2) years. • Existing buildings may maintain existing conditions; alterations are allowed if they do not increase nonconformance with standards.
Mechanical Equipment, Refuse Storage and Loading Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mechanical equipment shall be generally screened from view. Rooftop mechanical equipment must be set back from the roof line equal to its height.
Environmental Design Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Building Requirements as set forth in Article 22 shall generally apply to AHO Developments. • AHO Developments are exempt from the Green Roofs Ordinance.

AHO Design Guidelines

Site Design Objectives	
Response to Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design site layouts to harmonize with the neighborhood context.
Open Space & Landscape Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design open space to enhance the lives of residents and the broader community by offering aesthetic and environmental benefits. Offer useful amenities to residents, provide opportunities to minimize the impact of new development on neighbors' privacy and quality of life, and contribute to the beauty of the city.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote non-motorized mobility by prioritizing pedestrian-friendly and bike-accessible site design.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize the impact of parking and driveway.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize the visual, acoustical, and environmental impacts of essential utilities and services.
Outdoor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide lighting for safety and functionality while minimizing energy use, light pollution, and other negative impacts.
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrich the visual environment and strengthen the sense of place by incorporating art.
Building Design Objectives	
Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Configure massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. In evolving areas, configure new developments to help realize the City's vision for urban form.
Facades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design facades to enhance and enliven the public realm. In established areas, emphasize compatibility and reinforce sense of place. In evolving residential and commercial districts, contribute to the transformation of urban form by setting precedents for design excellence. Where appropriate, incorporate ground level retail spaces and common areas to foster a lively enliven the urban environment. Provide daylight to interior spaces, avoid excessive energy use, and protect the privacy of residents of neighboring buildings. Design facades to relate to the residential scales and patterns of Cambridge's diverse and historic neighborhoods. Design street facades to offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and visual interest as appropriate to their role in defining public space.

Architectural Details, Materials, Color, and Finishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use materials that are warm, inviting, and compatible with surrounding existing buildings and the neighborhood context. Develop building facades of high-quality, durable materials and with colors, finishes, and textures appropriate to building contexts.
Building Interiors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing, like all housing, should serve the needs of its residents while contributing to the residential character and sense of neighborhood within the area at large.
Sustainable Design Objective	
Site and Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve resilience measures to the maximum extent possible, including energy efficiency and measures to promote the health and wellness of residents.

The complete set of Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing (28 July 2020) can be found at:

https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend_aho_designguidelines_20200728v2.pdf.

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service Efficient design (LEED standards)

city water supply system, and sewer system.	
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Zoning & Development Staff Report

Overview

The developer, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), proposes to rehabilitate an existing church complex and adapt it for use as affordable housing. Three of the existing five buildings will be converted into housing; the remaining two buildings on the site will continue to be used by the church. The development will take place inside of the existing buildings. The project is pursuing Enterprise Green Communities certification for environmental sustainability.

The total Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the development is 59,400 square feet and there will be 46 permanently affordable rental apartments. The building height will remain at approximately 68 feet. Building entries will be located on the Seventh Street, Thorndike Street, and Sixth Street elevations. The development will provide long-term bicycle parking within the building and two off-street parking spaces on-site. It will also improve an existing courtyard at the corner of Sixth Street and Thorndike Street, as well as an interior courtyard.

Planning Board Comments from Initial Consultation Meeting

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 to review and comment on the design for this project, which is being developed under the Affordable Housing Overlay (Section 11.207 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed a plan set submitted by POAH dated December 29, 2021 and presentation dated April 5, 2022. They also reviewed memos from the Community Development Department (CDD) and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Board members were generally supportive of the proposed project and were excited to see the adaptive reuse of an historic structure. The project’s inclusion of units for families with children was also commended. The majority of comments from the Board focused on improving the overall design of the buildings and the site. The report from the initial meeting is attached.

Staff Comments on Revised Submission

The revised submission from the Developer remains generally consistent with the AHO standards. The Initial Report primarily focused on comments related to building design, which are addressed in the accompanying Urban Design report. The following are some aspects of the project that the Board requested additional information on in relation to AHO zoning standards:

- Long-Term Bicycle Parking. The AHO zoning does not require short- or long-term bicycle parking to meet normal zoning standards for projects that involve the renovation of existing buildings but encourages bicycle parking to be provided to the extent practicable given existing constraints. The Developer is providing 48 long-term bicycle parking spaces and has worked with City staff to meet the access and design standards for that type of bicycle parking. The revised submission shows the ramp access route to the long-term bicycle parking and the three locations of the long-term bicycle parking. The quality of the site plan graphic makes it challenging to read, so it is unclear if the proposed design meets the City’s design standards. A

1:10 scale plan for the proposed bicycle parking should be provided at the building permit stage with the access route and access aisle widths clearly labelled.

