

Requested Special Permits	Summarized Findings <i>(detailed zoning text on following pages)</i>
Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area, upon review of the traffic impact indicators analyzed in the Transportation Impact Study and mitigation efforts proposed. • The project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the City as set forth in Section 19.30 (see following page).
Grand Junction Pathway Overlay District Special Permit (Section 20.1000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision has been made for the conveyance to the City, or a designee thereof, by fee or easement, of interests in certain land as described [in Section 20.1000] for the development of the Grand Junction pathway between Binney Street and Cambridge Street. • The project will provide open space, recreational opportunities, a corridor for non-auto traffic in the City, as well as high quality development, and promote the goals of public health, safety, welfare and economic development.
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	<p>Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or (e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and (f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to lower-scale neighborhoods • Consistency with established streetscape • Compatibility with adjacent uses • Consideration of nearby historic buildings
Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhabited ground floor spaces • Discouraged ground-floor parking • Windows on ground floor • Orienting entries to pedestrian pathways • Safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access
The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/impact of mechanical equipment • Location/impact of loading and trash handling • Stormwater management • Shadow impacts • Retaining walls, if provided • Building scale and wall treatment • Outdoor lighting • Tree protection (requires plan approved by City Arborist)
Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management • Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service • Efficient design (LEED standards)
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional use focused on existing campuses • Mixed-use development (including retail) encouraged where allowed • Preservation of historic structures and environment • Provision of space for start-up companies, manufacturing activities
Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing as a component of large, multi-building development • Affordable units exceeding zoning requirements, targeting units for middle-income families
Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly beneficial open space provided in large-parcel commercial development • Enhance/expand existing open space, complement existing pedestrian/bicycle networks • Provide wider range of activities

Project Review Special Permit – Traffic Impact Findings

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

In areas where the Planning Board determines that area-specific traffic guidelines have been established in the Ordinance, the Board recognizes written agreements between project proponents and the City dealing with transportation mitigation strategies.

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.

Project Review Special Permit – Urban Design Findings

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.

19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives

The following urban design objectives are intended to provide guidance to property owners and the general public as to the city's policies with regard to the form and character desirable for new development in the city. It is understood that application of these principles can vary with the context of specific building proposals in ways that, nevertheless, fully respect the policies' intent. It is intended that proponents of projects, and city staff, the Planning Board and the general public, where public review or approval is required, should be open to creative variations from the detailed provisions presented in this Section as long as the core values expressed are being served. A project need not meet all the objectives of this Section 19.30 where this Section serves as the basis for issuance of a special permit. Rather the permit granting authority shall find that on balance the objectives of the city are being served. Nor shall a project subject to special permit review be required to conform to the Required Building and Site Plan Requirements set forth in Section 19.50.

Further indicators of conformance with these policy objectives shall be found in planning documents and plans developed for specific areas of the city or the city as a whole, to the extent that they are not inconsistent with the objectives set forth in this Section 19.30. These documents include the *Harvard Square Development Guidelines*, the *Central Square Action Plan*, the *Central Square Development Guidelines*, the *North Massachusetts Avenue Urban Design Guidelines Handbook*, the *University Park at MIT Urban Design Guidelines*, the *North Point Policy Plan and Design Guidelines*, the *Cambridge Institutional Growth Management Plan*, the *East Cambridge Riverfront Plan*, the *Eastern Cambridge Plan*, the *Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines*, the *Alewife Revitalization*, *Alewife Urban Design Study Phase II* and its Draft update of 1991, and *Toward a Sustainable Future: Cambridge Growth Policy Document*.

Grand Junction Pathway Overlay District Special Permit

20.1005 Required Conveyance of Grand Junction Land.

In connection with a Special Permit(s) granted pursuant to Section 20.1000, conveyance to the City, or its designee, of the following land for use on the Grand Junction pathway, by fee or easement, shall be required under such Special Permit(s) or have already been made:

- (a) Tax Parcel 37-88, comprising approximately 2,600 square feet, and known as 686 Cambridge Street;
- (b) A fourteen (14) foot wide strip of land along the east boundary of Tax Parcel 37-126, beginning at the north boundary of Tax Parcel 33-111 and continuing approximately 480 feet, and then the land between the east boundary of Tax Parcel 37-126 and the west boundary of Tax Parcel 37-88, continuing approximately fifty (50) feet to Cambridge Street, comprising a total of approximately 7,020 square feet; and
- (c) A fourteen (14) foot wide strip of land along the east boundary of Tax Parcel 33-110 bordering the Grand Junction railroad right-of-way beginning at Binney Street and continuing approximately 511 feet to the south boundary of Tax Parcel 33-111 and Tax Parcel 33-111, comprising a total of 19,916 square feet.

The land described in subparagraphs (a)-(c) is hereby defined as “Grand Junction Land.”.

