



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Affordable Housing Trust

June 27, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Ackermann Room, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts

OR

[Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

To participate in this meeting through the Zoom video meeting platform, please register using [this link](#) in advance of the meeting.

AGENDA

- Review of Meeting Minutes
- Update from the Community Development Department
- Affordable Housing Trust Fund Report: current balance and FY2024 activity;
- Walden Square II: Winn Development is requesting \$18,750,000 to create 95 new affordable rental units;
- 87-101 Blanchard Road: transmitting the Planning Board's Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation
- Request for Annual Appropriations for FY2024: the Housing Department is requesting \$710,115 to support non-profit housing providers affordable housing preservation and development programs, Housing Department staff, and Housing Department program operations in FY2025;
- Adjournment

Members of the public can provide written comments to the Affordable Housing Trust by email sent to affordablehousingtrustcomment@cambridgema.gov, or by delivery to the CDD office, by 5:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.

344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
Voice: 617 349-4600
Fax: 617 349-4669
TTY: 617 349-4621
www.cambridgema.gov

CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
MEETING MINUTES
May 23, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Conducted via Zoom and in person (City Hall, Ackermann Room)

Trustees Present in Person: Yi-An Huang, Chair; Teresa Cardosi, Florrie Darwin, Elaine DeRosa, Alyson Stein, Bill Tibbs

Trustees Present via Zoom: Elaine Thorne, Susan Schlesinger

Trustees Absent: Jim Stockard

Staff Present: Chris Cotter, Housing Director; Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager for Housing Development; Janet Haines, Housing Planner; Christine Yu, Associate Housing Development Planner; Anna Dolmatch, Senior Manager for Homeownership

Others Present: Lauren Greene, James Williamson, Aderonke Ogunrakinyo, LaToya Weaver, Sue Reinert, City Councilor Sumbul Siddiqui

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. Mr. Cotter explained that this meeting of the Affordable Housing Trust would be held in a hybrid fashion pursuant to applicable requirements, that all votes would be taken by roll call, and that there would be no public comment. He then confirmed via roll call that each remote participant could hear the meeting and was audible to others.

Prior to discussing the items on the meeting's agenda, Mr. Cotter acknowledged that this meeting is the last for Mr. Tibbs and Ms. Darwin. Mr. Cotter and other Trustees commended the two departing Trustees for their excellent work on the Trust. Ms. Darwin thanked everyone for their kind words and reflected on her experience sitting on the Trust.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by roll call of eight in favor and one absent (Mr. Stockard), it was voted to approve the minutes for the meeting of April 25, 2024.

CDD UPDATE

Jefferson Park Federal: Staff are working with the CHA on the full construction closing.

Rindge Commons Phase 1: Construction is complete, and tenants have begun moving into the property.

52 New Street: JAS is having a groundbreaking event on May 28th.

Walden Square II: Staff are reviewing a Trust funding request, which will be brought to an upcoming Trust meeting.

35 Cherry Street: JAS held their first AHO community meeting regarding the development of 35 Cherry Street on May 15th.

37 Brookline: JAS held a community meeting regarding the development of 37 Brookline Street on April 25th.

87-101 Blanchard Road: B'nai B'rith will have its second of two required Planning Board Design Advisory meetings on Tuesday, June 4th at 6:30 p.m.

OTHER UPDATES:

Housing Committee: The City Council's Housing Committee held a meeting on April 22nd regarding the feasibility of city-funded housing vouchers. Another meeting will be scheduled soon to continue the discussion. The Committee also held two meetings on May 8th and May 22nd regarding the creation of zoning language that would allow multi-family housing in all neighborhoods in Cambridge.

In response to a question on whether staff were conducting an analysis on the impact of building multi-family housing in low density areas. Staff responded that the meetings were more conceptual and for public comment and that the next meeting will talk about next steps to assess options. In response to a question whether allowing multi-family housing everywhere in the City will undercut the advantages of the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), Mr. Cotter answered that until the zoning language is clearer, the impacts are unknown, but it is likely that a change in zoning could reduce the advantage of the AHO.

Ms. Cardosi asked for clarification on the permits that AHO projects need and the AHO advantages. Staff responded that all large development projects over a certain size require a special permit.

NEW BUSINESS

35 Cherry Street Predevelopment Funding Request

Ms. Dolmatch presented a funding request from Just A Start (JAS) for up to \$300,000 in Trust funding for their affordable housing development at 35 Cherry Street. Previously owned by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the property was acquired by the City as part of a community benefits agreement. In October 2023, the Trust voted to designate JAS as the developer. Since then, JAS has worked on developing initial project designs and began the community outreach process.

JAS is requesting a commitment of \$300,000 in Trust funding to support ongoing predevelopment work, including architectural design and environmental testing. JAS anticipates more community meetings before presenting their designs to the Planning Board for review.

In response to a question regarding the parameters on what JAS can do on the site, Ms. Dolmatch answered that these will be large, family-sized homeownership units. She also explained how the community process produced a set of guidelines for the project. Unlike other City properties, this property came with a stipulation that it be used to benefit the community. Staff and Trustees discussed the importance of having the community's input on this project as this is a unique opportunity to build affordable homeownership units. Ms. Stein asked how JAS was designated as the developer for the site. Mr. Cotter explained that the JAS was selected through a Request for Proposal process run by the City.

Staff then recommended to the Trust to designate JAS as the developer given their qualifications and extensive experience with building affordable homeownership units. The Trust then voted on the matter late last year.

Upon a motion moved, seconded, and approved by roll call of eight in favor and one absent (Mr. Stockard), it was:

VOTED: to approve the Trust funding request of up to \$300,000 from JAS to support predevelopment activities at 35 Cherry Street, all as further described in the meeting materials.

Griffin Shepard, et al. Zoning Petition

Mr. Cotter informed the Trust that since the last meeting, the Planning Board and the Ordinance Committee both held their respective meetings on the zoning petition. The Planning Board voted neutrally on the matter but acknowledged the importance of the petition. The petition remains active at the Ordinance Committee. Both groups were very policy focused, especially on municipally-funded vouchers and supportive housing.

Staff noted to each body that the Trust has always been supportive of supportive housing and that many of the goals of the petition are already underway. Members noted that some aspects of the petition are still at odds with the enabling legislation, such as adding more Trust members, need to be made through a Home Rule Petition, which can be a cumbersome process.

Ms. Darwin added that when she participated in the Ordinance Committee meeting, she noticed a lot of interest for project-based vouchers, regardless of where the funds come from, and that the petitioners were open to changes to the petition. Trustees acknowledged that the Trust and the petitioners are on the same team with the same goal of increasing affordable housing. Ms. Schlesinger suggested that the Trust have a meeting with these petitioners to further the discussion on what the Trust could do more of.

Ms. Darwin commented that new programs, such as a vouchers program, are expensive and will potentially take away from projects. Chair Huang added that Trust money has historically been allocated into the preservation and creation of affordable housing. He acknowledged the importance and impact of vouchers, but also noted that there are tradeoffs of a municipally-funded voucher program that need be discussed with the City Council and the community. The City will need to look at how a voucher program could be funded long term.

