



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

2022 MAY -5 AM 11:00  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

## NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number:	385
Address:	180 Fawcett Street (160 Fawcett Street)
Zoning:	Industry B-2 (IB-2) / Alewife Overlay District 2 (AOD-2)
Applicant:	CCF Fawcett Street Property, LLC 185 Dartmouth Street, Suite 402 Boston, MA 02116
Owner:	CCF Fawcett Street Property, LLC 185 Dartmouth Street, Suite 402 Boston, MA 02116
Application Date:	November 9, 2021
Date of Planning Board Public Hearing:	December 7, 2021; March 29, 2022
Date of Planning Board Decision:	March 29, 2022
Date of Filing Planning Board Decision:	May 5, 2022
Application:	Special Permit for reduction of required off-street parking spaces (6.35.1); Flood Plain Overlay District Special Permit (20.73); Project Review Special Permit (Section 19.20) and Special Permits to increase FAR (Section 20.95.1), increase building height (Section 20.95.2), and authorize public infrastructure FAR bonus (20.95.11) in the Alewife Overlay District, to construct a new 4-story building principally for technical office use, with below grade parking for 46 cars, 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces, 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces, and 1 loading bay, with a total gross floor area of 58,027 square feet.
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 Swaathi Joseph at 617-349-4668, or [sjoseph@cambridgema.gov](mailto:sjoseph@cambridgema.gov).

## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED**

### Application Documents and Supporting Material

1. Special Permit Application submitted on 11/9/2021 containing Volume I – Graphic Material dated 10/8/2021, containing plan set prepared by SGA Architects; Volume II – Narrative dated 10/8/2021, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificates, and Project Narrative; and Volume III – Appendices, containing Community Outreach Summary, Infrastructure Narratives, Noise Mitigation Narrative, LEED Narrative, Transportation Impact Study, PTDM Plan, and Tree Study.
2. Revised Special Permit Application containing Volume I Graphic Material dated 11/19/2021, containing plan set prepared by SGA Architects; Volume II – Narrative dated 11/19/2021, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificates, and Project Narrative; and Volume III – Appendices dated 11/19/2021, containing Community Outreach Summary, Infrastructure Narratives, Noise Mitigation Narrative, LEED Narrative, Transportation Impact Study, PTDM Plan, and Tree Study.
3. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 12/7/2021.
4. Revised Special Permit Application containing Volume I Graphic Material dated 2/23/2022, containing plan set prepared by SGA Architects; Special Permit Narrative dated 2/23/2022, containing the Special Permit Cover Sheet, Dimensional Form, Ownership Certificates, and Project Narrative; and Special Permit Appendix dated 2/23/2022, containing revised Infrastructure Narratives and revised Tree Study.
5. Revised materials submitted on 3/24/2022 containing Ground Floor Plan dated 3/11/2022, Permeability Plan and Legend, and Cool Factor Score Sheet.
6. Presentation slides shown to the Planning Board on 3/29/2022.

### City of Cambridge Documents

7. Memo to the Planning Board from Katherine F. Watkins, City Engineer, dated 11/29/2021.
8. Memo to the Planning Board from Community Development Department (CDD) Staff, dated 12/1/2021.
9. Memo to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP+T), dated 12/1/2021.
10. Memorandum to the Planning Board from Joseph E. Barr, Director, TP+T, dated 3/21/2022.
11. Memo to the Planning Board from CDD staff, dated 3/22/2022.

### Other Documents

12. Email communication to the Planning Board from Ann Tennis, dated 12/6/2021.
13. Notice of Extension of Time to June 5, 2022, dated 2/16/2022.

## APPLICATION SUMMARY

The proposed project at 160-180 Fawcett Street is for the construction of a three-story technical office and laboratory building, with a 4<sup>th</sup> story mechanical penthouse, of approximately 58,027 square feet to replace an existing two-story wood gymnasium and office building. The project is located on the corner of Fawcett Street and Smith Place. The underlying base zoning is Industry B-2 (IB-2). The site is also in the Quadrangle Northeast Alewife Overlay District (AOD-2), which modifies the base district zoning regulations.

