

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2018 JAN 18 PM 2:16
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number: 330

Address: 55 Wheeler Street

Zoning: Office 1 District (O-1) / Alewife Overlay District 4 (AOD4) / Flood Plain Overlay District

Applicant: 55-9 Wheels Owner, LLC
7121 Fairway Drive, Suite 410, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

Owner: 55-9 Wheels Owner, LLC
7121 Fairway Drive, Suite 410, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

Application Date: August 4, 2017

Date of Planning Board Public Hearing: September 5, 2017; continued to December 19, 2017

Date of Planning Board Decision: December 19, 2017

Date of Filing Planning Board Decision: January 18, 2018

Application: Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20), Special Permits for increasing the FAR (Section 20.95.1), the height (Section 20.95.2), and the dwelling unit density (Section 20.95.4), and reducing required yard setbacks (Section 20.95.34.1) in Alewife Overlay District, Special Permit for earthmoving and landscaping in Flood Plain Overlay District (Section 20.70), Special Permit to reduce parking (Section 6.35.1), Special Permit to exceed allowed curb cut width (Section 6.43.5), and Multifamily Special Permit (Section 4.26.1); to construct a multi-family residential development in three buildings with total Gross Floor Area of 563,609 square feet containing 525 residential units, 448 off-street parking spaces accommodated at the basement and ground levels, 555 long-term bicycle spaces, 53 short term bicycle spaces, and landscaped areas accessible to the building residents and general public.

Decision: GRANTED, with Conditions.

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

Authorized Representative of the Planning Board: Swaathi Joseph

For further information concerning this decision, please contact Liza Paden at 617-349-4647, or lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on 8/4/2017, containing, *inter alia*, the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificate, Community Outreach Summary, Project Narrative, Flood Certification prepared by WSP USA dated 6/28/2017, Traffic Impact Study prepared by VHB, Inc. dated 1/24/2017, Tree Study prepared by Landworks Studio dated 12/19/2016 and updated 5/22/2017, and plan set titled Volume 2, dated 6/29/2017.
2. Presentation slides shown to Planning Board on 9/5/2017.
3. Supplement to Special Permit Application dated 10/6/2017, including updated plan set titled Volume 2.
4. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Anthony Galluccio, on behalf of the applicant, dated 12/13/2017.
5. Presentation slides shown to Planning Board on 12/19/2017.

City of Cambridge Documents

6. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Cambridge Historical Commission staff, dated 6/28/2017.
7. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Katherine F. Watkins, City Engineer, Department of Public Works (DPW), dated 8/29/2017.
8. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director, Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) Department, dated 8/29/2017.
9. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, dated 8/31/2017.
10. Memorandum to the Planning Board from CDD staff, dated 10/19/2017.
11. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director, TP&T Department, dated 10/20/2017.
12. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager, dated 12/12/2017.
13. Memorandum to the City Manager from Robert P. Reardon, Director of Assessment, Assessing Department, dated 12/13/2017.

Other Documents

14. Letter to the Planning Board from owners of Reservoir Lofts, undated.
15. Letter to the Planning Board from Sarah Slaughter, dated 9/2/2017.
16. Letter to the Planning Board from Fresh Pond Residents Alliance, dated 9/5/2017.
17. Email communication from Susan Lapides to the Planning Board, dated 9/10/2017.
18. Email communication from Ellen Mass to the Planning Board, dated 9/7/2017.

19. Email communication from Steven Reilly to the Planning Board, dated 9/11/2017.
20. Letter to the Planning Board from Sarah Diehl, dated 10/24/2017.
21. Email communication from Kelly Dolan to the Planning Board, dated 11/27/2017.
22. Email communication from John Roberts to the Planning Board, dated 11/28/2017.
23. Letter to the Planning Board from Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, dated 12/14/2017.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing office building to construct a multi-family residential development consisting of three buildings with a total of 525 dwelling units, including 448 off-street parking spaces accommodated at the basement and ground levels, 555 long-term bicycle spaces, 53 short term bicycle spaces, and landscaped areas accessible to the building residents and general public. The site is located in the Office-1 (O-1) zoning district, modified by Alewife Overlay District 4 (AOD-4) and partially in the Flood Plain Overlay District; no buildings are proposed within the flood zone, but a special permit is requested for proposed landscape improvements within that zone, and approval by the Conservation Commission will be sought. The Applicant reviewed the proposal with staff at the Cambridge Historical Commission, who did not find the existing buildings to be significant and therefore no demolition review hearing was required. The requested special permits are discussed in detail in the Findings below.

FINDINGS

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

1. Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20)

(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.

(19.25.11) Traffic Impact Indicators. In determining whether a proposal has substantial adverse impacts on city traffic the Planning Board shall apply the following indicators. When one or more of the indicators is exceeded, it will be indicative of potentially substantial adverse impact on city traffic. In making its findings, however, the Planning Board shall consider the mitigation efforts proposed, their anticipated effectiveness, and other supplemental information that identifies circumstances or actions that will result in a reduction in adverse traffic impacts. Such efforts and actions may include, but are not limited to, transportation demand management plans; roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvements; measures to reduce traffic on residential streets; and measures undertaken to improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles, particularly at intersections identified in the Traffic Study as having a history of high crash rates.

The indicators are: (1) Project vehicle trip generation weekdays and weekends for a twenty-four hour period and A. M. and P.M. peak vehicle trips generated; (2) Change in level of

service at identified signalized intersections; (3) Increased volume of trips on residential streets; (4) Increase of length of vehicle queues at identified signalized intersections; and (5) Lack of sufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The precise numerical values that will be deemed to indicate potentially substantial adverse impact for each of these indicators shall be adopted from time to time by the Planning Board in consultation with the TPTD, published and made available to all applicants.

The Applicant submitted a Transportation Impact Study for the proposed project to the Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T), which was certified as complete and reliable on February 7, 2017, as indicated in a memorandum from Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated August 29, 2017.

The Transportation Impact Study identified twenty instances where the Special Permit Transportation Criteria cited above were exceeded. The exceedances include one instance of traffic on a residential street and multiple instances of pedestrian delay at intersections, in addition to lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities on two residential streets. The Applicant has proposed to construct a planned roadway connection between Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street, which will improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections between the Alewife Quadrangle area and the Alewife shopping center area. The proposal also includes a public park space, which could potentially accommodate a landing for a potential future pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the rail tracks providing a connection to the Alewife MBTA station.

The project is expected to increase the vehicle trips and hence contribute to cumulative traffic growth in the area. Hence, TP&T submitted a set of recommended mitigation measures in its memo dated August 29, 2017, which were agreed to by the Applicant. Following comment from the Planning Board, the Applicant proposed additional mitigation measures that were endorsed by TP&T in its memo dated October 20, 2017. Overall, the proposed mitigation would support improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the area, support the public bicycle sharing system (Hubway) and carsharing services, provide transportation amenities to future residents of the project to reduce the need for auto trips, and implement a program of transportation demand management (TDM) measures to further limit the growth of auto trips generated by the project.

Therefore, upon considering the findings of the Transportation Impact Study and the mitigating transportation improvements to be undertaken by the Applicant as recommended by TP&T, the Board finds that the proposed project will not have a substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area.

(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.

The Board finds that the proposed project is consistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30, as described below.

(19.31) New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development....

The proposed project is located in a district that was zoned to enable a transition from lower-density development near the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood to medium-density development further to the east. This area is currently transitioning to contain a number of newer multifamily residential developments along with existing offices and other commercial uses. The largest use in the area is the Fresh Pond Reservation, city-owned conservation land, which the zoning in the area is intended to protect and enhance. The proposed project will not directly impact the reservation as it does not abut the reservation. The proposed development will add housing units that will contribute to the mix of uses in the area and align with the city's overall growth policies. The development will also provide new public streets, pedestrian connections, and open spaces to promote a more urbanistic pattern of development, in alignment with planning goals for the area. The project's overall massing and scale fit within the surrounding context and are further enhanced by the improvements to the streetscape and landscape treatment of the yards. The siting and orientation of the building is consistent with existing streetscape patterns in the area while providing opportunities for usable open space and connections to the uses and pedestrian/bicycle network.

(19.32) Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings. . . .