- Short-Term Bicycle Parking. The Developer is not proposing to provide short-term bicycle parking on-site due to site and budget constraints. They've indicated a willingness to work with the City to identify locations for short-term bicycle parking on the public sidewalk but have not proposed contributing funding.
- Resident Parking. There are two existing off-street parking spaces accessed from Thorndike Street. The application materials do not indicate how those spaces will be used, but the Developer does state that off-street parking will not be provided for residents. The AHO zoning does not require off-street parking. The AHO zoning does require Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures and a certification from the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP+T) that short-term pick-up, drop-off, and loading can be reasonably accommodated either off-street or on-street. It also allows, but does not require, the Developer to secure off-site parking for the project if it meets the standards in Section 11.207.6.2(b). The Developer has committed to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, including discounted MBTA passes; transit information; and long-term bicycle parking. The Developer has also explored providing parking options for residents off-site.

Urban Design Staff Report

Overview

The convent, school, and rectory of the Sacred Heart Church complex at 46 Sixth Street will be renovated to accommodate 46 units of affordable housing. The massing of the buildings will be unchanged, but numerous improvements will be made to their appearance: the brick facades will be cleaned and repointed, historically accurate replacement windows will be installed, and window openings that are currently infilled will be restored. The building's historically significant interior details will be preserved and restored. Insulation will be added, and new all-electric building systems installed. The existing interior walls will be retained where possible. New elevators will be installed, and accessible routes will be created. Long term bicycle parking will be provided. Sitework will include the renovation of the existing courtyard at the southeast corner of the site and the improvement of the complex's internal courtyard with plantings, paving, and furniture. The small existing garage on Thorndike Street will be demolished and replaced by two open-air vehicular parking spaces.

In the hearing on April 5, 2022, the applicant addressed numerous topics raised by the Planning Board including:

- The roof will be insulated.
- Due to a desire to preserve interior finishes, insulation won't be added to the exterior walls; the applicant will analyze the thermal performance of the building's triple withe brick walls.
- The applicant reviewed several options that had been considered to provide basement level parking and explained their conclusion that they were impractical given the dimensions of the building and the desire to have substantial trees in the courtyard.
- The applicant will test for lead paint and asbestos and follow recommendations.

In subsequent review, staff has concluded that:

- The mix of unit sizes is appropriate.
- While borrowed light in bedrooms is less than ideal, it is acceptable.

The current design is largely the same as it was at the April 5th hearing. The unit count remains at 46. In response to Planning Board and staff comments on the materials presented in the hearing on April 5th, improvements have been made to the design and documentation, including:

- Small changes and corrections have been made to unit layouts.
- The arched window on the Sixth Street façade will be restored.
- All windows will be replaced with historically accurate windows, including two-over-one windows for the rectory building.
- New, historically appropriate doors will be provided where the originals have been replaced.
- Dual draw window blinds will be provided to increase privacy, especially at the ground floor units.
- Additional information has been provided regarding plant species and landscape furnishings.
- The courtyard at the southeast corner of the site has been revised: the tree that had previously been in its center is now at its western side, more low plantings are provided, and the benches have been moved closer to the perimeter plantings. Loose furniture is shown in the central paved area.
- The route to the bicycle storage rooms is now indicated.

Urban Design Comments on Design Revisions

Site Design

1. Consider providing additional street trees on all three bordering streets.
2. Consider revising the courtyard at the southeast corner of the site, possibilities include:
 - a. Creating more visual separation between the courtyard and the adjoining two car parking lot and the pedestrian ramp by providing a solid wall at the height of the rectory's stone base and taller and denser plantings.
 - b. Giving the courtyard more protected feeling relative to the public sidewalks by raising the low wall on the east or south side of the courtyard to approximately 3 feet.
 - c. Giving the WW2 memorial more honorific emphasis.
 - d. Reusing the memorial's wrought iron gate somewhere in the project.
3. Consider adding plantings in the 2-car parking area. There may be some space available north of the eastern parking space.

Building Design

4. Some coordination remains to be done regarding the locations of windows in plan and elevation.
5. Consideration should be given to replacing existing wall mounted exterior flood lights with less obtrusive lighting.
6. The material and color of infill panels at the new elevator in the rectory building should be resolved.

Sustainability

Staff believes it is important to demonstrate that design team is thinking about embodied carbon in addition to operational emissions at the early stages of design.

7. Staff recommends that the design team try to estimate greenhouse gas emissions, including embodied carbon from products and construction processes involved in the rehab work, and make this information available during design development and/or construction document phases. To address embodied carbon, staff suggests that the design team use the LEED v.4 or v.4.1 materials and resources credit options and framework and procuring materials with third-party verified environmental product declarations EPDs.
8. Staff suggests that the new historically appropriate windows maximize thermal performance, with aluminum frames and a thermal-break system for energy efficiency.

Suggestions for further study

Because the Planning Board's review of this project is advisory, there are no conditions for continuing design review. However, as the developer further refines the design through the building permit and construction process, staff would encourage the developer to review the following topics. Staff will continue to consult with the developer as appropriate.