The project additionally proposes 46 parking spaces in a below-grade garage with access from Fawcett Street, a loading zone with access from Fawcett Street, 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 8 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project will close one existing curb cut on Smith Place and create a 22-foot-wide curb cut for the below-grade parking garage and a 14-foot-wide curb cut for the loading zone on Fawcett Street.

The initial project application included a request for a special permit for an exemption of the required green roof area in zoning section 22.35.3. In a revised submission, the applicant determined that a request for a green roof area exemption special permit was no longer required and therefore withdrew their request.

## 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) [sic] 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 August 20, 2021, as indicated in two memorandums from Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation, dated December 1, 2021 and March 21, 2022.

The Transportation Impact Study identified thirteen instances where the Special Permit Transportation Criteria cited above were exceeded while adding additional vehicle trips to the area roadways in the peak traffic flow direction: One vehicle level of service (LOS) exceedance at Concord Avenue/Smith Place for AM Peak hour from LOS D rating to LOS E; six pedestrian level of service (PLOS) exceedances at the signalized intersection of Concord Avenue/Blanchard Road for pedestrians crossing Concord Avenue during the PM Peak hour and for crossing Blanchard Road during both AM and PM Peak hours; four pedestrian level of service (PLOS) exceedances at the unsignalized intersections of Concord Avenue/Smith Place and Concord Avenue/Fawcett Street for crossing Concord Avenue during the AM and PM Peak hours; and two bicycle facility exceedances at Smith Place and Fawcett Street because they do not contain bicycle facilities. It should be noted that a new traffic signal will be installed at the Concord Avenue/Fawcett Street intersection as mitigation for the 55 Wheeler Street project (the Project is currently under construction).

The proposed 46 parking spaces are less than the minimum required ratio in current zoning, which would require 56 spaces. This reduction matches the maximum 0.8 parking space ratio recommended in the Alewife District Plan and is a further reduction from the applicant's initial request for 53 parking spaces. The proposed bicycle parking spaces exceed the minimum requirements, and the one loading bay meets the minimum requirement for the proposed use.

The Applicant has proposed improvements to the street design and intersection alignment for Smith Place/Fawcett Street to accommodate raised bicycle lanes and sidewalk ramps to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the site, as well as improving the overall bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity for the area. The building is sited to allow for a portion of elevated sidewalk to be constructed as part of the building's southwest corner.

TP+T submitted a set of recommended mitigation measures in its memo dated March 21, 2021, which were agreed to by the Applicant and are incorporated in this Decision.

Overall, the proposed mitigation would support improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the area, support the public bicycle sharing system (BlueBikes),

improve transportation in the Alewife area, provide transportation amenities to future tenants of the project to reduce the need for auto trips, and implement a program of transportation demand management (TDM) measures to further reduce the auto trips generated by the project. The proposal is also subject to the Cambridge Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Ordinance and received final approval for its PTDM Plan on November 12, 2021.

Therefore, the Board finds that the proposed project will not have a substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area, considering that the Applicant will undertake transportation improvements as recommended by TP+T to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access.

*(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 aligns with the goals identified for the area in the Alewife District Plan and would increase permeable areas and stormwater retention. 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. The Fawcett Street and Smith Place massing and facades have been revised to conform with zoning requirements, bringing portions of the façade closer to the adjoining streets, while still providing an elevated walkway at the portions of the Smith Place and Fawcett Street facades closest to the intersection in accordance with the Alewife District Plan and Design Guidelines. The building has a larger floorplate, and its height has been reduced. The site/landscape design has been adjusted to relate the building more directly with the adjoining pedestrian sidewalks. The layout of the sidewalks and bicycle lanes has been improved to better relate to expected movement patterns.

*(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 with elevated walkways at the southwest corner of the site, which is the corner most suitable for ground floor retail. The principal front wall planes facing Fawcett Street and Smith Place have been brought forward and aligned with the outer edge of the elevated walkway. This appears to have brought the elevated walkways into accord with zoning,

and also has the benefit of reducing the façade-to-façade widths of Fawcett Street and Smith Place to dimensions more characteristic of an urban, rather than a suburban, area. The design continues to preserve the existing street trees on Smith Place, and to also provide new street trees on Smith Place and Fawcett Street. The scheme provides continuous planting beds for existing and new street trees. These landscaping improvements will enhance both the visual and environmental quality of the area for pedestrians. Additionally, interior long-term bicycle parking and exterior short-term bicycle parking spaces are provided as required by zoning, and a 19 dock Bluebikes station will be a commitment of the PTDM plan.