The project enhances the pedestrian and bicycle activity in the immediate area. Entries are oriented toward anticipated routes of pedestrian and bicycle movement. The project incorporates convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections that will link to lanes on Concord Avenue and Fresh Pond Reservation. The landscaped yards, park, and a range of plantings provide an expanded pedestrian experience. The proposed design provides open space and landscaping that enhance the visual and environmental quality of the area for pedestrians. Exterior (short-term) and interior (long-term) bicycle parking is also provided per zoning requirements.

(19.33) The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors. . . .

Throughout the review process, significant attention was given to the treatment of façades and landscape areas to make them more attractive to passersby, and to respond to the finer grain scale of the neighborhood. In addition, the proposed building height and scale are compatible with surrounding uses. Mechanical equipment and vehicular access/egress areas are sited and shielded such that they will not adversely impact the surrounding buildings. Outdoor lighting will be designed to provide safety while minimizing light impacts on the neighborhood. The exact façade material treatments and

landscape features will be subject to ongoing review by City staff. Trash and other service functions are housed internally and serviced through the driveway. The Applicant has located the project's electrical equipment in as unobtrusive a location as possible and with appropriate screening. The loading dock has been strategically located across from the adjacent residential development's service and trash access to minimize the impact on the neighborhood.

(19.34) Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system. . . .

Traffic impacts have been discussed previously in these Findings. The project will be designed to meet strict Department of Public Works (DPW) stormwater standards applicable as per City of Cambridge Wastewater and Stormwater Drainage Use Regulations. DPW has provided comment to the Planning Board in a memorandum dated August 29, 2017 indicating that the project is expected to meet all DPW standards and recommending additional measures to mitigate and manage flood risk, which have been agreed to by the Applicant. Open space permeability will increase as a result of the development, which will assist in minimizing stormwater run-off from the site. The Applicant has also consulted with the Cambridge Water Department and has proposed improvements to ensure that water service can be provided to the site without adverse impacts on the municipal water system. The project is designed to include water-conserving plumbing features. The project will meet the Green Building Requirements set forth in Section 22.20 of the Zoning Ordinance. In accordance with the City's sustainability goals, the roof is designed to accommodate the potential future installation of solar panels.

(19.35) New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically. . . .

Historically, the area in which the project is proposed has an urban character that is largely inconsistent with Cambridge's citywide development goals. Existing uses are auto-oriented with extensive paved areas and surface parking. The existing pattern of development is not friendly to pedestrians or bicyclists and not sensitive to the open space in the vicinity. The proposed project better reinforces the pattern of more recent adjacent residential and commercial development in the neighborhood and aims to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel with connections to the Alewife MBTA station and other existing and planned amenities in the area. The new development's design and use will be harmonious with surrounding buildings in the vicinity.

(19.36) Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged. . . .

The project consists of residential development with a range of unit types, including three-bedroom units, as encouraged in the planning for the area as well as citywide planning objectives. The project will provide permanently affordable housing units in compliance with the Inclusionary Housing requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as recently amended by the City Council.

(19.37) Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city. . . .

The project enhances and expands open space amenities in the neighborhood. A public open space is proposed at the north side of the site, and a landscaped public pedestrian/bicycle connection is proposed between two of the proposed buildings on the site providing a potential future connection to Fawcett Street. Courtyards and raised decks provide additional open space amenity for the residents, and the new pathways will enhance connections to recreational open space pathways throughout the area. A play area for children will be an added benefit for the residents as there are no public playgrounds in the immediate vicinity.

2. Special Permit for building construction in Flood Plain Overlay District (Section 20.70)

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

- 1. No filling or other encroachment shall be allowed in Zone A areas or in the floodway which would impair the ability of these Special Flood Hazard Areas to carry and discharge flood waters, except where such activity is fully offset by stream improvements such as, but not limited to, flood water retention systems as allowed by applicable law.*
- 2. Displacement of water retention capacity at one location shall be replaced in equal volume at another location on the same lot, on an abutting lot in the same ownership, on a noncontiguous lot in the same ownership, or in accordance with the following requirements.*
- 3. All flood water retention systems shall be suitably designed and located so as not to cause any nuisance, hazard, or detriment to the occupants of the site or abutters. The Planning Board may require screening, or landscaping of flood water retention systems to create a safe, healthful, and pleasing environment.*
- 4. The proposed use shall comply in all respects with the provision of the underlying zoning district, provisions of the State Building Code, Wetlands Protection Act, and any other applicable laws.*
- 5. Applicants for development in the Alewife area shall be familiar with area-specific and general city-wide land use plans and policy objectives (e.g. Concord-Alewife Plan, A Report of the Concord Alewife Planning Study, November 2005; Toward a Sustainable Future, Cambridge Growth Policy, 1993, Update, 2007; Section 19.30 - Urban Design Objectives of this Zoning Ordinance) and shall demonstrate how their plan meets the spirit and intent of such documents in conjunction with the requirements of this Section 20.70 - Flood Plain Overlay District and Section 20.90 – Alewife Overlay Districts 1-6.*

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

The flood zone certification provided by WSP USA dated June 28, 2017 records that the site improvements proposed for this project will not result in an increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the 100-year flood. The small portion of the site located in the flood plain, which currently is comprised of bituminous concrete pavement, will become part of a park, replacing the paved surface with landscaping and plantings.

The proposed project will comply with the land use plans and policy objectives of the districts in which it is located, as well as the general land use policies of the City of Cambridge, as set forth in these Findings. A communication from DPW dated August 29, 2017 indicates that the proposed development will have the ability to meet all requirements associated with being partially located in the flood plain and will take necessary measures to address building resiliency associated with increased flood elevations presented in Cambridge's November 2015 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. Furthermore, DPW has recommended measures, to which the Applicant has agreed, to further anticipate and mitigate potential flood risks to the project.

The proposed project will comply with applicable provisions of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, as set forth in these Findings, and will comply with the State Building Code. The building permit will be issued only after the Cambridge Conservation Commission grants an Order of Conditions approving the project as proposed and confirming that the project will not impair the ability of the applicable flood hazard areas to carry and discharge flood waters. Hence, the Board finds that the proposal meets the criteria set forth in Section 20.75.

3. Special Permits to increase FAR and height, reduce minimum lot area per dwelling unit, and waive yard requirements in Alewife Overlay Districts (Section 20.95)

The Board finds that the proposal meets the criteria for issuance of special permits for FAR, height, and waiver of yard requirements in the Alewife Overlay Districts. The Board finds that the proposal advances the General Purpose and the specific requirements of Section 20.90, as set forth below.

20.92 General Purpose. It is the purpose of this Section 20.90 to augment existing base district zoning regulations to respond to the unique problems and pressures for change in the Alewife area. The regulations contained in this Section 20.90 provide for more careful public scrutiny of future development proposals and provide an opportunity to shape the form and character of that development in ways that will benefit both individual property owners and the general interests of the larger commercial and residential neighborhood as a whole.

These regulations are intended to harness the opportunities presented with the redevelopment of private property in ways that will:

1. *Encourage forms of development, mix of uses, and range of improvements that will facilitate and encourage walking, biking and transit use and reduce the growth of auto*

trips in an area already burdened with regional vehicular traffic passing through to other destinations in the metropolitan region;

The proposal will add housing to an area that is predominantly commercial in character, thus contributing to the overall mix of uses. The buildings have been sited on the lot to reinforce pedestrian movement along the streetscape and provide streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle enjoyment of the street. The proposal includes improvements to the pedestrian realm and the buildings include facilities to support and encourage bicycle use. In addition, as described above in these Findings, the Applicant performed a Transportation Impact Study and has agreed to implement a set of public improvements and other measures, as recommended by TP&T, to mitigate the project's impact on vehicular traffic in the area.

- 2. Preserve and enhance the capacity to store floodwater, recharge groundwater and manage the collection and disposal of stormwater in ways that add to the quality and visual appeal of the built environment as well as to the quality of the water itself;*

The proposal will meet applicable flood retention requirements, as well as the City's stormwater management standards and the permeable open space requirements of the zoning district.

- 3. Minimize the negative impact of new development on the adjacent Cambridge Highlands residential neighborhood while introducing new amenities and services that will benefit the residents of that neighborhood;*

The proposal is sited at a substantial distance from the Highlands neighborhood and will have minimal impacts.