Ms. Schlesinger suggested a report to showcase all the work that the Trust has done and to promote more transparency with the community. Trustees commented that they want to play a role in the voucher program discussion. Trustees discussed the importance of publicizing the projects and programs that the Trust funds.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion moved and seconded, by roll call of eight in favor and one absent (Mr. Stockard), it was voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the Trust's April 25, 2024 meeting
- Project Update
- 35 Cherry Street – Predevelopment Funding Request
- Memo re Griffin-Sheperd, et al., Zoning Petition
- Griffen-Shepard et al. Zoning Petition
- Law Dept. Opinion – Griffin-Sheperd, et al., Zoning Petition – Ltr to Pl Bd and AHT
- Planning Board Report – Griffin-Sheperd, et al., Zoning Petition

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust

June 27, 2024

Status of Active Commitments

	Active Projects	Sponsor	Rental Units	Ownership Units	Status	Total Cost	Trust Commitment	Loan Amount Per Unit	Trust Approval Date
1.	HomeBridge program	CDD	<i>currently approved buyers:</i>	13	92 scattered site units purchased by first time buyers to-date. Trust approved expanded subsidy share in August 2023. Online application now available. One unit closed this month. One unit under agreement.	N/A	\$24,200,000	1-br: 50% sale 2-br: 60% sale 3-br: 65% sale	several, including most recent: February 2023
2.	Homeownership Resale Program	CDD	<i>currently active units:</i>	22	Re-purchase, rehab and re-sale of affordable homeownership units to new homebuyers. Two units under agreement.	N/A	\$10,000,000		December 2011
3.	Vail Court (139 Bishop Allen)	TBD	TBD	TBD	Trust and City hosted public meeting in 2017 to hear from the community on affordable housing needs and ideas for the redevelopment of Vail Court. Additional public meetings will be scheduled but are currently on hold pending the legal action taken by former owner.	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A
4.	2072 Mass. Ave.	Capstone Hope	TBD	TBD	Capstone/Hope purchased site in April 2018 and sought a comprehensive permit to enable the construction of a new 48 unit affordable housing building but withdrew their request at the September 2021 BZA hearing; they remain committed to creating affordable housing at this site and are assessing next steps and options.	TBD	\$5,071,000	TBD	February 2018 and June 2021
5.	52 New Street	JAS	106		JAS purchased the site in early 2020 and is permitting the project through the Affordable Housing Overlay. After JAS held 3 AHO community meetings, the proposal was reviewed by the Planning Board at the two advisory design review meetings on 10/16/21 and 1/4/22 and a final Planning Board report has been issued. Construction closing completed in December 2023; construction underway. Groundbreaking event 5/28.	TBD	\$18,025,390	\$170,051	October 2019, June 2021, January 2022
6.	Park View Coop (24-26 Corporal McTernan Street)	Park View Coop		12	Funds committed May 2021; closing completed October 2022; renovations nearing completion.	\$4,986,321	\$4,199,215	\$349,935	March 2019 and May 2021
7.	Rindge Commons - Phase 1 (site of 402 Rindge Ave)	JAS	24		In June 2020, the Trust approved funding for the first phase of Rindge Commons. Project received a comprehensive permit in August 2020 and began construction in June 2022. The CAHT loan at closing was \$3,706,358 or \$154,444 per unit. This is a \$543,342 reduction from the original loan commitment. Construction complete; lease-up underway with first tenants already moved in.	\$17,307,771	\$4,250,000	\$177,083	June 2020
8.	Broadway Park (240 Broadway)	JAS		15	In March 2021, the Trust approved funding to create 15 affordable homeownership units. JAS has had several community meetings to review its proposal with the intention of seeking a comprehensive permit for this development. JAS also will be seeking to assemble remaining funding needed for this development.	TBD	\$3,600,000	\$240,000	March 2021
9.	Jefferson Park Federal (45-60; 61-75; 77-92; 93-108; Jackson Circle; 1; 2-19; 21-42; 109-124; 1000 Jackson Place)	CHA	278		In September 2021, the Trust approved funding to assist with the comprehensive modernization of Jefferson Park Federal. After the CHA held 3 AHO community meetings, the proposal was reviewed by the Planning Board at the two advisory design review meetings required by the AHO, first on 11/9/21, and again on 2/15/22. A final Planning Board report has since been issued. The CHA completed a 'dry closing' in late December 2023, in preparation of the full construction closing to occur in early 2024. Demolition complete; site work underway. Preparing for full construction closing.	TBD	\$43,611,615	\$156,876	September 2021
10.	35 Harvey Street	HRI / Cascap	12		In November 2021, the Trust approved funding to assist with the renovation and reconfiguration of Harvey Street from SROs to studio apartments. HRI has closed on funding November 2023 and work is now underway.	TBD	\$3,339,437	\$243,139	November 2021
11.	4 Mellen / 1627 Mass. Ave.	HRI	29		In January 2022, the Trust approved funding to assist with the purchase of this property from Lesley University to create affordable housing. The Trust approved additional predevelopment funding in August 2022. HRI acquired the site in August 2022 and held first AHO Community meeting on 9/15/22. Second community meeting held 3/15/22. Advisory design consultation with Planning Board held 7/18/23 and 12/5/23. Planning Board final design report issued on 12/20/23. State funding approved June 2024.	TBD	\$10,425,000	TBD	January 2022 and August 2022
12.	116 Norfolk Street	CHA	62		In August 2022, the Trust approved funding to assist in the renovation and expansion of an existing 38-unit SRO to create 62 studio apartments for individuals moving beyond homelessness. CHA completed AHO advisory design review in late 2022 and closed on funding in December 2022; construction is underway.	TBD	\$10,161,150	\$163,890	August 2022
13.	35 Cherry Street	TBD	TBD	TBD	In March 2022, the City Council approved the disposition of this property to the Trust for creation of affordable homeownership housing. Transfer from MIT complete. After RFP, Just A Start selected as developer at its October Trust meeting. JAS held AHO community meetings on 5/15/24 and 6/26/24.	TBD	TBD	TBD	March 2022
14.	49 Sixth Street	POAH	46		In October 2022, the Trust approved funding to assist in the conversion of a portion of the Sacred Heart church property to affordable housing. POAH has completed the AHO process. POAH is assembling remaining financing in advance of beginning construction in 2024. Increase of Trust funds request approved 3/6/24.	TBD	\$10,750,000	\$233,696	October 2022
15.	37 Brookline Street	JAS	TBD	TBD	JAS acquired the site in July 2023 and held an initial community meeting on 4/25/24 and will be scheduling additional community meetings to discuss design and development plans for the site.	TBD	\$2,064,000	TBD	March 2023
16.	650 Concord Ave	Neville Communities Inc (NCI)	71		In May 2023, the Trust approved funding to assist with capital repairs at Neville Place, the affordable assisted living portion of its campus. Staff are working with NCI on due diligence items in advance of closing, including the forming of a working committee to review tenant selection procedures. Increase of Trust funds request approved 3/28/24.	\$2,445,000	\$5,670,500	\$34,437	May 2023
17.	30 Wendell Street	HRI	TBD	TBD	HRI completed the acquisition of 30 Wendell Street from Lesley University on 11/30/23. First AHO meeting held 2/14/24 and hosted a Balden neighborhood walking tour with neighbors in April 2024. AHO community meeting held 6/20/24.	TBD	\$6,357,000	TBD	August 2023
18.	87-101 Blanchard Rd	B'nai B'rith	110		In March 2024, the Trust approved \$18,169,120 in funding to BBH for the new construction of 110 affordable rental units for seniors. BBH plans to permit the site under the AHO. First AHO PB meeting held in January 2024; Second AHO PB advisory design meeting 6/4/24.	TBD	\$18,169,120	\$34,437	August 2023

19.	28 Wendell Street	HRI	TBD		Site acquired June 2024 and will be combined with 30 Wendell Street.	TBD	\$10,300,000	TBD	March 2024
20.	(site confidential)	CHA			Trust approved funding for CHA to purchase a site for new affordable housing; closing expected to occur this summer.				April 2024