20.1006 Other Matters--Grand Junction Land.

The Grand Junction Land shall be conveyed to the City, or its designee, by fee or easement: (i) such that the environmental condition of the Grand Junction Land poses No Significant Risk, as defined under 310 C.M.R. 40.0006, to future users of the land given its intended use as a public pathway; (ii) subject to encumbrances which do not interfere with the use of the land for its intended purpose; and (iii) subject to a reservation of Grantor to grant subsurface utility easements. Nonconformity, including setbacks, arising directly from the conveyance of Grand Junction Land hereunder is waived.

20.1012 Project Review.

In granting approval for a building or buildings under Article 19, the Planning Board may approve buildings for which physical design information is presented in conceptual form, subject to later design review and approval by the Planning Board and a finding that final design of such building(s) is consistent with Section 19.30, as applicable.

General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit

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

- (a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or
- (b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or
- (c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or
- (d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or
- (g) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and
- (h) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.

Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines – Summary of Relevant Design Principles & Guidelines

Urban Design Goals – Transition Areas

1. Encourage new residential development and conversions of existing buildings to residential use but allow existing commercial uses to remain.
2. Use finely graduated heights to create transitions in scale from Kendall Square to residential neighborhoods.
3. Create better pedestrian and bicycle connections between residential neighborhoods, Kendall Square, Central Square, and the Charles River.

Street-level Uses and Design – Mixed Use Blocks

1. Street-level facades should include active uses such as:
 - Residential entrances
 - Shops, restaurants, and cafes
 - Services for the public or for offices such as fitness centers, cafeterias, daycare, etc.
 - Community spaces, such as exhibition or meeting space
 - Art exhibition space/display windows
 - Commercial lobbies and front doors
2. Major entrances should be located on public streets, and at or near corners wherever possible.
3. Transparent materials and interior lighting should be used to maximize visibility of street level uses. Ground floor facades should be at least 30 to 50 % transparent surface.
4. Blank walls should be avoided along all streets and pedestrian walkways.

Building Height and Orientation – Major Public Streets

1. Set back any portion of the building above 65 feet by at least 10 feet from the principal facade.
2. Setbacks used exclusively for ornamental landscaping are not permitted but may be allowed to accommodate street furniture, street trees, or generous sidewalks. Awnings and canopies are encouraged.
3. Driveway turnaround and vehicle drop-off facilities are strongly discouraged along public streets
4. Locate loading docks on side streets or service alleys, and away from residential areas.
5. In use, design, and entry, orient buildings towards corners.

Building Height and Orientation – Other Streets

1. If the prevailing height of surrounding buildings is 65 feet or less, establish a cornice line that matches the prevailing height of surrounding buildings. For additional height above the cornice line, provide a setback of at least 10 feet from the principal façade.

Scale and Massing

1. Buildings should avoid continuous massing longer than 100 feet facing residential streets and 200 feet facing mixed-use and retail streets. If massing extends beyond this length, it should be made permeable and visibly articulated as several smaller masses.
2. Buildings should reflect a rhythm and variation appropriate to the urban context. E.g., express bay widths of 16-25 feet along residential streets and 25-50 feet along mixed-use and retail streets.
3. Buildings should have a clearly expressed base, middle, and top. This may be achieved through changes in material, fenestration, architectural detailing, or other elements.
4. Use variations in height and architectural elements such as parapets, cornices and other details to create interesting and varied rooflines and to clearly express the tops of buildings.

5. Emphasize corners using taller elements such as towers, turrets, and bays.
6. Taller buildings should be articulated to avoid a monolithic appearance: Taller buildings should be point towers instead of slabs and should have smaller floor plates.

Architectural Character

1. Create varied architecture and avoid flat facades by using recessed or projected entryways, bays, canopies, awnings, and other architectural elements.
2. Vary the architecture of individual buildings to create architecturally diverse districts.
3. Where buildings are set back at upper stories, lower roofs may be used as balconies, balustrades, and gardens.

Environmental Guidelines

1. Design buildings to use natural resources and energy resources efficiently in construction, maintenance, and long-term operation of the building. Buildings should be sited to allow construction on adjacent lots to do the same. Compliance with LEED certification standards and other evolving environmental efficiency standards is encouraged.
2. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be sited and shielded to protect neighboring uses from noise impacts.

Parking

1. While underground parking is preferable everywhere, if above ground parking is to be built it should be designed so as not to be visible from public streets or pathways.
2. Locate vehicular parking entrances on side streets and alleys and provide safe pedestrian access from public streets.
3. All parking garages must provide direct pedestrian access to the street.
4. The primary pedestrian exit/access to all garages serving non-residential uses should be to the street or a public area.
5. Design and locate lighting fixtures in surface parking lots and garages to enhance safety while minimizing light spillover onto adjacent properties

Public Realm

1. Use streetscape elements such as trees, benches, signage, and lighting to support active pedestrian uses and to reinforce the character and identity of each district.
2. Provide strong pedestrian, bicycle and visual connections to the Charles River and public parks through view corridors, signage, and/or art installations.
3. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and new bus stops and transit stations.