- 4. Integrate the entire area through the creation of new pedestrian paths, roadways, green spaces and bridges that will facilitate movement within the several Districts and beyond to the Cambridge Highlands, North Cambridge and Neighborhood Nine neighborhoods and the Fresh Pond Reservation;*

The development will result in the creation of additional public paths, roads and open spaces. In addition, the project will make financial contributions that facilitate access to public transportation as set forth specifically in Appendix II of this Decision, and the project provides a main entry point for each building and landscaped area that is prominently featured along the façade and enhances the pedestrian and bicycle experience on Wheeler Street.

- 5. Introduce a significant component of residential living and support retail services to enhance the area's appeal for all persons who come to work, shop as well as live within the Districts; and*

The proposal will add a significant amount of housing to the area and will improve circulation and open space amenities in the neighborhood. Retail uses are not proposed for this project.

6. *Create an identity and sense of place for the Alewife Districts that parallels the development of the historic urban centers that characterize much of Cambridge.*

The proposal is oriented in a way to enhance the streetscape, respond to its neighbors, and relate to other recent housing projects in height and massing. The proposal will strengthen the residential streetscape presence and character of the area, and will also create public open space, which will be beneficial to the building residents and to the general public.

The proposal is consistent with the scale of development authorized in the district, as set forth below.

20.95.1 Maximum Floor Area Ratio. The maximum ratio of floor area to the lot area may be increased as set forth below, after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board.

3. *Quadrangle Southwest and Quadrangle Southeast Districts: 1.25 for non-residential uses; 2.0 for residential uses.*

The proposed residential project will have a total floor area ratio of 2.26. The maximum total floor area ratio allowed for residential use on this property is 2.6 when accounting for the inclusionary housing bonus.

20.95.2 Maximum Permitted Height. The maximum height for any building may be increased as set forth below, after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board:

3. *Quadrangle Southeast District: 70 feet for non-residential uses; 85 feet for residential uses.*

The maximum building height allowable by special permit for residential use on this property is 85 feet. The proposed residential project will have a building height of 78 feet.

20.95.34 Waiver of Yard Requirements. The yard requirements of the applicable base or Overlay districts may be reduced or waived as set forth below.

1. *Side and rear yard requirements of any applicable base zoning district may be waived, subject to the minimum requirements of Section 20.95.31 above, and front yards may be reduced to a minimum of fifteen (15) feet after the issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board (and in the Parkway Overlay District after making the findings required of the Planning Board in Section 20.63.7)*

3. *The Planning Board shall consider the following in making its findings:*
 - a. *The objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan continue to be met.*
 - b. *The stormwater management objectives for the area continue to be met both on the site and as the site may be a part of a larger system for managing stormwater runoff.*
 - c. *The reduction or waiver of yard requirements provides for more efficient development of land; encourages or facilitates a more logical pattern of buildings,*

streets, parks and open space; or enhances the urban, pedestrian character of the areas as envisioned in the Concord-Alewife Plan.

The project proposes side yards of 15 feet or more on the west and south. The front yard along the existing section of Wheeler Street, which currently dead-ends into the project site, will be 15 feet as well. The front yards that will be established upon the completion of the new roadways on the property and conveyance to the City of Cambridge will range from zero to over fifteen feet along the to-be-constructed extensions of Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street; however, these yards will not violate zoning requirements because those street extensions will be constructed on the project site, and Section 20.99 of the Zoning Ordinance provides that future subdivision of a project that has received Planning Board approval shall be permitted notwithstanding applicability of yard requirements. The Board approves the proposed setbacks as shown on the project plans. The project will meet the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan with the creation of a residential streetscape along Wheeler Street and will have green open space and mature trees in the yards. The stormwater report indicates that the project will meet the stormwater management objectives for the area. The proposed waiver will allow more efficient development of land with minimum conflict with the pattern of buildings in the vicinity in addition to enhancing the urban character and pedestrian experience of the area as envisioned in the Concord-Alewife Plan.

The Board finds that the project is generally consistent with the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan and the Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines, in particular those for the “Quadrangle” area in which the project is located, as set forth below.

Concord-Alewife Plan Goals for Quadrangle:

- *Encourage creation of housing along Concord Avenue.*

The project will introduce 525 new residential units within walking distance from Concord Avenue.

- *Introduce neighborhood-focused retail to form a mixed-use core near the Alewife Brook Parkway edge of the Quadrangle.*

The project does not include any retail use as it is not located along a major road or near the Alewife Brook Parkway.

- *Continue to allow light industrial uses closer to the railroad tracks.*

The project is exclusively residential in nature with public open space located close to the railroad tracks.

- *Create appropriate transitions between the Highlands and nonresidential uses in the Quadrangle by introducing a green buffer and allowing lower densities and heights near the Highlands*

The project site is not near the Highlands neighborhood.

- *Create a public space that serves a stormwater function as well as being an open space resource.*

The new public park located near the railroad tracks will improve stormwater infiltration as well as function as an open space amenity.

- *Increase the amount of permeable surface in the Quadrangle as the area redevelops.*

The project will replace the extensive paved area in the rear with a landscaped open space and a much smaller surface parking area/plaza with permeable paving.

- *Encourage future development to respond to stormwater goals for the area.*

The project will meet all the requirements mandated by the city for stormwater management in terms of quantity and quality.

- *Create a hierarchy of boulevards, avenues, streets, and pathways.*

The project provides sufficient connections, vehicular and non-vehicular, through the site.

- *Enhance the character of Concord Avenue by improving its streetscape.*

The project site is not along Concord Avenue.

- *Design new public spaces and places that support a range of community-focused activities.*

The project will include public spaces including a new public park, streets, and pedestrian/bicycle path connections.

- *Improve traffic circulation within the Quadrangle by enhancing existing roads and adding new ones—without creating a direct vehicular connection to the Highlands.*

The project is located away from the Highlands neighborhood and includes several east-west connections linking Fawcett Street to Wheeler Street as well as a non-vehicular connection between the buildings.

- *Improve the streetscape within the Quadrangle to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle environment.*

The building entrances and landscaped areas will create a pleasant experience along Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- *Strengthen pedestrian/bicycle access to Alewife Station to improve connections to transit and to the minuteman Path and Linear Park.*

The open space, in addition to generating public activity, may also accommodate the landing of a future pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the rail tracks, which will improve the access to Alewife Station. The midblock crossing at Wheeler Street is located and

designed to facilitate connection between the east-west Mews bicycle/pedestrian path with a potential future extension of Terminal Road.

- *Improve the pedestrian environment along Concord Avenue and provide safe crossings.*

The project is not located along Concord Avenue. The new signal proposed at Fawcett Street and Concord Avenue for transportation mitigation will improve the pedestrian crossing experience in the area.

- *Continue to encourage residential use along Concord Avenue.*

Though the project is not along Concord Avenue, it will expand the residential use in the area.

- *Encourage housing development within the Quadrangle, particularly close to the Highlands.*

The project site is not near the Highlands neighborhood.

Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines – Areawide:

- *Break up large blocks into smaller blocks, of sizes similar to those in surrounding Cambridge neighborhoods, to improve circulation and be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.*

The three buildings with separate entrances and courtyards create an interesting volume. The extension of the streets to connect and additional non-vehicular connections through the site improve the circulation in the area.

- *Vary the design of individual buildings to create an architecturally diverse district.*

The buildings with varied setbacks, massing, and facade treatment reinforce the pedestrian experience while integrating with the surrounding built environment. Varying materials and fenestration offer breaks in the building façade to integrate with the scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

- *Street level facades should include active uses such as frequent residential entrances, with setbacks for stoops and porches; neighborhood-serving retail including shops, restaurants, cafes; services for the public or for commercial offices such as fitness centers, cafeterias, daycare centers; community spaces such as exhibition or meeting spaces; and commercial lobbies and front entrances.*

The street-level façade includes multiple entrances into the buildings and residential amenity areas, and includes landscaped areas offering active and quiet outdoor spaces meant to be enjoyed by residents and the larger public. All ground level parking is screened by at-grade units, building walls (at the west and south faces) and entrance lobbies along the building facades.