Total Units 800

Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust

Status of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Developments

	AHO Development	Developer	AHO Status & Activity	Rental Units	Ownership Units	Development Status
1.	52 New Street	Just-A-Start Corporation	AHO Community meetings held on 2/25/21, 3/25/21, and 4/15/21. Planning Board design consultation held on 10/26/21 and 1/4/22. Design consultation completed January 2022; Final Planning Board report issued 1/20/22 and was transmitted to the Trust on 1/27/22. Construction closing occurred on 12/29/23.	106		Design Consultation Complete; see above
2.	Jefferson Park Federal (45-60; 61-75; 77-92; 93-108; Jackson Circle; 1; 2-19; 21-42; 109-124; 1000 Jackson Place)	Cambridge Housing Authority	AHO Community meetings held on 3/2/21, 4/1/21, and 10/19/21. Planning Board design consultation held 11/9/21 and 2/15/22. Final Planning Board report issued 3/9/22 transmitted to the Trust on 3/24/22. Preparing for construction loan closing.	278		Design Consultation Complete; see above
3.	Walden Square II (102 Sherman Street)	WinnDevelopment Companies	AHO Community meetings held on 3/23/21, 4/13/21 and 5/27/21. Submission for first Planning Board advisory design consultation was withdrawn by developer on 11/16/21. Design revised based on community comments. Community meetings held 2/23/22, 8/29/23 (rescheduled from 8/1/23) and 9/14/23. First Planning Board advisory design meeting held 3/12/24. The second Planning Board advisory design meeting is scheduled for 7/10/24.	95		Original submission withdrawn; AHO community meetings complete; preparing to begin Design Consultation process underway.
4.	49 6th Street	POAH & Urban Spaces	AHO Community meetings held on 7/27/21 and 11/3/21. First Planning Board advisory design consultation meeting held 4/5/22. Second design consultation meeting was held on 6/28/22; Planning Board report issued 7/14/22 and transmitted to the Trust on 8/4/2022. Assembling remaining funding needed to begin construction.	46		Design Consultation Complete; see above
5.	116 Norfolk Street	Cambridge Housing Authority	First AHO community meeting held 2/10/22. Second community meeting held 4/26/22. First Planning Board advisory design consultation meeting was held on 7/5/22. Second advisory design consultation held 9/13/22. Planning Board report issued on 10/28/22 and transmitted to the Trust on 11/17/22. Closed 12/2022; under construction.	62		Design Consultation Complete; see above
6.	1627 Mass. Ave./4 Mellen	Homeowner's Rehab Inc	First AHO community meeting held 9/15/22. Second community held 3/15/23. First advisory design consultation with Planning Board held 7/18/23, second design consultation held 12/5/23. Final Planning Board report issued 12/20/23 and transmitted to the Trust on 1/25/2024. Assembling remaining funding needed to begin construction.	29		Design Consultation Complete; see above
7.	87-101 Blanchard Road	B'nai Brith Housing	AHO community meetings held 10/4/23 and 11/10/23. First Planning Board advisory design meeting held 1/23/24 and 6/4/24. Final Planning Board report issued 6/18/23 and transmitted to the Trust on 6/27/2024.	110		AHO community meetings complete; Design Consultation process underway.
8.	28-30 Wendell Street	Homeowner's Rehab Inc	First AHO community meeting held 2/14/24. HRI restarted the AHO community meeting to include 28 Wendell Street. The first combined community meeting was held 6/20/24.	TBD		AHO community meetings underway.
9.	35 Cherry Street	Just-A-Start Corporation	AHO community meetings held 5/15/24 and 6/26/24.	TBD		AHO community meetings underway.

Status of Active Inclusionary Housing Developments

	Approved Active Projects	Developer	Status	Rental Units	Ownership Units	Applicable zoning
1.	55 Wheeler Street	Toll Brothers	Covenant recorded 3/12/21. Building Permit issued 3/16/21. Under Construction. First phase complete. Residents moving in; tenant selection continuing.	99		Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement
2.	40 Thorndike Street, Court House	Leggat/McCall	Covenant recorded; Building Permit issued. Preparing for tenant selection.	48		All units are affordable
3.	605 Concord Ave.	Abodez Acorn	Covenant recorded; Building Permit issued 12/9/21. Under Construction.	7		Revised ordinance at 15% sf requirement
4.	1043-1059 Cambridge St.	418 Real Estate	Covenant recorded. Building permit issued 7/11/22. Working with selected homebuyers.		3	Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement
5.	121 Broadway	Boston Properties (BXP)	Covenant recorded 12/28/23. Building permit issued 3/21/24.	102		MXD zoning - 20% Inclusionary + 5% Middle-income

Under Development: 256 3
Completed Units: 1125 215
All Units: 1381 218
1599

	Active Pipeline Projects	Developer	Status	Rental Units	Ownership Units	Applicable zoning
1.	8 Winter Street	8 Winter St LLC, DND Homes	Inclusionary Housing Plan approved; preparing Covenant	3		Revised ordinance at 20% sf requirement
Subsidy amount needed to create Affordable Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area for Inclusionary Housing not created pursuant to Section 11.203.3 (i):				\$450 / per square foot		



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Christopher Cotter, Housing Director
Date: June 27, 2024
Re: Report on Affordable Housing Trust Funds

Attached please find a report on the fund balance and FY2024 activity for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

The report includes amounts of funds received by the Fund in FY2024 from all sources, including:

- City funds through the annual Operating Budget
- Community Preservation Act Funds
- Incentive Zoning Contributions

Notably, through June 1, 2024, the City has received more than \$35 million in Incentive Zoning contributions, by far the largest amount ever received in a single fiscal year. For comparison, in FY2023 the City received \$5 million through Incentive Zoning.

The report also includes funds received in FY2024 through repayment of loans and interest.

Commitments

The report includes funding amounts for developments and housing programs that have received funding commitments from the Trust. Once the Trust commits funds, those funds remain committed until they are ready to be encumbered and expended, while other work continues to move the development toward construction or completion. Often, affordable housing developers need to demonstrate evidence of a funding commitment from a local source like the Trust to be able to apply for other needed capital subsidy.

Committed funds are included in the report through June 1, 2024.

Encumbered Funds

344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139
Voice: 617 349-4600
Fax: 617 349-4669
TTY: 617 349-4621
www.cambridgema.gov

Committed funds are encumbered when they need to be available to expend. This typically happens when sites funds are needed to purchase property or when prior to construction start after all other funding commitments are obtained by the affordable housing developer.

Once encumbered, funds can then be expended. Expended funds are included in the report through March 31, 2024.

Current and Anticipated Requests

The report also includes total amounts of current and anticipated requests.

Current requests include requests we are now preparing to take the Trust. This includes new funding requests, requests for final commitments for previously funded developments, and funds being requested for new site acquisitions where offers have been accepted.

Current requests being reviewed include funds requested for Walden Square II, Rindge Commons Phase 2, and new site acquisitions.

Anticipated requests include staff estimates for funds that will be requested to complete the financing of developments where funds have already been committed. Funds that may soon be requested for the acquisition of new sites where negotiations are underway and offers are pending are also included in this total.

Anticipated requests include funds expected to be requested to fund: 1. ongoing programs including HomeBridge; 2. to complete the financing of developments that have received prior funding commitments including 37 Brookline Street, 28 & 30 Wendell Street, and 2072 Mass. Ave.; and 3. new developments where funds will soon be requested including 35 Cherry Street.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND STATUS REPORT

6/1/24

		<u>as of</u>	
AHT Fund Beginning Balance	\$ 149,728,223		7/1/23
<u>New Funds</u>			
City Funds (Budget)	\$ 24,645,750		
City Funds (CPA)	\$ 16,480,000		
Incentive Zoning Funds	\$ 35,301,548		
Inclusionary Housing Funds	\$ -		
Green Roof Zoning Funds	\$ -		
Loan Repayments	\$ 761,852		3/31/24
Interest	\$ 5,567,976		3/31/24
Total Fund Balance	\$ 232,485,350		
<u>Expended / Encumbered / Committed</u>			
Expended FY24	\$ (24,338,244)		3/31/24
Encumbered Funds	\$ (11,917,107)		3/31/24
Committed Funds	\$ (116,512,373)		
Total	\$ (152,767,724)		
Available Balance	\$ 79,717,626		
<u>Current & Anticipated Requests / Reservations</u>			
Current Requests*	\$ (45,750,000)		
Anticipated Requests / Reservations**	\$ (182,545,000)		
Total	\$ (228,295,000)		
Balance - unrequested/unreserved funds	\$ (148,577,374)		

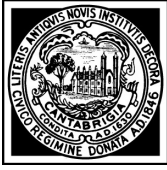
* Current Requests include funding request now being reviewed for Walden Square 2, Rindge Commons Phase 2, and pending new site acquisitions

** Anticipated Requests / Reservations include anticipated requests to complete proposed developments (HomeBridge, 28 & 30 Wendell, 2072 Mass Ave, 37 Brookline St, 35 Cherry Street, Corcoran Park and new site acquisitions).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND STATUS REPORT