Separated bicycle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks are provided in the setbacks on both Fawcett Street and Smith Place. Public access easements or agreements will be needed with the City for the sidewalks and bicycle facilities, including maintenance, and will be incorporated into the conditions of this Special Permit.

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

In adhering to the applicable stormwater management standards, the proposed project mitigates the impacts of development on water storage and improves upon the existing conditions. Flood Elevations associated with the 2070 10-year and 2070 100-year storm events have been provided to the Applicant. The Applicant is proposing to elevate their structure to establish the first floor elevation at 22.5 CCB, above the 2070-100 year event. Deployable barriers are proposed to exclude floodwater from the garage entrance and critical electrical equipment is located above flood level.

The revised project has a larger footprint than originally proposed, which allows the applicant to limit occupied space to the first three floors. Its overall height is 54 feet, with additional 22-foot tall screens for rooftop mechanical equipment. This proposed 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. Rooftop equipment is sited and screened to mitigate visual impacts. The exact rooftop mechanical screening, façade material treatments and landscape features will be subject to ongoing review by City staff. Trash and other service functions are housed internally. Additional trees and rooftop greenery were added to the site design during the review process to promote shade and cooling.

The project is subject to Green Building Requirements and will target a LEED Gold minimum design standard with sustainable features including an air tight building enclosure and high efficiency lighting. The area of green roof was increased through the review process to exceed the minimum established by the Green Roofs Requirement in Section 22.35 of the Zoning Ordinance.

*(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 November 29, 2021 indicating that the project is expected to meet all DPW standards and that the Applicant will finalize a Site Action Plan to promote resiliency from environmental risks with approval from DPW prior to issuance of a building permit. A relocated water easement has been reviewed and discussed with the Applicant, the Water Department, and the DPW. While no water main connection is proposed within this corridor at this time, the existing easement on the property maintains the City's potential for this connection.

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

The area in which the project is proposed has an evolving urban character that has been anticipated by Cambridge's planning efforts, including the Concord-Alewife Plan (2005) and the recent Alewife District Plan (2019) completed as part of the Envision Cambridge comprehensive planning process. The existing conditions in this area are dominated by commercial and industrial land uses, with vast expanses of impervious surfaces in the form of parking lots and truck loading areas. A few parcels have transitioned from industrial use to offices, commercial research labs, or recreational uses. This area has access to public transit through regional bus service on Concord Avenue, and the site is about a one-mile walk to the Alewife MBTA Station. It is also about a quarter-mile north of Fresh Pond Reservation. In accordance with the Alewife District Plan, the project will provide a funding contribution to support future areawide public infrastructure improvements, such as a railroad crossing to the "Triangle" subdistrict.

The proposed project better reinforces the pattern of more recent residential and commercial development in the neighborhood as well as the City's planning objectives by siting the building in anticipation of the street pattern envisioned by the Alewife District Plan. The design also accounts for evolving City standards for flood risk mitigation by incorporating measures to protect from projected 2070 flood levels, including the elevation of building ground floors. Additionally, proposed ground floor plans include locating the lobby close to the intersection and the inclusion of doors from the south elevated walkway directly to the tenant space at the building's southwest corner, making it more suitable for retail use.

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

The project does not include residential development, but will provide a contribution to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust in accordance with Incentive Zoning requirements.

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

The project is within close proximity of the Fresh Pond Reservation and proposes landscape improvements along the sidewalks of Smith Place as well as improving the appearance and amenity of streetscape edges. A portion of the lot will be conveyed to the City to enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on public streets.

2. Special Permits to increase FAR, additional FAR for public improvements, and increase building height 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 authorized by the provisions of 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. In reviewing these criteria the Board was informed by the Concord-Alewife Plan, completed in 2005, which preceded the enactment of the Alewife Overlay Districts, as well as the Alewife District Plan, completed in 2019, which updates the Concord-Alewife Plan for this area.