- *Encourage awnings/ canopies to provide shelter and enliven ground-floor façades.*

The main entrances of the buildings are accentuated with canopies. The secondary entrances to the bicycle storage areas and individual unit entries will be designed to have canopies to provide shelter and comfort.

- *Design residential buildings with individual units and front doors facing street, including row house units on the lower levels of multi-family residences.*

Direct entries are proposed for first floor units facing Wheeler Street in Buildings 1 and 2 to enhance the pedestrian experience.

- *Utilize low impact development principles in building and site design as a way to meet City, State, and Federal stormwater requirements...*

The project utilizes low impact design principles and will be designed to meet the City's stormwater management standards, subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works.

- *Compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards and other evolving environmental efficiency standards is encouraged.*

The project incorporates sustainable building strategies to achieve a LEED Silver standard and meet the requirements of the stretch code.

- *Use site design that preserves future rights-of-way identified in the Circulation Concept Plan.*

The proposal supports the circulation plan with multiple street and pedestrian/bicycle connections through the site that will contribute to the developing area-wide circulation system.

- *Improve existing streets to meet City standards, including streetscape improvements.*

The project will expand the existing street network by extending and connecting Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street, which will be designed to City standards for including sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, traffic calming features, and on-street public parking.

- *Strengthen bicycle and pedestrian links to adjacent areas. Provide links that strengthen physical and visual connections to open space resources.*

The project will enhance the bicycle and pedestrian connections to Concord Avenue through the design of new street extensions as well as an east-west "mews" connection that anticipates an additional future pedestrian/bicycle connection between Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street.

- *Screen service areas from major streets.*

Entrance lobbies, direct entry units, and landscaped areas will abut Wheeler Street. The loading dock and service areas are tucked behind the buildings, accessed via a service drive and not visible from Wheeler Street.

- *Parking below-grade is preferred. If above-grade parking is to be provided, design it so it is not visible...from public streets, or from pathways; line above-ground structured parking with active uses...*

Some above-grade parking is proposed, but will be substantially screened by buildings and landscaping. Aside from the proposed vehicular access point, most above-grade parking will be buffered from Wheeler Street by active residential spaces including lobby spaces, entrances, and landscaped areas.

- *Design and locate lighting and signage in support of the district's pedestrian-friendly quality.*

Signage will be minimal given that it is a residential project. Exterior lighting on the site will be pedestrian-scaled for safe and comfortable use of the outdoor spaces.

- *Use site design to minimize shadows on other buildings or on public streets, open spaces, parks, and plazas.*

The shadow studies show that the proposed arrangement of massing on the site will not result in excessive shadow impacts on neighboring buildings and spaces.

- *Design residential development to include a range of units of various sizes and with various numbers of bedrooms...*

The proposal includes a variety of different residential unit sizes and types, including three-bedroom units.

Concord-Alewife Design Guidelines – Quadrangle:

- *Use streetscape and other improvements to define Wilson Road as part of a major east-west connection through the Quadrangle.*

The project is not located in the vicinity of Wilson Road, but will support east-west connections through the aforementioned new street connections.

- *Create an open-space system characterized by parks and green spaces of varying scales and uses.*

The street network improvements and new public open spaces and connections, along with residential courtyards, will enhance the amount and variety of open space in the area and support potential future pedestrian/bicycle connections to Alewife Station.

- *Use pooled resources to create a new central public open space in the Quadrangle that incorporates stormwater management.*

The project will create a new park that is located adjacent to the project and other recent residential developments in the area, which will expand the public open space amenities in the area. Landscaping and infrastructure within the new park will provide a stormwater management function.

- *Locate active uses around the future open space to create a safe and active environment throughout the day and evening.*

The proposed open space is adjacent to two residential buildings with windows facing the park, and the pedestrian and bicycle connections to the new park will attract neighborhood users to the area. The potential future pedestrian bridge may activate the area further as a transit route.

- *Provide pedestrian links to strengthen physical connections to the shopping center.*

The proposed streetscape improvements will enhance the direct connection to the shopping center amenities located west of Alewife Brook Parkway for residents of the project and other buildings in the area.

- *Create building height/façade setbacks between 85' and 105'.*

The proposed building is less than 85 feet in height.

- *Provide pedestrian links to strengthen connections to Fresh Pond Reservation, consistent with the Fresh Pond Master Plan.*

The proposed streetscape improvements will provide better pedestrian and bicycle connections to Concord Avenue to access Fresh Pond Reservation.

- *Strengthen streetscape and other improvements to define Concord Avenue.*

The project does not have frontage on Concord Avenue.

- *Site new development to allow for a future above-grade crossing between the Triangle and the Quadrangle.*

The proposed park is planned such that it could accommodate a landing for a potential future pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the rail tracks and provide a direct non-vehicular connection between the Triangle and the Quadrangle.

20.95.4 Dwelling Unit Density. In any instance where the required Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit in any base district is greater than 600 square feet the Planning Board may issue a special permit to reduce the required Minimum Lot Area Per Dwelling Unit to 600 square feet.

The minimum lot area per dwelling unit in the Office 1 district is 1,200 square feet. The project proposes a minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 602 square feet for the 415 base units, excluding the inclusionary bonus units, which may be approved by the Planning Board with the granting of this special permit.

20.96.1 Quantity. The minimum ratio of Open Space and Permeable Area to the total area of the lot shall be fifteen (15) percent for Open Space and twenty-five (25) percent for Permeable Area. The Permeable Area requirement may be reduced as of right with the certification to the Superintendent by the City Engineer that the lot and the development upon it meet the Department of Public Works standards for water quality management and

the retention/detention of the difference between the 2-year 24-hour pre-construction runoff hydrograph and the post-construction 25-year 24-hour runoff hydrograph as outlined in the publication Proposed Concord – Alewife Area Stormwater Management Guidelines, May 2006, Cambridge Department of Public Works, and upon a finding by the Planning Board pursuant to its review of an application under the provisions of Section 20.93.2, that such reduction advances the relevant purposes of this Section.

The project will improve on-site stormwater management with stormwater discharge treatment that meets the city's stormwater regulations in addition to reducing the peak rates of stormwater runoff. The amount of permeable area is below the required 25%; however, the substantial improvement in on-site stormwater management through the elimination of extensive impervious surface advances the relevant purposes of this section.

4. Multifamily Dwelling in Office-1 District (Section 4.26.1)

The Planning Board finds that the proposal is in conformance with the criteria for approval of a multifamily dwelling in the Office-1 District, as set forth below.

4.26.1 The construction of a multifamily dwelling containing twelve (12) or more dwelling units or of elderly oriented congregate housing containing twenty-four (24) or more separate living spaces in a Residence C, Residence C-1, Residence C-1A, Office 1, Business A-1, or Business A-3 district shall require a special permit granted by the Planning Board.

10.47.4 Criteria for approval of Townhouses and Multifamily Dwellings. In reviewing applications for townhouse developments and multifamily dwelling, the special permit granting authority shall consider and address the following site plan criteria as applicable:

- (1) Key features of the natural landscape should be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal should be minimized and other natural features of the site, such as slopes, should be maintained.*

At present, the site has a large impervious footprint with few trees over three-inch caliper. The proposed development includes removal of many existing trees, but will increase the landscaped areas on the site with a greater number of trees planted and also improve site drainage conditions.

- (2) New buildings should be related sensitively to the existing built environment. The location, orientation and massing of structures in the development should avoid overwhelming the existing buildings in the vicinity of the development. Visual and functional disruptions should be avoided.*

The proposed new buildings are comparable in scale to the residential buildings in the immediate neighborhood with a streetscape treatment that is responsive to the open space in the vicinity and future plans for the area.

- (3) *The location, arrangement, and landscaping of open space should provide some visual benefits to abutters and passersby as well as functional benefits to occupants of the development.*

The proposed development will create a landscaped open space with deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs and groundcovers in the yards, which will provide visual benefits to the building residents and to the general public.

- (4) *Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.*

Most of the parking spaces are accommodated in a below-grade garage. The at-grade parking areas are tucked away from the primary roadways to promote safety and convenience.

- (5) *Parking area landscaping should minimize the intrusion of onsite parking so that it does not substantially detract from the use and enjoyment of either the proposed development or neighboring properties.*

All parking spaces are appropriately screened with landscaping and generally located away from the main roadways.