6/1/24

AHT Active Commitment Detail		All Time		3/31/24 unless noted*			
Development / Program	Total Units	Total Commitment	Expended Prior FYs	Expended FY24	Encumbered	Committed	Funding Note
HOUSING - Fresh Pond Apts. Reserve	n/a	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 2,072,367	\$ 640,183	\$ 2,287,450	\$ -	reserve held by AHT
JAS - Rindge Commons phase 1	24	\$ 4,250,000	\$ 1,733,295	\$ 1,973,363	\$ -	\$ 543,342	
Park View Coop	12	\$ 4,199,215	\$ 938,878	\$ 2,505,223	\$ 755,114	\$ -	
CHA - 116 Norfolk	62	\$ 10,161,150	\$ 2,423,181	\$ 6,904,234	\$ 833,735	\$ -	
52 New Street	106	\$ 18,025,390	\$ 9,300,000	\$ 2,437,954	\$ 3,487,436	\$ 2,800,000	
CHA - Jefferson Park Federal	278	\$ 43,611,615	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,611,615	
HRI - 35 Harvey Street	12	\$ 3,339,437	\$ 180,000	\$ 1,552,516	\$ 1,606,921	\$ -	
POAH - 49 Sixth Street	46	\$ 10,750,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,750,000	additional funding request anticipated
CAPSTONE - 2072 Mass. Ave.	TBD	\$ 5,071,000	\$ 4,069,227	\$ -	\$ 1,001,773	\$ -	additional funding request anticipated
HRI - 1627 Mass. Ave. / 4 Mellen	29	\$ 10,425,000	\$ 7,662,164	\$ 244,153	\$ 18,683	\$ 2,500,000	additional funding request anticipated
JAS - Broadway Park	TBD	\$ 3,600,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,600,000	
JAS - 35 Cherry Street	TBD	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
JAS - 37 Brookline	TBD	\$ 2,064,000	\$ 1,714,849	\$ 82,709	\$ 266,442	\$ -	additional funding request anticipated
Neville Place	57	\$ 5,670,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,670,500	
HRI - 30 Wendell	TBD	\$ 6,357,000	\$ -	\$ 5,826,753	\$ 530,247	\$ -	additional funding request anticipated
HRI - 28 Wendell	TBD	\$ 10,300,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,300,000	additional funding request anticipated
JAS - Condo Acq. Neighborhood 9	1	\$ 550,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 550,000	
B'NAI BRITH - Blanchard Road	110	\$ 18,169,120	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,169,120	
CHA - Site Confidential	22	\$ 4,950,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,950,000	
WINN - Walden Square 2	95	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$18.75M request to AHT 6/27/24
JAS - Rindge Commons 2	77	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	funding request under review
CHA - Corcoran Park	291	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	funding request anticipated
New Site Acquisition	291	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	funding requests under review
HOUSING - Print Shop Condos	24	\$ 3,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000,000	
HOUSING - HomeBridge	TBD	\$ 21,200,000	\$ 15,589,188	\$ 1,078,016	\$ 715,000	\$ 3,817,796	
HOUSING - HomeBridge (100%-120% AMI)	TBD	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 849,399	\$ -	\$ 247,149	\$ 1,903,452	
HOUSING - FTHB Resale Fund	preservation	\$ 10,000,000	\$ -	\$ 614,654	\$ -	\$ 3,759,912	
HOUSING - FTHB Buydown Funds	n/a	\$ 500,000	\$ 108,424	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 391,576	
HOUSING - Agency Contracts Consulting, Admin	admin	n/a	n/a	\$ 478,486	\$ 167,157	\$ 45,060	
HOUSING STAFF	admin	n/a	n/a	\$ -	n/a	\$ 150,000	
TOTAL	1537			\$ 24,338,244	\$ 11,917,107	\$ 116,512,373	



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Date: June 27, 2024
To: Affordable Housing Trust
From: Janet Haines, Housing Development Planner
Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager for Housing Development
Re: Walden Square II – Funding request

Winn Development, a Boston-based housing developer, is requesting up to \$18,750,000 in financing to assist in the new construction of 95 units of affordable rental housing as an infill development at their existing 240-unit Walden Square site off Walden Street in North Cambridge. The proposed Walden Square II development consists of two new buildings containing a total of 95 units, including 33 1-bedrooms, 33 2-bedrooms, 23 3-bedrooms and 6 4-bedrooms. Winn will be permitting Walden Square II under the provisions of the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO), as described below in greater detail.

Background

As you may remember, several years ago, Winn had proposed a single 100+ unit building concept, with a 7-story building located at the Northern edge of the site, adjacent to the Yerxa Road pedestrian underpass. Staff shared periodic updates on the proposed development with the Trust as Winn worked through their design and development plans. Based on early feedback from the Trust, Winn agreed to update their unit mix to include more family-sized units. Winn also agreed to update their financing plan to eliminate acquisition costs and to include more soft funding from the state.

Winn began the AHO review process for the single-building plan but decided to put the project on hold following mixed response to their design concept during the community process and questions about Winn's management of the existing 240 affordable units at Walden Square. Winn spent the next year working to address these issues. Winn used the intervening time to making site improvements at Walden Square including updated landscaping, improved lighting and security, beefing up staffing, and painting and new flooring in common areas of the low-rise buildings, renovations to a number of units. Winn also made management improvements including increased staffing, additional management training, and improved communications approaching including providing translations of notices to tenants.

Attached are two letters from then Mayor and Vice Mayor, related to Walden Square. The first letter, dated January 20, 2022 describes concerns they had with Winn's management of Walden Square Apartments. The second letter, dated April 13, 2023, provides an update confirming the improvements which Winn has made at Walden Square.

Project Description

During that time, Winn also revised their design approach for Walden II to respond to community input.

The new design consists of a smaller 7-story building (Building A) with 60 units located on the north edge and a 6-story building (Building B) with 35 units located at the south portion of the property. There are currently 190 parking spaces on the site for the existing 240-unit affordable Walden Square I Apartments. The new Walden Square II development will add an additional eight spaces, for a total of 198 spaces for the entire site. There will also be 74 new long-term bike parking spaces in indoor bike rooms and outdoor enclosed bike shelters, 42 short-term bike parking spaces, and a 19-dock Blue Bike station on the property.

Winn was able to retain the large number of family-sized units during their redesign. Approximately two-thirds of the units will be two-bedroom or larger, as summarized below:

Unit Size	# Units by BR	% Units by BR
1BR	33	35%
2BR	33	35%
3BR	23	24%
4BR	6	6%
Total:	95	100%

As an infill project, the Walden Square II development will be integrated into Winn’s affordable Walden Square I site. The redeveloped site will include 2.3 acres of open space (31% of lot area), including 3 playgrounds tailored to different age groups of children, a half-court basketball court, and a number of pedestrian and bike paths available to residents of both sites.

In reviewing the funding request, staff requested that Winn provide information on the operating budgets for both Walden I and Walden II, each of which are separate developments owned by separate entities. Staff reviewed the budgets to ensure that the estimated operating costs for the new development were reasonable and in-line with what we would expect compared to other comparably sized developments and to confirm that any cost sharing between the two properties was being allocated appropriately.

The two projects will share common amenities and these costs will be shared on a pro rata basis. In addition to the shared open space, existing common space in the Walden I buildings will be expanded and improved to create larger meeting spaces, a new fitness room with exercise equipment and a yoga room, and an upgraded computer room all of which will be shared by all tenants. The new building will also house the joint property management and resident services offices servicing Walden I and Walden II properties and residents.

The cost to enlarge the existing community room space and to create a fitness center in the existing property will be funded through the Walden Square II development budget. The alternative to this approach would be to create community space in one of the new Walden Square II buildings, which would require a reduction in the number of units and/or bedrooms in Walden Square II. Staff will continue to review this to determine whether some of these costs can be paid by Walden Square I.

In addition to sharing maintenance and property management staff, the combined site will share a full-time resident services coordinator who will work directly with residents to connect them to existing services within the community, focusing on community engagement, economic mobility, housing stability, employment, health, and education. The site is also served by the Walden Square Community Association (WSCA) with a full-time staff member that arranges programming for Walden Square residents, with a focus on programming for youth and seniors. The WSCA staff member is paid by Winn, while the resident services coordinator is paid from building operations.