*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 contribute to the overall mix of uses with the addition of office and commercial laboratory space and potential ground floor retail. The site layout has been arranged to place all parking below grade, reduce the overall of parking to the 0.8 ratio recommended by the Alewife District Plan, and reinforce the movement of people walking and riding bicycles on Fawcett Street and Smith Place by incorporating a pedestrian-oriented entrance and landscaped areas. The proposal includes improvements to the pedestrian realm with a new sidewalk and separated bicycle facility, and the building includes facilities to support and encourage bicycle use, as noted further above in these Findings. In addition, the Applicant performed a traffic study that was reviewed by TP+T and has agreed to recommended mitigation for transportation impacts as noted further above in these Findings.

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 requirements and recommended standards relating to flooding and water management. The DPW has reviewed the Application Documents and indicated to the Planning Board that the project is expected to meet the City's requirements and will be subject to further review by DPW.

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 separated from the Highlands neighborhood and will have minimal visual or transportation 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 project will make financial contributions to transportation improvements and implement streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian and bicycle movement along Fawcett Street and Smith Place.

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 does not include residential uses, but includes streetscape improvements within the site, which will enhance the neighborhood appeal to a variety of users. The designated ground story tenant space at the corner of Smith Place and Fawcett Street will provide the opportunity for a future retail tenant.

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 designed and oriented in a way to enhance the streetscape, respond to its neighbors, and relate to the recent projects in the subdistricts in height and massing. The proposal will improve the urban character of the area by creating stronger street frontages.

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.*

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2. *Quadrangle Northeast District: 1.5 for all uses*

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The proposed project will have a total floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.74. The Applicant has requested a special permit from the Planning Board for additional FAR for public improvements that allows them to exceed the 1.5 FAR maximum FAR otherwise allowed by special permit for all uses in the Alewife Quadrangle Northeast District, in accordance with Section 20.95.11 below:

*20.95.11 Additional FAR for Public Improvements. In order to provide an incentive to property owners to protect important segments of future roadways and infrastructure from permanent building construction, the Planning Board, in its review of any Special Permit application, may grant additional FAR above that permitted in Section 20.95.1 above in all Overlay Districts where the proposed development incorporates or provides one or more of the following improvements or property interests in a manner and to an extent determined to be sufficient to significantly advance the objectives of the Concord-Alewife Plan.*

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- 2. Conveyance of fee or easement property interests to the City of Cambridge (in a form acceptable to the City) to permit the future construction of roadway segments, pedestrian paths, the pedestrian bridge referenced above in Paragraph 1, public parks and other publicly accessible open space and recreation features consistent with the Concord-Alewife Plan, which segment, path, park or open space is identified on the maps entitled Priority Infrastructure Plan and Additional Infrastructure Plan or is otherwise identified by the Planning Board at another location and determined by the Board to be of equal value and consistent with those elements identified on the Map and the objectives set forth in the Plan.*

*In this instance, the additional FAR shall be equal to the FAR otherwise permitted on the lot as-of-right or by special permit, but shall be applied only to that portion of the lot for which a fee or easement interest is to be conveyed.*

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The Application proposes 5,724 SF of land to be conveyed for public improvements that will expand public infrastructure along Smith Place and Fawcett Street, which include realigned roadways, pedestrian sidewalks, elevated bicycle lanes, and street tree planting zones. The Planning Board found that these proposed features were consistent with the Concord-Alewife Plan and of equal value with those elements identified on the Concord-Alewife Plan maps entitled Priority Infrastructure Plan and Additional Infrastructure Plan.

By issuing a special permit for additional FAR for public improvements, the total allowable Gross Floor Area (GFA) on site will increase by 8,586 SF to a total of 58,734 SF. The Application proposes 58,027 SF of GFA and is consistent with the maximum floor area ratio granted by special permit.

*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:*

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- 1. Quadrangle Northeast District: 70 feet for all uses...*

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The maximum building height allowable by special permit for non-residential use on this property is 70 feet. The proposed non-residential project will have a building height of no more than 70 feet.