- (6) *Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.*

The proposal includes a dedicated trash room in the first floor of Building 1 and another centrally located one shared by Buildings 2 and 3. They will be obscured from the residents and neighbors. The trash room has been located so that it is easily accessible for use by residents and for facilitating trash pickup through the service road. The electrical transformers on the site, which are located outdoors at the end of the service road, will be screened by tall vegetation to reduce the visual impact on the neighboring property.

5. Special Permit for reduction of required parking (Section 6.35.1)

6.35.1 Reduction of Required Parking. Any minimum required amount of parking may be reduced only upon issuance of a special permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals. A special permit shall be granted only if the Board determines and cites evidence in its decision that the lesser amount of parking will not cause excessive congestion, endanger public safety, substantially reduce parking availability for other uses or otherwise adversely impact the neighborhood, or that such lesser amount of parking will provide positive environmental or other benefits to the users of the lot and the neighborhood, including specifically, among other benefits, assisting in the provision of affordable housing units. ...

The proposed project seeks approval to reduce the required amount of accessory parking. The basis for the requested reduction is that the location of the site near the MBTA Alewife

Station and bus service, as well as connections to multiple bike paths provides good access to alternative transportation modes. The current proposal to reduce parking for the proposed development is consistent with the city-wide goals to discourage driving and encourage other modes of transportation, and serves to reduce auto trip generation and thereby mitigate potential traffic impacts, as discussed earlier in these Findings. The project is seeking approval for 448 parking spaces for 525 residential units, with 384 spaces to be accommodated in a below-grade garage, 42 spaces at-grade under Building 1 and 22 surface spaces. Such relief is allowed by special permit pursuant to Section 6.35.1 and Section 10.45, which allows the Planning Board to grant special permits otherwise within the purview of the Board of Zoning Appeal for projects that are also subject to Planning Board special permit approval.

In its memo dated October 20, 2017, TP&T expressed support for the requested reduction in required parking to a proposed ratio of approximately 0.85 spaces per unit, which is consistent with the observed peak parking demand in the adjacent similar residential development. In addition, TP&T supports the Applicant's request to allow the potential future removal of the 22-space parking lot without needing a Special Permit amendment if the Applicant can demonstrate to TP&T that the parking needs are met satisfactorily. The Applicant has also committed to provide carsharing spaces, transit subsidies, and access to shuttle services, which will further encourage residents to become less dependent on personal car ownership. Moreover, additional public on-street parking will be added with the construction of the proposed Wheeler Street extension. Hence, the Board finds that there will be minimum impact on availability of parking and no other adverse impacts on the neighborhood. The Board also finds that the reduction in parking will be reasonable in light of the considerations set forth below.

... In making such a determination the Board shall also consider whether or not less off street parking is reasonable in light of the following:

- (1) The availability of surplus off street parking in the vicinity of the use being served and/or the proximity of an MBTA transit station.*

The project is within an area served by the MBTA Alewife Red Line Station and MBTA bus route stop serving Cambridge and surrounding towns.

- (2) The availability of public or commercial parking facilities in the vicinity of the use being served provided the requirements of Section 6.23 are satisfied.*

The MBTA Alewife Station parking garage is the closest public parking facility, which is not expected to provide an alternative for residents, though it may be an option for visitors on a short-term basis.

- (3) Shared use of off street parking spaces serving other uses having peak user demands at different times, provided that no more than seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum parking requirements for each use shall be satisfied with such shared spaces and that the requirements of Subsection 6.23 are satisfied.*

Shared use of off street parking spaces serving other uses has not been proposed; however, carsharing services will be made available.

- (4) *Age or other occupancy restrictions which are likely to result in a lower level of auto usage; and*

No such restrictions exist; however, the reduction in parking anticipates a less auto-dependent future for the area as the Applicant has shown that residents in this particular area tend to prefer public transit or other modes of commuting.

- (5) *Impact of the parking requirement on the physical environment of the affected lot or the adjacent lots including reduction in green space, destruction of significant existing trees and other vegetation, destruction of existing dwelling units, significant negative impact on the historic resources on the lot, impairment of the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30 of the Zoning Ordinance, or loss of pedestrian amenities along public ways.*

The reduction in parking is preferable because it promotes efficient use of the existing transit options and prevents the need to build additional parking on the site, which positively impacts the urban design of the area.

- (6) *The provision of required parking for developments containing affordable housing units, and especially for developments employing the increased FAR and Dwelling unit density provisions of Section 11.200, will increase the cost of the development, will require variance relief from other zoning requirements applicable to the development because of limitations of space on the lot, or will significantly diminish the environmental quality for all residents of the development.*

The project includes affordable housing utilizing the increased FAR and dwelling unit density provisions. Providing parking compliant with zoning requirements would impact the environmental quality as it would potentially reduce the amount of open space on the project site or require additional above-grade parking.

6. Special Permit to exceed allowed curb cut width (Section 6.43.5)

The proposed project seeks approval for a curb cut with a width of approximately 43 feet along the proposed Fawcett Street extension to combine the access to the underground garage and the at-grade building service area. The maximum allowed curb cut width is 30 feet per zoning regulations. Such relief is allowed by special permit in Section 6.43.5 and Section 10.45 of the Zoning Ordinance.

6.43.5 The Board of Zoning Appeal may grant a special permit modifying the provisions of this subsections 6.43 in accordance with the following conditions: . . .

- (b) The maximum curb cut width specified in paragraphs 6.43.3 (a) and 6.43.3 (b) may be modified if the Board determines that an increased curb cut width would facilitate traffic and safety.*

In its memo dated August 28, 2017, TP&T noted that the location of the service road is reasonable and supported the approval for the special permit to exceed the curb cut width as it consolidates and minimizes the number of curb cuts for the project site. The only other curb cut in the project site will be located in front of Building 1. Therefore, the Board finds that the larger curb cut for this proposed development meets the applicable criteria.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As discussed earlier in these Findings, based on a review of the certified Transportation Impact Study and with consideration of the proposed mitigation and other applicable requirements, the traffic generated will not create any new congestion, hazard, or change in neighborhood character. Patterns of access and egress have been designed in consultation with TP&T.

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

The proposed residential use conforms to the allowed uses in this district, and hence will not adversely affect adjacent uses that exist or are anticipated in the future. The proposed project will be compatible with the use and scale of surrounding lots, will improve the streetscape with landscape improvements, and will expand open space in the neighborhood.

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

The proposed housing use will not create nuisance or hazard, and all development activity will adhere to applicable health and safety regulations.

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

The proposed use is encouraged by City plans for the area and the Zoning Ordinance. The neighborhood is witnessing a rise in residential use including a variety of multifamily dwellings, which are allowed in the district. Therefore, the proposed residential development fits the existing and anticipated pattern of development in addition to enhancing the integrity of the district.

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

The Board finds the project to be consistent with the citywide urban design objectives, as set forth above in these Findings.

DECISION

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

1. All use, building construction, and site plan development shall be in substantial conformance with the Application Documents and other supporting materials submitted to the Planning Board by the Applicant, and the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board are those dated 10/06/2017. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The project shall be subject to continuing design review by the Community Development Department (“CDD”). Before issuance of each Building Permit for the project, CDD shall certify to the Superintendent of Buildings that the final plans submitted to secure the Building Permit are consistent with and meet all conditions of this Decision. As part of CDD’s administrative review of the project, and prior to any certification to the Superintendent of Buildings, CDD may present any design changes made subsequent to this Decision to the Planning Board for its review and comment.
3. Before issuance of a Building Permit for the project, CDD shall certify that the Permittee has provided an updated tree survey to CDD and the City Arborist, which, as a minimum, identifies the courtyard trees as existing trees to clarify compliance with Tree Protection Ordinance.
4. The Permittee shall address the following design comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be provided to CDD for review and approval of the final design details:
 - a. Plans to identify all window and door openings, and elevations showing all rooftop appurtenances, equipment, and screening materials.
 - b. Details of all proposed public realm, open space, streetscape and landscape improvements, including play areas and screening of electrical equipment and utilities.
 - c. Final locations, widths, and design treatments of sidewalks, pathways, and service roads, especially the mews connection through the site.
 - d. Site design details of the surface parking lot, to include selection of additional plantings and permeable paving options.
 - e. A description of measures for monitoring and managing the surface parking lot use and open space areas.