1. Brick repair/restoration, including review of repointing mortar and joint tooling
2. Replacement windows
3. Proposed exterior wall sections
4. Locations of potential new street trees
5. Species and planting standards for proposed trees and other plantings
6. Bicycle parking
7. Site furniture
8. Design of the southeast courtyard and the WW2 memorial
9. Design of the play area
10. Exterior lighting
11. Sitework materials



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	April 22, 2022
Subject:	Initial Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation
Project Location:	49 Sixth Street
Date of Planning Board Meeting:	April 5, 2022

Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 to review and comment on the design for 49 Sixth Street, a residential building being developed by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) under the Affordable Housing Overlay ([Section 11.207](#) of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed a plan set submitted by POAH dated December 29, 2021 and presentation dated April 5, 2022. They also reviewed memos from the Community Development Department (CDD) and the Department of Public Works (DPW), which are attached.

Proposal Description

The developer, POAH, proposes to rehabilitate a portion of an existing church complex and adapt it for use as affordable housing. Three of the existing five buildings will be converted into housing; the remaining two buildings on the site will continue to be used by the church. The development will take place inside of the existing buildings. The project is pursuing Enterprise Green Communities certification for environmental sustainability.

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Board Comments

Board members were generally supportive of the proposed project and were excited to see the adaptive reuse of an historic structure. The project’s inclusion of units for families with children was also commended. In advance of the second advisory design consultation, Board members encouraged POAH to address the following comments:

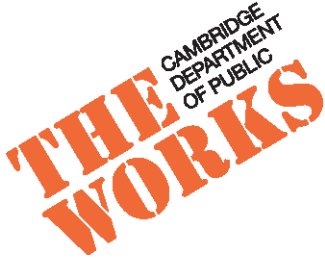
- **Building Design.** One Board member raised a comment from the staff memo, noting that the windows on the rectory building at the corner of Sixth Street and Thorndike were originally two-over-two and should be restored. They also would like to see the partially infilled window to the right of the rectory's main entrance on Sixth Street be restored. A Board member suggested dual-draw blinds to balance natural light with privacy in the units with windows near the sidewalk.
- **Building Plan.** One Board member noted that the unit layouts were unclear and that the designs could be further refined. A Board member asked for more information about the adequacy of the ramp access to the long-term bicycle parking, as noted in the CDD memo.
- **Site Plan.** Board members raised concerns about the drop-off area on Sixth Street, noting that it is near an entrance that is not accessible for all users. They also noted and that parking in a front setback conflicts with the City's urban design objectives. A Board member would like to understand the potential for short-term bicycle parking on-site or on the public sidewalks.
- **Landscape.** Board members would like to see additional street trees. They would also like to understand what trees currently exist on site and any measures that will be taken to preserve them.
- **Parking and Loading.** Board members would like more information on the discussions that the developer has had with the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department about exploring off-site parking solutions.

Additionally, Board members endorsed the comments made in the memos provided by CDD and DPW and asked that they be considered when refining the design.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Swaathi Joseph".

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.



City of Cambridge Department of Public Works

Owen O'Riordan, Commissioner

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
theworks@cambridgema.gov

Voice: 617 349 4800

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March 22, 2022

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Katherine F. Watkins, PE
City Engineer

RE: 49 Sixth Street; AHO Planning Board Submission

We are in receipt of the 49 Sixth Street Renovation, AHO Planning Board Submission, dated December 29, 2021.

The DPW supports the project and acknowledges that POAH and their consultant team have demonstrated a general understanding our Department's requirements for development projects and have indicated a willingness to work with the DPW to meet the requirements and to address our concerns. With the understanding that the project will be subject to a thorough and complete engineering review at the time of the Building Permit Application, we anticipate continuing to work with the Applicant. Items discussed with the Applicant related to our purview, are summarized below.

Stormwater Management and Sewer Generation:

The development will be required to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit prior to the issuance of a Building Permit which will include a detailed review of the proposed stormwater management system, plans for erosion and sedimentation control during construction and the plans for long term operation and maintenance of the system.

The increase in sewer generation for the proposed use of the site will trigger mitigation of Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) at a rate of 4 to 1 per State Requirements.

The Submission Materials acknowledge these requirements. DPW will work with POAH as the design progresses.

Climate Change / Resiliency:

We have worked closely with POAH and their consultant team to review and address the issues related to potential impacts on the parcel and units from flooding associated with the projected 2070 Storm Events. The DPW will continue to work with the team to ensure that the development meets the established standards related to addressing the potential flooding impacts. The DPW will look for the project to be passively built/protected from flooding in the 2070-10 year events and demonstrate the ability to recover from the 2070-100 year events.

Consistent with all development in the City, the DPW will be looking for the project to contribute to expanding the tree canopy to help combat heat island concerns and to provide shade for comfort of the residents of the development. As the project is a redevelopment of a parcel with limited open space, these increases in canopy could be through the addition of street trees along the project frontage.

Public Right of Way:

DPW will review and evaluate all proposed work and impacts in the public right of way, as the design is developed. Connections to both public and private utilities as well as all proposed disruption in the public right of way shall be reviewed as part of the Building Permit and construction permit processes.

In summary, as related to the interests of the DPW the proposal will result in improved conditions over the current conditions of the site. We look forward to working with the POAH and other City Departments on this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns related to the comments or information provided above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katherine F. Watkins".

Katherine F. Watkins, P.E.
City Engineer