3. Flood Plain Special Permit (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 Plain Special Permit requirements in Section 20.70 of the Zoning Ordinance requires compensatory storage for any development that impacts the volume of the flood plain. A portion of the northwest corner of the Project Site is located within the FEMA mapped floodplain. The applicant filed a Notice of Intent to the Conservation Commission and a negative determination was issued by the Commission on August 16, 2021 determining that the resource area was not impacted by the site development. Based on this evidence, and because the proposal demonstrates consistency with area planning as set forth earlier in these Findings, the proposal meets the criteria for a Flood Plain Special Permit,

4. Special Permit for Reduction in Minimum Number of Parking Spaces (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. 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.*
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.*
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.*

*Example: Office and Theatre uses with peak user demands at different times. Office requires a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) spaces and the theatre requires a minimum of one hundred (100). Seventy-five (75) percent of the lesser minimum requirement is seventy-five (75) (75% of 100). Therefore seventy-five (75) spaces can be shared but twenty-five (25) (100-75) would still be required, making the total amount of required parking for both uses (150 + 25) one hundred and seventy-five (175).*

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

*For a project seeking a reduction in required off-street parking for residential uses, a Parking Analysis shall be required as part of the Special Permit Application as set forth in Section 6.35.3.*

The proposed 0.8 parking ratio is consistent with the Alewife District Plan recommendations and with expected utilization rates. The Project is within the vicinity of the Alewife MBTA transit station and bus routes along Concord Avenue. Additionally, the applicant is providing

sufficient short and long term bicycle facilities, as well as the installation of 19 dock blue bike station. These site elements will not cause excessive congestion, endangerment to public safety, or reduced parking availability for the neighborhood and the Board finds that the proposal meets the criteria for issuance of special permits authorized

5. General Criteria for Issuance of a Special Permit (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.

*(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 technical office for research and development uses, with a ground floor storefront space, conform to the set of allowed uses in the district and will not adversely impact the operation or development of adjacent uses, which are predominantly office and storage.

*(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 uses will not result in any nuisance or hazard. The development will be required to conform to all applicable health and safety codes as well as measures recommended by DPW to mitigate area-specific risks of future flooding.

*(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 ...*

As discussed earlier in these Findings, the proposed uses and development are consistent with the character of this evolving, mixed-use district. There are other general and technical office buildings in the district activating the streetscape with landscaped areas.

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

As set forth above in these Findings, the Board finds the project to be consistent with the citywide urban design objectives as well as urban planning and design objectives for the Alewife area.

## DECISION

Based on a review of the Application Documents, testimony given at the public hearing, 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, except as modified by the additional Conditions of this Special Permit Decision. The project plans hereby approved by the Planning Board are Volume I Graphic Material dated 2/23/2022, containing plan set prepared by SGA Architects. Appendix I summarizes the dimensional features of the project as approved.
2. The approved use of the project is technical office for research and development (Section 4.34.f in the Table of Use Regulations), except that the ground story may also be occupied by any Retail or Consumer Service Establishment in Section 4.35 of the Zoning Ordinance or other non-residential use that is permitted in the underlying zoning district and has a direct pedestrian entrance to the street. Any other proposed use that is permitted in the zoning district, but not authorized by this special permit, shall be subject to Planning Board approval.
3. The Planning Board approves the conveyance of approximately 5,724 square feet of land for public use as depicted in the plans, and the 8,586 square foot bonus development associated with that conveyance per Section 20.95.11. The increase in density is conditioned on the City's design approval and eventual acceptance of an easement for the land to be conveyed. The Permittee shall submit construction plans for improvements to this area for City approval prior to issuance of a Building Permit. The Permittee shall provide a plan and legal description of the easement to be conveyed prior to issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy.
4. The Planning Board approves the requested reduction in parking to 46 spaces. Any further reduction in parking shall be permitted to the extent allowed by zoning at the time. However, any increase in parking shall require an amendment to this Special Permit. No additional parking shall be required for any future retail or consumer service establishment located on the ground story.
5. 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.