- f. Detail of the landscaping features within the setback between Building 3 and the Fawcett Street extension, which shall be refined to provide a transitional buffer between the public sidewalk and private residential units.
 - g. All exterior materials, colors, and details.
5. The Permittee shall comply with all the mitigation and transportation demand management measures recorded in the memorandum dated 10/20/2017 issued by TP&T (attached to this Decision as Appendix II, and made a part hereof) and shall be subject to continuing review and approval by TP&T of the following:
 - a. Final street layout design.
 - b. Final curb cut and service road design. The service road shall be designed in concert with the landscape plan to maximize permeable surface area and accessibility, and shall be lighted and cleared of snow and ice in the winter.
 - c. Plans for parking, bicycle parking, and vehicular service facilities, including access and egress.
 - d. Plans and implementation schedule for installation of a traffic signal by the Permittee at Concord Avenue and Fawcett Street and the roadway connection from the site to Fawcett Street for construction access purposes.
6. The Permittee shall comply with all the conditions recorded in the memorandum dated 8/29/2017 issued by DPW (attached to this Decision as Appendix III and made a part hereof) and shall be subject to the following conditions to be reviewed and approved by DPW:
 - a. The Permittee shall excavate test pits to definitively locate the existing drainage infrastructure in the Wheeler Street extension and shall continue to coordinate with DPW to identify potential conflicts with street tree locations.
 - b. Stormwater management systems and flood resiliency plans shall be reviewed and approved.
 - c. Details of all streetscape features and materials in areas that are intended to be conveyed to the City shall be reviewed and approved.
 - d. Continuous concrete sidewalks shall be required along all main pedestrian paths of travel.
 - e. The City's standard "acorn" type light fixture for Wheeler Street shall be replaced with the City's standard "pendant" to match those on Fawcett Street.
 - f. The Permittee shall be responsible for maintenance of any non-standard features, including lighting, installed in the City's new right-of-way.
7. In approving the requested reduction in required parking, the Planning Board hereby authorizes a future reduction of up to twenty-two (22) open-air spaces by TP&T without needing an amendment to this Special Permit. As part of the transportation monitoring procedures approved by the City, the Permittee shall monitor on-site parking and within three (3) years of issuance of the final certificate of occupancy shall submit to TP&T the results of

such monitoring with particular emphasis on the need for and usage of the 22-space surface parking lot. If the project's parking demand is lower than currently anticipated, the Permittee shall consult with TP&T to consider, and TP&T shall have the power to authorize, discontinuance of the surface parking lot to a non-parking or car-sharing use or combination of such uses.

8. The Permittee shall be required to prepare and implement a Construction Management Program in accordance with Section 18.20 of the Zoning Ordinance, which shall be reviewed and certified by the DPW and the Cambridge Public Health Department prior to issuance of a Building Permit for development authorized by this Special Permit. Such a program shall include, in addition to the specific items required by Section 18.20, a plan for site remediation in accordance with applicable local, state and federal requirements. Such program shall also include on-site posting of project information, including contact information for a construction coordinator.
9. The Permittee shall prepare a photographic documentation of the existing building complex and submit it to CDD, prior to demolition.
10. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).
11. Throughout design development and construction, the project shall conform to the Green Building Requirements set forth in Section 22.20 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. CDD shall certify that the applicable requirements are met prior to issuance of a building permit, and again prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, for development authorized by this special permit.
12. Prior to the final selection of colors and textures for façade materials, the Permittee shall erect a mock-up(s) of an exterior wall section, including rooftop screening elements, on or near the building site to be reviewed by CDD for comment. Members of the Planning Board shall be notified when the mock-up is erected and given an opportunity to view the materials and transmit any comments to CDD.

Voting in the affirmative to approve the requested special permits were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Catherine Preston Connolly, Hugh Russell, and Associate Member Thacher Tiffany, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two thirds of the members of the Board, necessary to grant a special permit. Planning Board Member Mary Flynn voted in the negative.

For the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Theodore Cohen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.

A copy of this decision PB-330 shall be filed with the Office of the City Clerk. Appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to Section 17, Chapter 40A, Massachusetts General Laws, and shall be filed within twenty (20) days after the date of such filing in the Office of the City Clerk.

ATTEST: A true and correct copy of the above decision has been filed on January 18, 2018 with the Office of the City Clerk, by Swaathi Joseph, duly authorized representative of the Planning Board. All plans referred to in the decision have been filed with the City Clerk on said date.

Twenty days have elapsed since the above decision was filed in the office of the City Clerk and:
_____ no appeal has been filed; or
_____ an appeal has been filed within such twenty days.

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

Date: _____, City Clerk

Appeal has been dismissed or denied.

Date: _____, City Clerk

Appendix I: Approved Dimensional Chart

| | Existing | Allowed or Required | Proposed | Permitted |
|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lot Area (sq ft) | 249,518 | 5,000 | No Change | No Change |
| Lot Width (ft) | 240 | 50 | No Change | No Change |
| Total GFA (sq ft) | 42,000 | 648,747 | 563,609 | 563,609 |
| Residential Base | n/a | 499,036 | 499,036 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Non-Residential Base | 42,000 | 374,277 | 0 | |
| Inclusionary Bonus | n/a | 149,711 | 64,573 | |
| Total FAR | 0.17 | 2.6 | 2.26 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Residential Base | n/a | 2.0 ¹ | 2.0 | |
| Non-Residential Base | 0.17 | 1.5 ¹ | 0 | |
| Inclusionary Bonus | n/a | 0.6 | 0.26 | |
| Total Dwelling Units | 0 | 539 | 525 | 525 |
| Base Units | n/a | 415 | 415 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Inclusionary Bonus Units | n/a | 124 | 110 | |
| Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft) | n/a | 600 | 600 | |
| Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft) | n/a | 462 | 474 | |
| Height (ft) | 35 | 85/105 ² | 78 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Front Setbacks (ft) | 9.5 | 15 ³ | 0 ⁴ | |
| Side Setback (ft) | 21.2 | 0 ³ | 15 | |
| Side Setback (ft) | 566 | 0 ³ | 15 | |
| Rear Setback (ft) | 13 | 0 ³ | n/a | |
| Open Space (% of Lot Area) | n/a | 15 | 36 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Private Open Space | n/a | 15 | 20 | |
| Permeable Open Space | n/a | 25 ⁵ | 20 | |
| Off-Street Parking Spaces | 271 | 525 | 448 ⁶ | 448 |
| Long-Term Bicycle Parking | n/a | 551 | 555 | Consistent with Application Documents |
| Short-Term Bicycle Parking | n/a | 53 | 53 | |
| Loading Bays | 1 | n/a | 1 | |

¹ With Planning Board Special Permit as per Section 20.95.1.3.

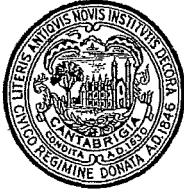
² With Planning Board Special Permit as per Section 20.95.2.4.

³ With Planning Board Special Permit as per Section 20.95.34.1.

⁴ The front yards that will be established upon the completion of the new roadways on the property and conveyance to the City of Cambridge will measure 0 feet at their minimum depth along the to-be-constructed extensions of Wheeler Street and Fawcett Street, respectively, which, front yards shall be deemed to be compliant yards because of the applicability of Section 20.99.

⁵ May be reduced as of right with certification to the Superintendent by the City Engineer and upon a finding by the Planning Board.

⁶ With Planning Board Special Permit as per Section 6.35.1. Furthermore, a reduction or elimination of 22 spaces located in the surface parking lot is authorized without needing an amendment to this Special Permit (from 448 to 426 total parking spaces).




CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
344 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

www.cambridgema.gov/traffic

Joseph Barr, Director
Brooke McKenna, Assistant Director for Street Management

Phone: (617) 349-4700
Fax: (617) 349-4747

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Planning Board
From: Joseph E. Barr, Director 
Date: October 20, 2017
Re: 55 Wheeler Street Residential Project (PB#330)

The Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T) provided a memo dated August 29, 2017 to the Planning Board with our initial comments on the proposed 55 Wheeler Street Residential project by 55-9 Wheel Owner, LLC. TP&T attended the project's first Planning Board hearing on September 5, 2017 and heard the comments from the Planning Board and the public. Since the September 5 Planning Board hearing, TP&T in coordination with the Community Development Department (CDD) and Department of Public Works (DPW), have been working with the applicant on the project. We have also reviewed the project's Supplemental Materials dated October 6, 2017, and we offer the Planning Board members the following additional comments on this project.

