



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: January 3, 2019

Re: Special Permit **PB #179, North Point (Cambridge Crossing) Parcel W**
Design Update

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The schematic designs for the Parcel W retail buildings were approved by the Planning Board on June 27, 2017 and were subsequently submitted with design changes at the November 13, 2018 Board meeting. At that meeting, the Planning Board primarily raised concerns about proposed changes to the treatment of the northwest corner of the North Building.

The Applicant recently submitted revised materials in response to the comments made by the Board. As presented in November, the design review materials also include an increase in gross floor area (GFA) of 1,148 sf.

These revised design materials are presented for the Board's review and approval. A summary of comments from staff is provided on the following page. Because Condition 10(b) of the Special Permit requires the Planning Board to vote to approve a final design prior to issuance of a Building Permit, any such changes should be formally approved by the Board. Staff will continue to review refinements to the design prior to issuance of a building permit, and throughout the development phase.

Comments made by the Planning Board at the November 2018 meeting focused on the northwest corner of the North Building, which was proposed to be altered by the addition of spandrel glass and mechanical louvers. This was considered a significant change from the transparent glazing that was originally approved. Board members also asked questions about the nanawalls and requested additional perspective views.

Staff Comments on Revised Materials

- The revised materials show that the North Building's mechanical well has been relocated so that the northwest corner is fully glazed with transparent vision glass for both the first and second floors. This is a considerable improvement and staff appreciates the attention given to the Board's comments.
- Other minor changes include additional glazing in some locations because of modifications to the mechanicals, and additional entry doors, which have a positive urban design impact. It also appears that the color/treatment of the cedar siding has changed and is now a pale wood stain, rather than grey. This helps to warm up the building, particularly where the pale stain is used in proximity to black /grey metal panel.
- Additional details have been provided to further demonstrate the utility of the proposed nanawalls. Use of operable glass wall systems improves the connection between inside and out, contributing to the liveliness of the public realm. The additional mullions required for the nanawalls also enhance the visual interest and texture of the elevations.
- Staff recommends that the revised Parcel W retail building designs be approved and suggests the following as continuing design review items:
 - Review of the location and details of mechanical louvers to ensure that noise and odor impacts on the public realm are minimized.
 - Review of all proposed public realm, open space and streetscape design details, including accessibility requirements.
 - Review of the internal layout of the retail spaces to ensure that the level of activation and transparency continues to be maximized.
 - Review of all exterior materials, colors, and details, including glass specifications and a materials mock-up on site prior to any exterior materials being ordered.
 - Review of the second-floor deck areas to ensure that these spaces are designed and curated to be considerate of nearby residents after hours (e.g. lighting, noise).
 - Provision of electrical outlets and other items that are needed for outdoor entertainment uses in the plaza space.

Additional GFA

- The Special Permit allows up to a 10% change in GFA on any site as part of the design review process. The additional GFA related to the canopy structures and revisions to the mechanicals is relatively minor and is less than 10% of the GFA approved for Parcel W.