6. The Permittee shall address the following comments through the continuing design review process set forth above. Each of the below items shall be subject to CDD review and approval of the final design details prior to issuance of a Building Permit:
  - a. Collaborate with staff as the layouts of the elevated walkways and front setbacks are resolved between the various plans and sections.
  - b. Collaborate with the City to finalize and approve the nature and instruments of public easements for the pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle paths in the Fawcett Street and Smith Place setbacks.
  - c. Review of all exterior materials, colors, and details, including an exterior wall mock-up prior to any exterior materials being ordered.
  - d. Review of detailed layout of separated bike lanes, curb cuts, sidewalks, crosswalks, and street trees, etc.
  - e. Review of tree species and planting standards.
  - f. Review of paving materials.
  - g. Review of the details of the elevated walkway and associated steps, ramp, railings, benches, etc.
  - h. Review of dimensions and clearances of short- and long-term bicycle parking areas and routes, and of the Bluebikes station.
  - i. Review lighting in the proposed HVAC penthouse to minimize impacts on neighbors.
7. 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. The mock-up's location shall be coordinated with CDD staff prior to construction.
8. The amount of Permeable Area shall be calculated and reviewed prior to issuance of a Building Permit. If the project does not meet the permeable area requirements in the Alewife Zoning Districts, certification shall be required by the City Engineer that the applicable stormwater management standards are met.
9. The design details for the wood trellis extending over portions of the elevated walkway shall be reviewed prior to issuance of a Building Permit to ensure compliance with Section 22.53 of the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable standards.
10. The Permittee shall be responsible for the design and installation of all necessary infrastructure and utility improvements both on and off the site needed to support the construction of the building. All improvements to public infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, tree plantings in the public right-of-way, and utilities, in addition to those portions of the site to be conveyed by easement, shall be subject to approval by the Department of Public Works ("DPW").



11. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, the Permittee shall provide a revised Tree Plan to DPW to verify that the plans are in conformance with the applicable provisions of the Cambridge Tree Protection Ordinance.
12. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, all flood protection measures, final stormwater management plan, and mitigation requirements for stormwater inflow and infiltration from the sewer system shall be reviewed and approved by DPW.
13. The Permittee shall prepare a final Site Action Plan to allow for future building adaptation to flooding risks associated with climate change, with an emphasis on providing safety and comfort to building occupants, which shall be reviewed and approved by DPW and the Cambridge Fire Department prior to issuance of a Building Permit and shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building. The Site Action Plan shall meet the following minimum requirements:
  - a. The Action Plan shall be reviewed by the Permittee and property management team every five years through 2070 to confirm the effectiveness of existing adaptation measures and the need for additional measures. The reviews shall be reviewed by DPW and the Fire Department.
  - b. The Action Plan shall include a notification regarding flooding risks that shall be included in the leases to ensure building tenants and occupants are informed of the flood risk. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - c. The Action Plan shall include a building user notification/evacuation plan. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - d. The Action Plan shall provide information, guidance, and resources to assist occupants sheltering in place, such as a disaster supply kit. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - e. The Action Plan shall detail an operations plan for flood protection measures. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - f. The Action Plan shall develop the operation of the fire detection and suppression systems to ensure that they remain operable during flood events or loss of power. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - g. The Action Plan shall address elevator operation and heated and cooled gathering spaces in each building in the event of loss of power. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - h. The Action Plan shall identify appropriate public spaces in the building to locate key emergency medical supplies and other emergency response supplies. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.
  - i. The Action Plan shall include a notification protocol to be utilized in the event of a flooding or other natural disaster. This plan shall be operational immediately upon occupancy of the building.

14. The Permittee shall comply with the Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Plan approved on November 12, 2021, as it may be amended.
15. The Permittee shall comply with the recommended mitigation measures set forth in the memorandum issued by Joseph E. Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (“TP+T”), dated March 21, 2022:
  - a. Prior to the issuance of the Building Permit, the Permittee shall provide a one-time \$5 per square foot contribution to the City toward the Alewife Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge or other Transportation Improvements in Alewife Area (e.g. 58,027 SF x \$5/SF = \$290,135), per the recommendation of the Alewife District Plan.
  - b. Upon opening of a pedestrian bridge over the commuter rail tracks, the Permittee shall analyze real world utilization data available from the project to consider the feasibility of reducing off-street parking below 46 spaces. This parking utilization data and analysis shall be submitted to TP+T staff at that time. A reduction below 46 spaces shall be at the discretion of the developer/owner.
  - c. Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the Permittee shall contribute \$58,000 to the City toward planning, design, and/or installation of transportation improvements in the Alewife District, such as a potential new traffic signal at Concord Avenue/Smith Place, and/or other transportation projects in the area. This item will help mitigate the LOS exceedance at the Concord Avenue/Smith Place intersection.
  - d. The Property owner shall reconstruct Smith Place and Fawcett Street, adjacent to the Property, as approved by the City and as necessary to align with the City’s cross-section plans for Smith Place and Fawcett Street. Reconstruction shall include sidewalks, separated bicycle facilities adjacent to the site, and street trees/landscaping. The final design shall be approved by the City prior to the issuance of a Building Permit and construction shall be completed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, except that the Director of TP+T may approve a longer timeframe if necessary for circumstances that are outside of the Permittee's control. The Permittee shall be responsible for obtaining approval of a maintenance plan from DPW, including sidewalks and separated bicycle lanes adjacent to the building, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.
  - e. The Permittee shall ensure sufficient capacity in the electrical panel and transformer(s) to support the future installation of electric vehicle charging equipment for all vehicle parking spaces, and prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, shall install electric vehicle charging stations to serve at least 14 parking spaces, or 25% of the total number of spaces, whichever is greater. These stations may be either 7 dual-head Level 2 chargers or 14 individual Level 2 chargers.
16. 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 TP+T and DPW 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 said Section 18.20:

- a. A plan for site remediation in accordance with applicable local, state and federal requirements;
  - b. Identification of all work to take place in the public right of way including but not limited to potential impacts to existing public shade trees to be coordinated early in the design process with the City Arborist; and
  - c. A community outreach program including, at a minimum, the following elements:
    - i. An identified point of e-mail and telephone contact to respond to community questions and feedback throughout the construction process;
    - ii. A system for communicating ongoing project updates, which may include a web page, e-mail list, social media presence, direct outreach, and/or other measures; and
    - iii. One or more signs posted on-site, legible from the public way, providing the information above along with a brief description of the project, the amount of commercial space, an expected completion date, and a rendering of the street-facing elevations.
17. 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. The project shall also conform to the Green Roofs Requirement in Section 22.35 of the 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.
18. The Project shall be subject to the applicable Incentive Zoning requirements set forth in Section 11.202 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. The applicable Housing Contribution shall be calculated at the time of issuance of a Building Permit and the Housing Contribution shall be made prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
19. All authorized development shall abide by all applicable City of Cambridge Ordinances, including the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 8.16 of the City Municipal Code).

Voting in the affirmative to grant the requested Special Permits were Planning Board Members Louis Bacci, Jr., H. Theodore Cohen, Mary Flynn, Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Associate Members Alan Price and Ashley Tan, appointed by the Chair to act on the case, constituting at least two-thirds of the members of the Board.

For the Planning Board,



Mary Flynn, Vice Chair

A copy of this decision PB-385 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 May 5, 2022 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)	+/- 33,432	5,000 (Min.)	No Change	No Change
Lot Width (ft)	147.65	50.0	No Change	No Change
Total GFA (sq ft)	38,028	+/- 58,734	+/- 58,027	58,027
Residential Base	0	N/A	0	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Non-Residential Base	38,028	+/- 58,734	+/- 58,027	
Inclusionary Bonus	0	N/A	0	
Total FAR	1.14	0.75 (1.50 with SP)	1.74 (+/- 58,027 SF)	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Residential Base	0	N/A	0	
Non-Residential Base	1.14	0.75 (1.50 with SP)	1.74 (+/- 58,027 SF)	
Inclusionary Bonus	0	N/A	0	
Total Dwelling Units	0	N/A	0	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Base Units	0	N/A	0	
Inclusionary Bonus Units	0	N/A	0	
Base Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	0	N/A	0	
Total Lot Area / Unit (sq ft)	0	N/A	0	
Height (ft)	51.9	35.0 (70.0 with SP)	70.0	70.0
Front Setbacks (ft)	1.3	15.0	15.0	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Side Setback (ft)	14.0	0.0	9.9	
Side Setback (ft)	41.8	0.0	10.0	
Rear Setback (ft)	N/A	0.0	N/A	
Open Space (% of Lot Area)	4.5%	15.0%	32.9%	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Private Open Space	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Permeable Open Space	1.8%	25.0%	29.0% (+/- 9,659 SF)	
Off-Street Parking Spaces	26	56-112	46	No more than 46
Long-Term Bicycle Parking	N/A	13	14	Consistent with Application Documents and applicable zoning requirements
Short-Term Bicycle Parking	N/A	4	8	
Loading Bays	2	1	1	