Street Design. The project's site plan has been revised to add three on-street parking spaces on Wheeler Street in front of Building 1. TP&T supports the three new on-street parking spaces because it addresses a concern we raised in our August 29 Planning Board memo about vehicles stopping and blocking the bike lane in front of the Building 1 lobby. We expect that we will determine how to best regulate the on-street parking spaces before the project is occupied, which may be for loading/deliveries/drop-offs, resident parking, time-limited parking, or another appropriate curb use.

As we stated in our August 29 Planning Board memo, overall TP&T supports the Wheeler Street layout design which is a complete street and includes sidewalks and bicycle lanes, a raised pedestrian crossing, on-street parking and a "chicane" or curb extensions that slightly curve the street to limit vehicle speeds. The Wheeler Street connection to Fawcett Street will greatly improve connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles within the Quadrangle. The final street layout design will be approved by City staff through the building permit design review process. After constructed, the Wheeler Street extension is also expected to be conveyed to the City. Regarding the circulation patterns on Wheeler Street, such as prohibiting left-turns from and to Concord Avenue or having Wheeler Street be one-way to or from Concord Avenue, TP&T expects to monitor the street and determine the most appropriate changes (if any) as the project is completed or at some point thereafter.

One critical element of the success of this project is improving connections to Alewife MBTA Station for all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, and shuttle buses. Based on comments made by members of the public and the Planning Board, we are suggesting that the mitigation program for this project include

55 Wheeler Street Residential Project

a financial commitment towards creating improved connection between the project site and Alewife MBTA Station. This contribution could be used to advance the planning and design of Terminal Road (which has been the topic of many recent discussions about improving access to the Alewife Quadrangle), improving the accessibility of existing connections, or creating new connections.

Loading and Service Road. Based on comments from the Planning Board, the service road located to the west of Building 2 and 3 was widened from 12 to 18 feet and now includes a truck turnaround area. TP&T supports this change because it will allow the service road to be more functional by being able to accommodate more than one truck and enable trucks to enter and exit the service road head first which is safer than backing in or backing out. This will also make it safer for cyclists using this road to access the bicycle parking.

As stated in our August 29, 2017 Planning Board memo, TP&T supports the Planning Board Special Permit request for an approximately 43 foot wide curb-cut so it can be used to access both the service road and the parking garage driveway. The final curb cut and service road design should be approved by TP&T through the building permit design review. The service road should also be designed to fit in with the landscaping plan, include providing as much permeable surface as possible, along with a smooth, accessible surface that is lighted and maintained clear of snow and ice in the winter (particularly for bicyclists that will use the service road).

Bike Parking. The project will provide 555 secure, covered, and weather-protected long-term bicycle parking spaces spread out among the three buildings and on the ground level. TP&T believes that the locations for the long-term bike parking are appropriate and will be functional with direct access to the street or service road. Residents will be able to choose the location to store their bike(s) that best meets their needs. Furthermore, locating the bike parking on the ground-level instead of in the below-grade parking garage is convenient for transporting a bicycle in and out of the building. TP&T will continue to work with the applicant on both the long-term and short-term bike parking plan through the building permit design review process.

Automobile Parking. The project proposes 448 parking spaces (0.85 spaces per unit), including 384 spaces in the below-grade parking garage, 42 at-grade spaces under Building 1, and a 22 spaces in a surface parking lot. There is no change in the number of spaces proposed from the first Planning Board hearing on September 5, 2017, although as noted above three additional on-street parking spaces have been added. Visitor parking and other short-term parkers (i.e., maintenance workers) are expected to be accommodated in the project's 22 space parking lot; however, the applicant confirmed that visitors and maintenance workers will also be allowed to park in the garage as needed (i.e., if the surface lot is full and there are unused spaces available in the garage).

The applicant has also requested the ability in the future to eliminate (or not build) the 22 space parking lot, which would lower their parking ratios to 0.81 spaces per unit. TP&T believes that the 0.81 and 0.85 parking ratios are within the appropriate range for this project and its location, and we support the option to reduce 22 spaces or 5% of the total spaces without needing a Special Permit amendment, but rather based on demonstrating to TP&T that the project is meeting their parking demands.

Transportation Mitigation. TP&T has been working productively with the applicant on a transportation mitigation program for the project and recommend the measures described in the table below. These transportation infrastructure improvements and Transportation Demand Management Measures (TDM) are needed to minimize the project's traffic impacts and create a safe, connected, and sustainable project.

55 Wheeler Street Residential Project

55 Wheeler Street Residential Project – PB#330

| Mitigation | Phasing/Completion |
|--|--|
| <p>Hubway Station. Finance the purchase and installation of one (1) full-size (23 dock) Hubway station in a publicly visible/accessible location. The City and applicant shall identify a mutually acceptable locations for the Hubway station on the property site.</p> | <p>Initial payment for equipment to be made to the City before the first Building Permit.</p> |
| <p>Ongoing Hubway Support: To support the Hubway bike share system, which will provide a sustainable mode of public transportation for residents and their guests, the Permittee shall pay an annual fee to support the operations and maintenance of the Hubway system to the City to support the Hubway bikesharing system (a 23 dock station). However, this requirement may be reduced or eliminated upon approval by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, and the Community Development Department, based on an assessment of the utilization of the Hubway bikesharing system by the residents of the Project. The assessment will include information such as, Resident's Hubway membership levels, mode share, surveys of residents Hubway use, Hubway station use, or other information as determined by the City. The earliest that the Permittee may apply for an assessment to reduce or eliminate this requirement is three (3) years after the issuance of the Project's final Occupancy Permit</p> | <p>To be paid to the City before June 1st in the year the Hubway Station is expected to be installed, and ongoing before June 1st annually.</p> |
| <p>Contribute \$250,000 towards the planning, design, and/or installation of improved transportation connections between the project site and Alewife MBTA Station. This could include further development of the Terminal Road connection to Wheeler Street, improving bicycle, pedestrian, and shuttle access across the MBTA rail line, and/or other enhancements that improve connection between the Alewife Quadrangle and Alewife MBTA Station.</p> | <p>Prior to issuance of the first Building Permit.</p> |
| <p>Design and construct Wheeler Street as approved by the City to include sidewalks and bicycle lanes, raised pedestrian crossings, on-street parking and a "chicane" or curb bulbs that slightly curve the street to keep vehicle speeds low.</p> | <p>The Street should be completed or substantially completed, as approved by TP&T, prior to issuance of the first Occupancy Permit. The street should be conveyed to the City when completed</p> |
| <p>Install a new traffic signal at the Concord Avenue/Fawcett Street intersection including real-time traffic and bike count station. The signal shall be coordinated with existing signal equipment at other signals along Concord Avenue, as feasible.</p> | <p>Prior to issuance of the first Occupancy Permit</p> |
| <p>Guarantee Public access for pedestrians and bicyclists through the proposed "mews" connection by means of a permanent easement, covenant, conservation restriction, or other similar legal device acceptable to the City. The Permittee shall also enter into an agreement, easement or instrument approved by the City for the approximately 30,000 sf open space, and its design and maintenance by the Permittee. The design of the park should also include bicycle parking. There shall also be public access for pedestrians and bicyclists to a potential future landing site for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad tracks.</p> | <p>To be completed prior to the issuance of the final Occupancy Permit for the project and ongoing.</p> |