Proposed Development Budget

The total development cost (TDC) for the project is estimated to be \$80,413,447, or \$846,457 per unit. In addition to the \$18,750,000 (\$197,368) request from the Trust, the project will be funded with \$10,010,000 in hard debt, 4% tax credit equity of \$36,716,000, EOHLC soft funding of \$9,500,000, MassHousing’s Workforce funding of \$5,000,000, Passive House grants of \$285,000, and deferred fees of \$152,447

The estimated TDC for the project has increased from Winn’s earlier estimates due in large part to general increases in construction costs being seen by all projects in recent years, as well as the increased cost of moving to a two-building plan, which requires twice as many elevators and other expensive items. While the amount of Trust funding requested per unit is higher than some other recent Trust-funded projects, Walden Square II is in line when reviewed by funding per bedroom, given the number of 3-bedrooms and 4-bedrooms at Walden Square II, as shown in the following table:

	Walden II	87-101 Blanchard	52 New Street
Units	95 units	110 units	106 units
TDC/Unit	846,457	617,898	852,451
Fees+OH/Unit	51,861	48,378	69,212
TDC/Bedroom	418,420	617,898	426,226
TDC/sq.ft.	672	649	699
CAHT & City Funding/Unit	197,368	165,174	170,051
CAHT & City % of TDC	23.32%	27%	20%
EOHLC/MH funding/Unit	152,632	100,000	63,679
EOHLC/MH % of TDC	18.03%	16%	7%

Staff will continue to work with Winn on seeking ways to reduce the overall budget, including the funding needed from the Trust.

AHO Review

Winn held a community meeting in February 2022 to update the neighborhood on improvements made to Walden Square I and introduced their revised designs to the community in 2023. They completed their AHO community review in September 2023 and began their AHO advisory design review with the Planning Board in March 2024. Their first Planning Board review was held on March

12, 2024, and their second and final Planning Board is scheduled for July 2nd, 2024. Their revised design plans have been generally well-received.

The final Planning Board report on the AHO design consultation will be forwarded to the Trust for review when it is completed.

Recommendation

The Walden Square II development will create 95 high-quality affordable housing units including a large number of much needed three- and four-bedroom units. It is located in a good location for housing, close to Danehy Park, one of the largest public parks in Cambridge and bordered by the Cambridge Friends School, which features a large play field. The site is .5 miles from Porter Square, with access to the MBTA commuter rail and Red Line and within .5 miles are grocery stores, numerous restaurants, retail, and other amenities. Winn has reported that there are over 1,000 households on the waiting list for their existing 240-unit Walden Square I development, demonstrating the demand for affordable housing at this location.

In preparing this request and recommendation, we reviewed Winn's request with Alyson Stein, Jim Stockard, and Susan Schlesinger who agreed with our recommendation to bring this request to the Trust and recommend approval.

Housing staff recommends that Winn Development's request for up to \$18,750,000 in permanent financing be approved by the Trust subject to the following conditions. The loan commitment shall be made subject to the Trust's standard terms and conditions including, but limited to, the following:

1. Staff approval of the final development and operating budgets including confirming appropriate division of costs between Walden Square 1 and Walden Square II for any shared amenities, staffing, services and other shared expenses.
2. Environmental assessment and/or remediation plan, acceptable to staff.
3. Staff approval of construction plans and specifications;
4. Submission of final construction bid and trade items from general contractor along with construction contract Borrower has entered into with contractor;
5. Firm written commitments from all funding sources, sufficient to complete transaction;
6. Staff approval of the approach used to separate the Walden Square II site from the existing Walden Square I site, anticipated to be either a ground lease or condominium structure;
 - a. In the event of a ground lease structure, staff approval of the terms of the ground lease, including the requirement that any ground lease payments made to landlord (an entity related to Winn) be reinvested back into the development, on terms approved by Staff;
7. Staff approval of the tenant selection and marketing plan, which shall be consistent with the City's marketing preferences including but not limited to maximum preferences for Cambridge residents;
8. The Trust's review and consideration of Planning Board final AHO advisory design review report;

9. Standard Trust terms and conditions, including:

- All affordable units shall be subject to the City's affordable housing covenant to be signed at loan closing which shall reflect the requirements of the Affordable Housing Overlay, including the requirement for permanent affordability;
- All units shall be restricted to households earning below 80% AMI, as defined in the affordable housing restriction;
- The loan shall be secured as a second mortgage loan, subordinate only to first mortgage financing;
- The loan shall have an interest rate of 3% compounding, or such other rate approved by Staff;
- Loan shall be subject to a penalty rate of 8% compounding; applicable upon violation of the affordability restriction;
- All principal and accrued interest shall be due and payable at the end of the term; however, the maturity date may be extended subject to approval by the Trust and extension of the affordability period;
- The loan shall provide for repayment of principal and interest from 50% of net cash flow from the development as described in the loan documents, or such other terms acceptable to staff;
- Loan shall be non-recourse;
- Any reductions in project costs or increases in non-Trust funding sources shall be used to reduce the amount of the Trust commitments, on terms acceptable to Staff.

During the construction period, the Borrower shall comply with the following requirements:

- Notify Lender's Construction Manager of all construction meetings and copy on meeting minutes;
- Copy Lender on all change orders;
- Copy Lender on all funding requisitions to other sources; and,
- Submit requisitions in form acceptable to Lender.

Following lease-up, the Borrower shall comply with the following requirement:

- Provide demographic information on the race and ethnicity of applicants at initial marketing, initial lease up, initial occupancy, and on waitlists and ongoing occupancy over time, as requested and in a form acceptable to the Lender; such reporting requirements will be included in the tenant selection plan documentation approved by Staff at or prior to Loan closing.
- Provide data on the project's operating costs, upon request, in format acceptable to Staff.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SUMBUL SIDDIQUI

mayor@cambridgema.gov
Phone: 617-349-4321



OFFICE OF THE VICE MAYOR
ALANNA M. MALLON

amallon@cambridgema.gov
Phone: 617-349-4280

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge, MA

January 20, 2022

Affordable Housing Trust

Re: Concerns regarding Winn Management property at Walden Square

Dear Housing Trust Members,

We are writing to raise some serious concerns about Winn Management that have been brought to our attention over the course of last two years. Due to the repeated nature of these complaints, the similarity of their content, and evidence presented to us, we believe that Winn Management is continually failing its residents, especially at the Walden Square Apartments. Based on these concerns we would strongly advise against supporting the Walden Square project in the City of Cambridge moving forward if these concerns are not addressed adequately:

- Egregious and unresolved pest infestation issues over several years (Inspectional service Department has documentation of this)
- Lack of appropriate communication from management to residents (not accommodating of diverse language needs, posting notices at the last moment, poor attitude of office staff, unresolved work orders)
- Environment of intimidation and suggestion that residents leave if they are dissatisfied, which is not a viable option given the lack of affordable housing options in Cambridge

We have spoken to the City's Inspectional Services Department on many occasions, and there is photographic evidence to back up allegations, and residents are willing to speak to trust members about the conditions they are living under. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

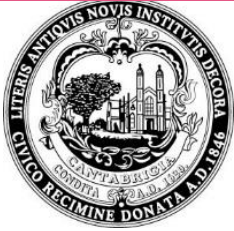
Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sumbul Siddiqui in black ink.

Mayor Siddiqui

Handwritten signature of Alanna M. Mallon in black ink.

