

Requested Special Permits	Required Planning Board Findings <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Central Square Overlay District: Standards for Issuance of Special Permits (Section 20.305)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Central Square Action Plan:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ encourage responsible and orderly development;</li> <li>○ strengthen the retail base to more completely serve the needs of the neighborhoods;</li> <li>○ preserve the Square’s cultural diversity;</li> <li>○ create active people oriented spaces;</li> <li>○ improve the physical, and visual environment;</li> <li>○ provide retail establishments that serve people of diverse economic and social groups who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Building and site designs are consistent with “Urban Design Plan for Central Square” as outlined in the “Central Square Action Plan” and the “Central Square Development Guidelines” (see summary on following pages).</li> <li>• Building and site designs adequately screen the parking provided and are sensitive to the contributing buildings in the vicinity.</li> <li>• No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation (either now or within the past 5 years).</li> </ul>
Central Square Overlay District: Building height up to 80 feet (Sections 20.304.2)	<i>The maximum height of buildings shall be 45 feet in Residence C-2A base district and additional height cannot be granted by this special permit.</i>
Central Square Overlay District: Waiver of yard setback requirements (Section 20.304.4.1)	<i>Central Square Overlay District findings set forth above</i>
Central Square Overlay District: Reduction of open space requirements (Sections 20.304.4.2)	<i>Central Square Overlay District findings set forth above</i>
General Special Permit Criteria (Section 10.43)	Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43.

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

## Special Permit for Increase in Building Height, Waiver of Yard Setback Requirements & Reduction of Open Space Requirements in Central Square Overlay District

**20.304.2** Building Height Limitations. The maximum height of buildings in the Central Square Overlay District shall be governed by the requirements of this Section 20.304.2; however, at locations where the base zoning district establishes a more restrictive height limitation, the more restrictive shall apply.

1. *As of Right Height Limitations.* The maximum height of any building shall be fifty-five (55) feet except as further limited below:
  - (a) Where the lot abuts Bishop Allen Drive or Prospect Street between Bishop Allen Drive and Harvard Street, any portion of the building above forty-five (45) feet shall be set back behind a forty-five degree (45°) bulk control plane beginning at an elevation of forty-five (45) feet above the front lot lines on Bishop Allen Drive and/or Prospect Street and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.
  - (b) Where the Residence C-2A district serves as the base district, the maximum height shall be forty-five feet. No additional height shall be permitted in this district notwithstanding any provision in Paragraph 2 below.
2. *Special Permit for Additional Height.* Additional height may be permitted as follows:
  - (a) The maximum allowable height in the Central Square Overlay District may be increased up to eighty (80) feet upon issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board provided that those portions in excess of sixty (60) feet are set back from the street line at least ten (10) feet and that those portions are also set back from one or more forty-five degree (45°) bulk control planes beginning sixty (60) feet above any streetline in the district and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.
  - (b) Where the lot abuts Bishop Allen Drive, or Prospect Street where the lot lies in a Business A District, and where the lot lies within a Business A District, any portion of the building above forty-five (45) feet shall be set back behind a forty-five degree (45°) bulk control plane beginning at an elevation of forty-five (45) feet above (1) the front lot lines on Bishop Allen Drive and/or Prospect Street and (2) any residential zoning district line abutting the Business A District, and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five degree (45°) angle.
3. The bulk control plane restrictions of Paragraphs 1 and 2 above may be waived by the Planning Board upon issuance of a Special Permit.

**20.304.4** Waiver of Setback and Open Space Requirements.

1. Yard Setbacks. Upon issuance of a special permit from the Planning Board the yard requirements of a base zoning district may be waived except where such yard abuts a lot, but

not a public way, outside the Overlay District. However, in waiving or reducing a front yard setback, the Planning Board shall take into account the width of the adjacent public sidewalk and may limit the reduction of the setback in order to provide additional sidewalk width within the front yard setback where appropriate, taking into account applicable City standards and expected pedestrian traffic on the street.

2. Private Open Space. Open Space shall be provided as required in the Base Zoning District, however the Planning Board may allow, by Special Permit, the reduction of required Open Space, and permit such Open Space to be located at levels other than at grade if the applicant can demonstrate that the urban design objectives as set forth in the Central Square Overlay District can be met.

## 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
  - (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.