55 Wheeler Street Residential Project

| Mitigation | Phasing/Completion |
|---|--|
| The Permittee shall be obligated to work cooperatively with the City on any efforts to connect Wheeler Street to Terminal Road and for the potential future pedestrian and bicycle bridge. | |
| Residential Transportation Demand Management Measures (TDM). | Prior to the issuance of the first Occupancy Permit, the project should demonstrate that the TDM measures will be implemented and how. |
| A. Make available up to 2 publicly available carsharing parking spaces for a vehicle-sharing company on the project site. As demand dictates additional carsharing vehicles should be added over time. | Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit. |
| B. To establish the habit of using public transportation, advertise and offer each adult member of each household (up to 2) upon move-in a Charlie Card valued at the cost of 50% of a monthly MBTA Link Pass (currently \$84.50/month subject to fare increases,) for 3 consecutive months. This requirement renews each time a new household moves in to incentivize new households to use public transit. For condominium units, the requirement shall apply to only the first initial condominium owners (up to 2 per unit) but not be required if individual owners subsequently sell their unit. | Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit. |
| | |
| D. Join the Alewife Transportation Management Association (TMA) to provide benefits to residents including shuttle bus access for residents. | Prior to issuance of first Occupancy Permit and ongoing. |
| E. Provide shuttle bus service to the Alewife MBTA station through the Alewife TMA or equivalent service as approved by the City that provides a minimum 30 minute headway during morning and afternoon peak hours. The shuttle bus schedule should also be increased as demand dictates based on residents' requests, ridership and surveys conducted as part of the transportation monitoring and reporting program. | Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit. |
| F. Install a real-time multimodal transportation display screen to help people decide which mode to choose for each trip and/or post materials at a transportation information center in building lobbies including information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Available pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the site o MBTA maps, schedules, and fares o Area shuttle map and schedule, if one exists o "Getting Around in Cambridge" map and other CitySmart materials (available at the Cambridge Community Development office) o Location of bicycle parking o Hubway regional bikeshare system o Carsharing o Ride-matching o Other pertinent transportation information | Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit. |

55 Wheeler Street Residential Project

| Mitigation | Phasing/Completion |
|--|---|
| <p>G. Designate a transportation coordinator (TC) for the site to manage the TDM programs including, compiling and distributing New Resident Packet about transportation options in the area. The TC will also oversee the marketing and promotion of transportation options to all residents at the site in a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Posting information in a prominent location in the building and on the Project's website, social media, and property newsletters. o Responding to individual requests for information in person and via phone and email o Performing annual transportation surveys. <p>Require that the TC will be on-site during a minimum of 2 hours per week and will be available during other times to residents via email and telephone. Email and phone information for the TC will be posted in the transportation information center.</p> | <p>Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit</p> |
| <p>H. Provide a minimum of two Level 2 DC fast charge electric vehicle charging stations serving four designated parking spaces.</p> | <p>Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit.</p> |
| <p>I. Provide bike repair areas, including air pumps and other bike repair tools, in the bicycle storage areas.</p> | <p>Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit.</p> |
| <p>J. Do not charge residents additional fees for bicycle parking.</p> | <p>Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit.</p> |
| <p>K. Charge fees for automobile parking separately from the rent to remind residents of the cost of owning a vehicle. The Permittee shall provide the summary of on-site parking fees to the TP&T.</p> | <p>Ongoing after issuance of the first Occupancy Permit.</p> |
| <p>Transportation Monitoring. The Permittee shall implement a transportation monitoring program as approved by the City to include monitoring of mode split, counts of auto and bike parking space utilization, and auto ownership.</p> | <p>Transportation monitoring program to be every year for the 1st 5 years and then every three (3) years afterwards.</p> |



City of Cambridge
Department of Public Works

Owen O'Riordan, Commissioner

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

Voice: 617 349 4800

TDD: 617 499 9924

August 29, 2017

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Katherine F. Watkins, PE
City Engineer

RE: 55 Wheeler Street Special Permit Application

We are in receipt of the Planning Board Special Permit submission for 55 Wheeler Street, dated June 29th, 2017. The DPW has met with the Applicant and their consultant team to review the proposal for the work. The Applicant 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.

Generally, the DPW, based on the provided documentation, does not anticipate the project having any issue meeting all of the requirements of the DPW with the understanding that the project will be subject to a through and complete engineering review at the time of the Building Permit Application. Issues that have been discussed have been highlighted below.

Flood Plain Overlay District:

A portion of the Development Parcel sits in the Flood Plain Overlay district. City Ordinance and State Regulations require that:

- Compensatory storage for any displacement of water retention capacity within the 100-year flood plain.
- Documentation that encroachment of the floodway shall not result in any increase in flood levels during the occurrence of the 100-year flood.
- Review of plans by Conservation Commission and the City Engineer.

The Applicant has indicated that these requirements are being addressed and will be submitted for review to the Conservation Commission through a Notice of Intent Filing. The Conservation Commission reviews, permits and inspects projects in the floodplain. The Commission will review the compensatory storage requirement, landscape restoration and may impose additional conditions.

Stormwater Management:

Under the City Land Disturbance Regulations because the project requires a Special Permit from the Planning Board, the Applicant will need to obtain a Stormwater Control Permit from the

Department of Public Works. The Project also is located in the Alewife Overlay District and therefore subject to all requirements of that district outlined in the City Ordinance.

The City requirements cover the design standards and long term operation and maintenance of a management system for the project site, as well as the construction phase erosion and sedimentation control plans. The Applicant acknowledges the Stormwater Control Permit Requirements in the Special Permit Application and makes a commitment to the following:

1. Design a system that will meet the City of Cambridge standard to reduce the peak rate of runoff from the post development 25-year storm event to the rate of the existing 2-year event.
2. Treat a water quality volume of 1" of Runoff over the proposed impervious area.

The DPW will review the Stormwater Control Permit and work with the Applicant to make sure that all permit requirements, including but not limited to those listed below, are also met.

Additional requirements of the permit include:

1. Provide a plan for erosion and sedimentation controls and BMP's for the construction phase of the new development.
2. Make improvements to the quality of the stormwater runoff including an 80% reduction in the amount of Total Suspended Solids and 65% reduction in the Phosphorus load.
3. Provide a plan outlining the long term operation and maintenance procedures of the designed system to ensure sustained operation of the system into the buildings future.

Climate Change / Resiliency:

The Applicant has been asked to address flood level impacts and building resiliency associated with increased flood elevations presented in the November 2015 *Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment*. Flood Elevations associated with the 2030 100-year storm events and projected 2070 1% Sea Level Rise have been provided to the Applicant and are also provided below.

| Location Name | 2030 100 yr precip | 2070 100yr precip | 2070 1% SLR/SS |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 55 Wheeler St Property | 20.49 CCB | 20.56 CCB | 22.49 CCB |

Discussion included in the Special Permit Application acknowledge the provided elevations and commit to designing a facility that is consistent the goals of the study. Some of the proposed mitigation measures committed to include:

1. The building entrances to occupied spaces will be designed above the projected 2070 SLR / SS 1% event elevation minimize potential for impacts from future conditions.
2. Mechanicals will be elevated to minimize potential impacts.

3. Garages will be equipped with flood controls entrances.
4. Project will reduce heat island effect by reducing impervious coverage of the site.

The DPW will continue to work with the Applicant to ensure the final design is meeting the City requirements for building resiliency.

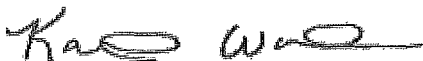
Other Public Infrastructure:

The Applicant commits to working with the City of Cambridge DPW and other departments as the design specifics for the development are progressed. DPW will review and evaluate all proposed work and impacts in the public right of way, as the design is developed. Some additional items worth noting include:

1. The Development will be required to remove inflow/infiltration (I/I) from the City sewer system at a rate of 4 times the projects added wastewater generation. The Applicant is estimating that the project will generate 78,750 gallons per day. That volume, less the sewer generation from the existing on-site uses, will be used to determine the I/I mitigation requirement. The DPW will work with the Applicant to confirm this volume and coordinate the I/I mitigation effort.
2. The Development plans to extend existing roadways to connect Wheeler Street to Fawcett Street. The roadway extensions will include facilities for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. It is the intent of the Applicant to convey the newly created roadway to the City upon completion of the construction. The DPW will continue to work closely with the Applicant and their design team on the specifics of the roadway design and the conveyance procedures.
3. The Applicant has met with City Staff to review existing and proposed trees, both on and off-site. The Applicant should continue to coordinate with the DPW on the placement of all trees, specifically street trees proposed adjacent to the existing drainage infrastructure in the Wheeler Street Extension.

We look forward to working with the Applicant 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,



Katherine F. Watkins, P.E.
City Engineer

Cc: Jennifer Letourneau, Conservation Commission