Vice Mayor Mallon



City of Cambridge

COF 2023 #93
IN CITY COUNCIL
May 15, 2023



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SUMBUL SIDDIQUI

Mayor@cambridgema.gov
Phone: 617-349-4321

Sumbul Siddiqui, Mayor
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

April 13, 2023
City Council

Re: Holding WinnCompanies Property Management Accountable to Tenants

At the end of January 2022, Vice Mayor Mallon and I sent a letter to the Affordable Housing Trust outlining our concerns regarding WinnCompanies' property management at Walden Square, raised to us by current residents. Our concerns included egregious and unresolved pest infestation issues, a lack of appropriate communication from management to residents, and an environment of intimidation and suggestion that residents should leave if they are dissatisfied. This was in anticipation of WinnCompanies's request to the Affordable Housing Trust for funds to support Walden Phase 2, which they presented as creating much needed deed-restricted additional affordable housing units for families. Following that letter, my office hosted three meetings with high level WinnCompanies management and four meetings to hear directly from residents. In the past 1.5 years, we have made progress in the following ways:

- We were given two point-people for WinnResidential, Trevor Samios, *Senior Vice President, Connected Communities*, and Jeff Stigliano, *Regional Vice President* who have very been responsive to the concerns we've raised on behalf of tenants. Jeff often meets with tenants within 24 hours of when an issue is raised to us.
- We have been provided with updates about WinnResidential investments and improvements on a bi-monthly basis. Some of these are highlighted below:

- Two new staff members were hired who we have heard positive feedback about, Jennifer Anderson, Property Manager and Ameer Tawakli, Connected Communities Coordinator
- Communications to residents have been translated into English, Spanish, Haitian Creole and Arabic languages, and an iPad installed outside the office to assist with translation for residents.
 - Somali and Amharic will be added moving forward.
- Reimbursements totaling \$20,799.99 have been made to 3 households to address losses caused by management's neglect (repeated pest treatment, mold, leaks).
- A new Parking Policy was put into place in May of 2022.
- A Resident Advisory Committee was formed, and 6 meetings held; this RAC is in the process of being combined with the *Walden Square Community Association*, an independent non-profit tasked with supporting residents.
- SMART exterior bait stations were installed in coordination with Inspectional Services as part of a pilot project. 133 rodents were removed from the site via this project.
- Additional extermination services were contracted and currently out of 240 Units at Walden Square on average 31 have pest issues, this is comparable with other large properties in the area.
 - Since the fourth quarter of 2022 full building cleanouts and resulting follow up there has been a 59% reduction in units with exterminator noted activity or signs of activity.
- Additional security staff, maintenance staff, cameras and lights have been installed, as well as key fob access to one of the buildings. Additional capital improvement projects have been completed.
- In 2022, 7 units were renovated, in 2023, 50 units are planned for renovation; 4 units have been converted to ADA and 4 more are in process.
- We connected with MassHousing, which serves as the Contract Administrator for HUD Boston. MassHousing staff engaged directly with Winn to outline specific concerns about pest control. Through ongoing communication and follow-up, they have concluded that this challenging pest problem at Walden Square is now being addressed aggressively and with consistent attention.

While ongoing work continues there is now more attention and focus from WinnCompanies, I am pleased with the efforts made, and I look forward to updates at Walden Square.

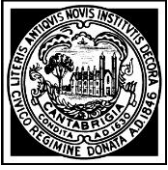
Sincerely,



Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui



Vice Mayor Mallon



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ

*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

SANDRA CLARKE

*Deputy Director
Chief of Administration*

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Christopher Cotter, Housing Director
Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager for Housing Development
Date: June 27, 2024
Re: Planning Board review of 87-101 Blanchard Road

B'nai B'rith Housing (BBH) has been working on plans to replace the existing 2-story commercial building on the site into 110 senior affordable rental units. CDD and Housing Department staff have worked with BBH as the team developed its plan, held community meetings, and recently completed the advisory design review process with the Planning Board under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO).

The Planning Board held its second required advisory design consultation meeting on June 4, 2024 to review and comment on the revised designs for BBH's proposed development. The Board provided initial comments on the project in February 2024.

The proposed design was favorably received by the Board, which noted in its report that BBH was responsive to both staff and Board member comments, which added a big impact to the overall design development. The Planning Board advised additional consultation with CDD, which is outlined in the attached report, and is primarily directed at further refinement of the proposed walkway, consideration to add more trees, and incorporation of bike parking.

The AHO requires that the results of the design review process be shared with the Affordable Housing Trust. The Planning Board report is attached and includes:

- Planning Board Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation (6/18/2024), including:
 - CDD Staff Memo (5/29/2024);
- Planning Board Initial Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation (2/12/2024), including:
 - CDD Staff Memo 1/17/2024).

Project Overview:

The property consists of a commercial building that will be demolished and replaced by a six-story affordable housing development for seniors. The current development proposal involves creating a total of 110 one-bedroom units. Amenities will also include a community space, a fitness room, a library, a solarium, and a dog-washing room. Furthermore, BBH will add thirty off-street parking, long-term bike parking spaces, and a

new Bluebikes station. The project is being permitted under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). Under their AHO submission, all 110 units will be affordable to households earning up to 60% of area median income (AMI).

More information on BBH's proposed development, including material BBH submitted to the Planning Board and presentation materials, can be seen on CDD's 87-101 Blanchard Road project page at:

[https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Housing/87101blanchardroad.](https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Housing/87101blanchardroad)



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: June 18, 2024

Subject: Final Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design
Consultation Procedure Compliance Certification

Project Location: 87-101 Blanchard Road

Date of Planning Board Meeting: June 4, 2024

Project Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, June 4th to review and comment on the revised designs for 87-101 Blanchard Road, a mixed-use development proposed by B’nai B’rith Community Development, LLC (“BBH”) under the Affordable Housing Overlay (Section 11.207 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board reviewed a revised submission and plan sets submitted by BBH dated May 1, 2024, and memoranda from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, which is attached. The Board held its first design consultation on January 30, 2024 and issued an initial report dated [February 12, 2024](#).

Board Comments

Overall, the Board noted that the revised designs by BBH were responsive to both staff and Board member comments and added up to a big impact on the site’s overall design development. Specifically, Board members noted that the more consistent material palette, increased amenity deck, rooftop terrace, reduced drop-off area and increased number of tree plantings all positively contribute to the site’s design and future quality of life of the building’s residents.

In addition to the suggestions for further study included in the CDD Urban Design report, the Board offers the following suggestions to explore further as the proposal moves forward:

- Further refinement of the proposed pedestrian walkway behind the under-building parking area and the opportunity to incorporate textured pavement or pavers.
 - At the terminus of the walkway, further design development to ensure a seamless transition from the walkway to the rear entry plaza for the building.
- Opportunities to add additional trees in the second parking island

City of Cambridge, MA
87-101 Blanchard Road (AHO-7) PB Final Report

- Opportunities to incorporate bike parking and/or storage that can accommodate larger bicycles/tricycles
- Coordination with the Department of Public Works on the viability of adding street trees within the proposed sidewalk area along Blanchard Road.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

Swaathi Joseph

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Mary Flynn, Chair.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: May 29, 2024

Re: **AHO-7, 87-101 Blanchard Road - Affordable Housing Overlay Design Consultation Meeting #2**

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Overview

Submission Type: Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Advisory Design Review

Applicant: B'nai B'rith Community Development, LLC. (BBH)

Zoning District(s): Residence C-1; Business A (BA)

Proposal Summary: Construction of senior housing in place of an existing 2-story commercial building to create hundred and ten (110) new rental units under the AHO.

Planning Board Review and comment on conformance with AHO

Action: Development Standards, City Development Guidelines for the proposal area, Design Guidelines for AHO, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives.

Memo Contents: CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report

Other Staff Reports: None

AHO Design Guidelines

Site Design Objectives	
Response to Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design site layouts to harmonize with the neighborhood context.
Open Space & Landscape Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design open space to enhance the lives of residents and the broader community by offering aesthetic and environmental benefits. • Offer useful amenities to residents, provide opportunities to minimize the impact of new development on neighbors' privacy and quality of life, and contribute to the beauty of the city.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote non-motorized mobility by prioritizing pedestrian-friendly and bike-accessible site design.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the impact of parking and driveway.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the visual, acoustical, and environmental impacts of essential utilities and services.
Outdoor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lighting for safety and functionality while minimizing energy use, light pollution, and other negative impacts.
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the visual environment and strengthen the sense of place by incorporating art.
Building Design Objectives	
Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Configure massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. In evolving areas, configure new developments to help realize the City's vision for urban form.
Facades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design facades to enhance and enliven the public realm. In established areas, emphasize compatibility and reinforce sense of place. In evolving residential and commercial districts, contribute to the transformation of urban form by setting precedents for design excellence. • Where appropriate, incorporate ground level retail spaces and common areas to foster a lively enliven the urban environment. • Provide daylight to interior spaces, avoid excessive energy use, and protect the privacy of residents of neighboring buildings. • Design facades to relate to the residential scales and patterns of Cambridge's diverse and historic neighborhoods. • Design street facades to offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and visual interest as appropriate to their role in defining public space.
Architectural Details, Materials, Color, and Finishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use materials that are warm, inviting, and compatible with surrounding existing buildings and the neighborhood context. Develop building facades of high-quality, durable materials and with colors, finishes, and textures appropriate to building contexts.

Building Interiors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Affordable housing, like all housing, should serve the needs of its residents while contributing to the residential character and sense of neighborhood within the area at large.
Sustainable Design Objective	
Site and Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieve resilience measures to the maximum extent possible, including energy efficiency and measures to promote the health and wellness of residents.

The complete set of Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing (28 July 2020) can be found at:

https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend_aho_designguidelines_20200728v2.pdf

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

Zoning & Development Staff Report

Overview

B'nai B'rith Community Development, LLC (“BBH” or the “Applicant”) proposes to demolish an existing, one-story commercial building and construct a six-story, L-shaped building consisting of 110 affordable dwelling units for seniors and approximately 8,000 square feet of non-residential space on the ground story at the northeastern corner of Blanchard Road and Normandy Avenue in the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood of Northwest Cambridge. The project parcel also contains a three-story residential development separated into two distinct buildings at the back of the site.

The project includes thirty off-street parking spaces, 67 long-term bike parking spaces, and a new 19-dock Bluebikes station on the site. The site is proposing approximately 53,000 square feet of open space (38% of the total lot area), which exceeds the minimum requirements under the AHO.

Planning Board Comments from Initial Consultation Meeting

Overall, the Planning Board supported the creation of new affordable housing for seniors, the scale and massing of the building, and the building’s proposed siting along Blanchard Road.

In terms of site design, Board members urged the Applicant to explore opportunities to reduce the overall paving on the site and consider alternatives to providing off-street parking beneath the footprint of the building. Board members also asked the Applicant to explore adding more ‘green’ to the site – in the form of additional trees and/or outdoor open space and recreational area.

In terms of building design, Board members requested the Applicant further increase the articulation of the building façade, use a more limited and contextual material palette, and explore relocating the isolated dwelling unit on the ground floor near the drop-off area in the rear.

Staff Comments on Revised Submission

A revised application was received by the City dated May 1, 2024, consisting of revised application forms and narrative, a revised graphics volume, and a revised appendix volume. The Applicant also met with City staff to discuss further design refinements since the initial hearing, and the revised application is responsive to both staff and Board comments on the original application.

The project remains consistent with the AHO zoning standards. In the initial [Zoning memo](#) from CDD staff, further detail of the proposed mechanical screen was requested to ensure that the proposed opacity requirements set forth in Section 11.207.7.5.c would be met. Perspective views illustrating the location and view of proposed rooftop mechanical equipment are provided on Pages 58-60 of Volume 2b of the graphical materials, and demonstrate that mechanical equipment will be set back from the principal wall plane and permanently screened from view. Further, the proposed rooftop mechanical equipment will be enclosed by a screenwall that is entirely opaque.

Urban Design Staff Report

Overview

The Affordable Housing Overlay project at 87-101 Blanchard Road proposes the redevelopment of an existing, two-story commercial building fronting Blanchard Road into a 6-story building containing 110-unit age-restricted apartments of 100 percent affordable housing. Amenity and social service spaces are to be provided on the ground floor. The footprint is “L” shaped, with one wing oriented along Blanchard Road to the west, and the other aligning with the Blair Pond Stream to the north. To the south and east are two existing, four-story multifamily residential buildings separated from the project by a shared parking lot that will be substantially reconfigured. Abutting the northeast corner of the parcel is Blair Pond, a natural area hydrologically connected to the Alewife Brook Reservation.

Blanchard Road forms the boundary between the Town of Belmont and the City of Cambridge, specifically the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood in which the project is located. Its character changes frequently along its relatively short length, from light industrial/commercial adjacent to the Fitchburg Line tracks to small-scale residential approaching Concord Ave, and thereafter to a mix of residential and open space where it fronts the Fresh Pond Reservation. The project occurs at the transition between the industrial/commercial and residential areas. While no separated bicycle facilities exist along Blanchard Road, the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path is a short distance to the north, and there are protected bike lanes along Concord Avenue to the south.

In general terms, the design shown in the revised submission (May 2, 2024) is similar to the design presented at the first Planning Board hearing on January 29, 2024 (materials dated November 29, 2023). While the revised design incorporates numerous improvements, it remains in general conformance with the Design Guidelines for the Affordable Housing Overlay (2020):

- Creating a generous, lushly landscaped, and activated urban edge and street wall that reinforces Blanchard Road.
- Stepping down the height and massing as it approaches smaller-scale adjacent context.
- Creating a highly transparent, welcoming, and visually prominent entry at the building’s corner with benches and plantings.
- Visually shielding parking from the public right of way.
- Employing natural and durable materials that relate to the context.
- Incorporating a range of sustainability measures including habitat restoration, increased site plantings and permeability, and all-electric, passive house standard construction.

In the project’s first hearing, the Planning Board strongly supported the project but suggested that further study be given to specific aspects of the design, including:

- The amount of the site that is devoted to parking.
- The relative benefit of the nine below-building parking spaces versus other programmatic uses, and the potential circulation conflicts its two-way drive aisle creates.
- The amount and coherence of the open spaces provided for residents, and specifically expanding the amenity deck along the Blair Pond Stream.
- Increased opportunities for trees, especially in the parking lot to reduce heat island effect.
- The number of building materials and whether a reduction would clarify the composition.
- The single unit located in the north wing, and if it could be clustered with the other residential units on the ground floor to decrease its isolation.

Urban Design Comments on Design Revisions

The design of the project has evolved collaboratively in conversation with Staff since the previous meeting, and while some issues previously identified by the Planning Board remain, most have evolved in a substantially positive direction.

Outdoor Spaces

While the number of parking spaces has not diminished, the amount and quality of outdoor spaces within the portion of the site the applicant controls has increased to the benefit of both the residents and surrounding community. The project also benefits from the close proximity of several major open spaces such as the Alewife Brook Reservation, Clay Pit Pond, and Fresh Pond Reservation.

- The amenity deck along the north side of the building has doubled in area, expanding the interface between Blair Pond Stream and amenity spaces lining the building's north wing.
- The entry from the parking lot now incorporates four additional trees within enlarged permeable and planted areas flanked by seating.
- The sidewalk along Blanchard road has been increased in width, and the proposed trees within the front yard setback have been increased in number and adjusted to better shade the sidewalk (street trees aren't possible in the sidewalk due to the atypical location of underground utilities beneath it).
- The plaza at the entry facing Blanchard Road has been widened, with built-in seating along an enlarged planter including three additional trees.
- Within the parking area, a sidewalk has now been incorporated along the driveway, and the island has been increased in width to accommodate two additional shade trees.

Façade Materials

The organization of materials across the façade has been further refined and rationalized to create a clearer and more compelling composition.

- The wood cladding previously present only around the Blanchard Road building entry has been extended across the length of the ground floor west façade, employing a rich, warm material to reinforce a more clearly legible building base.
- Metal paneling is now used to clad all bays whether projecting or coplanar, creating a clear relationship among them while simultaneously reducing the overall number of materials.
- Projecting brick areas anchor the ends and intersection of the two wings, with the parapet of the central portion now extending backward to complete the volume. Punched windows within the brick portions now include both cast sills and brick headers, adding texture and contrast.
- The inclusion of an additional horizontal mullion on Window Types "B" and "C" lends the fenestration a more residential scale and creates a shared datum across all window types.
- The applicant clarified the challenges that balconies introduce, from the security of residents to achieving passive house standards. Bays, step backs, and canopies have instead been incorporated to add depth and shadow to the façade.

Ground Floor

The program and organization of the ground floor has remained relatively consistent.

- The applicant clarified their concerns around introducing additional ground floor entrances into the building due to security for the intended population. These concerns seem valid, and the landscaping in front yard will still provide an immensely improved public realm experience over the existing condition.
- The single isolated unit in the rear wing was a frequent topic of conversation between staff and the applicant. Suggestions for exchanging its location with that of the trash room were explored but found to negatively impact the upper floors due to the location of the trash chute. Additionally, it cannot be exchanged with the Social Services space as that program is fulfilling a zoning requirement. The unit has been subsequently shifted towards the middle of the wing to lessen its isolation. While still less than ideal, it is still preferable to losing a much-needed unit of affordable housing.
- The below-building parking was also frequently discussed. The 110 units and 30 parking spaces yields a roughly 0.27 parking ratio. Given that the intended population has a higher likelihood of mobility challenges than the general population, this ratio doesn't seem unreasonable. The proposed parking remains fully visually shielded from the public right-of-way, and the drive aisle serving it has now been made one-way to reduce potential conflicts and decreased in width to enlarge the adjacent parking island. This island now accommodates two additional shade trees which will both lower the potential heat island effect of the asphalt as well as further visually screen the below building parking from the adjacent residential buildings.
- Access to the long-term bicycle parking has been shifted from along the boardwalk fronting Blair Pond Stream to the parking lot, with a sidewalk along the driveway and signage to warn cars of potential cyclists. This removes the awkward condition of bicycles traversing the amenity deck.

Suggestions for Further Study

Site

- The point where the painted pedestrian pathway behind the building connects rear building entry plaza is depicted in slightly different ways across the drawings. Staff prefer the design shown on Page 40 as it depicts an enlarged plaza space. However, it would be optimal for the painted pathway to feed directly onto the plaza at the closest available point as opposed to following the curve of the drop off towards the entry canopy.

Façade

- There may be potential to further differentiate the upper levels of the two wings based on their contextual responses to both Blanchard Road and Blair Pond Street in a similar manner to the ground level façade.

Ground Floor

- It would be worth exploring whether the Bicycle Storage Room can include spaces that can accommodate tricycles and recumbent bicycles given the intended population.
- Methods for ensuring that the single unit in the north wing is effectively shielded from the adjacent parking area would be beneficial.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	February 12, 2024
Subject:	Initial Report of Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Design Consultation
Project Location:	87-101 Blanchard Road
Date of Planning Board Meeting:	January 30, 2024

Overview

The Planning Board (the “Board”) met on Tuesday, January 30, 2024 to review and comment on the design for 87-101 Blanchard Road, a residential development by B’nai B’rith Housing, Inc. (the “Applicant”) under the Affordable Housing Overlay (“AHO”) in Section 11.207 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Board reviewed a plan set submitted by the Applicant dated November 29, 2023, as well as memos from the Community Development Department (CDD) staff, which are attached.

Proposal Description

The proposal involves the demolition of an existing, two-story commercial building and the construction of an approximately 100,000 square-foot, 6-story, L-shaped building consisting of 110 affordable dwelling units for seniors and approximately 8,000 square feet of non-residential space on the ground story. The project parcel contains a four-story residential development separated into two distinct buildings at the back of the site. The project will consist of all one-bedroom units and thirty new off-street parking spaces.

Board Comments

Board members were very supportive of the proposed use and acknowledged that affordable senior housing is a critical need in Cambridge and the broader metro area. Overall, the Board supported the scale and massing of the building, as well as its proposed siting along Blanchard Road in order to help create an activated streetwall and be sensitive to the lower-scale residential development to the south.

As the proposal continues to develop, Board members urged the Applicant to focus on the following program and design elements:

Site Design

- Board members had varying opinions about the number of planned off-street parking spaces. Some Board members felt that the site, as proposed, would contain more off-street parking spaces than what may be necessary. Other Board members noted, however,

that seniors may be more inclined to drive than to use alternative modes of transportation that may be available. Board members generally agreed that the proposed design of the parking should be reviewed to see if it is possible to:

- Reduce the overall amount of paving on the site; and
- Eliminate or reduce the area underneath the building footprint designated for parking at-grade.
- Explore opportunities to add additional trees – both on the interior of the site in the proposed parking area, as well as along Blanchard Road to help create a double allée of trees along the sidewalk.
- Consider opportunities for expanding outdoor open space and recreation areas, which could include expanding the proposed outdoor deck area or creating additional green spaces on the site, such as an area for a community garden.
- Provide more information on the proposed amenity spaces and the planned programming to link outdoor areas with indoor spaces.
- Provide information to illustrate that the proposed drop-off area on the interior of the site has enough width to accommodate passenger vehicles as well as vans and shuttle buses.

Building Design

- Consider opportunities to further increase the articulation of the façade, through techniques such as adding balconies to units.
- Consider reducing the number of materials planned for the façade and relying more on neighborhood context for material options.
- Explore opportunities to better connect the ground-story unit on the northeastern corner of the building to the rest of the residential areas of the building.
- To address some of the site design comments above, consider reducing the building’s footprint, balanced by increases in height in certain parts of the building, to preserve the overall number of planned units.

In addition to these topic areas, the Board supported comments made in the staff memos for the proposal and asked that they be considered to refine the project’s design.

Submitted for the Planning Board,

Swaathi Joseph

Representative to the Planning Board, authorized by Mary Flynn, Chair.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: January 17, 2024

Re: Affordable Housing Overlay Design Consultation **AHO-7, 87-101 Blanchard Road**

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

Overview

Submission Type: Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Advisory Design Review

Applicant: B'nai B'nai Community Development, LLC. (BBH)

Zoning District(s): Residence C-1; Business A (BA)

Proposal Summary: Construction of senior housing in place of an existing 2-story commercial building to create hundred and ten (110) new rental units under the AHO.

Planning Board Review and comment on conformance with AHO

Action: Development Standards, City Development Guidelines for the proposal area, Design Guidelines for AHO, and Citywide Urban Design Objectives.

Memo Contents: CDD Zoning Report & Urban Design Report

Other Staff Reports: None

AHO Design Guidelines

Site Design Objectives	
Response to Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design site layouts to harmonize with the neighborhood context.
Open Space & Landscape Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design open space to enhance the lives of residents and the broader community by offering aesthetic and environmental benefits. • Offer useful amenities to residents, provide opportunities to minimize the impact of new development on neighbors' privacy and quality of life, and contribute to the beauty of the city.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote non-motorized mobility by prioritizing pedestrian-friendly and bike-accessible site design.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the impact of parking and driveway.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the visual, acoustical, and environmental impacts of essential utilities and services.
Outdoor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lighting for safety and functionality while minimizing energy use, light pollution, and other negative impacts.
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the visual environment and strengthen the sense of place by incorporating art.
Building Design Objectives	
Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Configure massing for compatibility with the prevailing or desired pattern of neighboring buildings and open spaces. In established neighborhoods, relate to the existing pattern of streets and other open spaces, and prioritize compatibility with existing buildings. In evolving areas, configure new developments to help realize the City's vision for urban form.
Facades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design facades to enhance and enliven the public realm. In established areas, emphasize compatibility and reinforce sense of place. In evolving residential and commercial districts, contribute to the transformation of urban form by setting precedents for design excellence. • Where appropriate, incorporate ground level retail spaces and common areas to foster a lively enliven the urban environment. • Provide daylight to interior spaces, avoid excessive energy use, and protect the privacy of residents of neighboring buildings. • Design facades to relate to the residential scales and patterns of Cambridge's diverse and historic neighborhoods. • Design street facades to offer a sense of civic presence and human scale, and visual interest as appropriate to their role in defining public space.

Architectural Details, Materials, Color, and Finishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use materials that are warm, inviting, and compatible with surrounding existing buildings and the neighborhood context. Develop building facades of high-quality, durable materials and with colors, finishes, and textures appropriate to building contexts.
Building Interiors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable housing, like all housing, should serve the needs of its residents while contributing to the residential character and sense of neighborhood within the area at large.
Sustainable Design Objective	
Site and Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve resilience measures to the maximum extent possible, including energy efficiency and measures to promote the health and wellness of residents.

The complete set of Design Guidelines for Affordable Housing (28 July 2020) can be found at:

https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Housing/Overlay/zngamend_aho_designguidelines_20200728v2.pdf

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

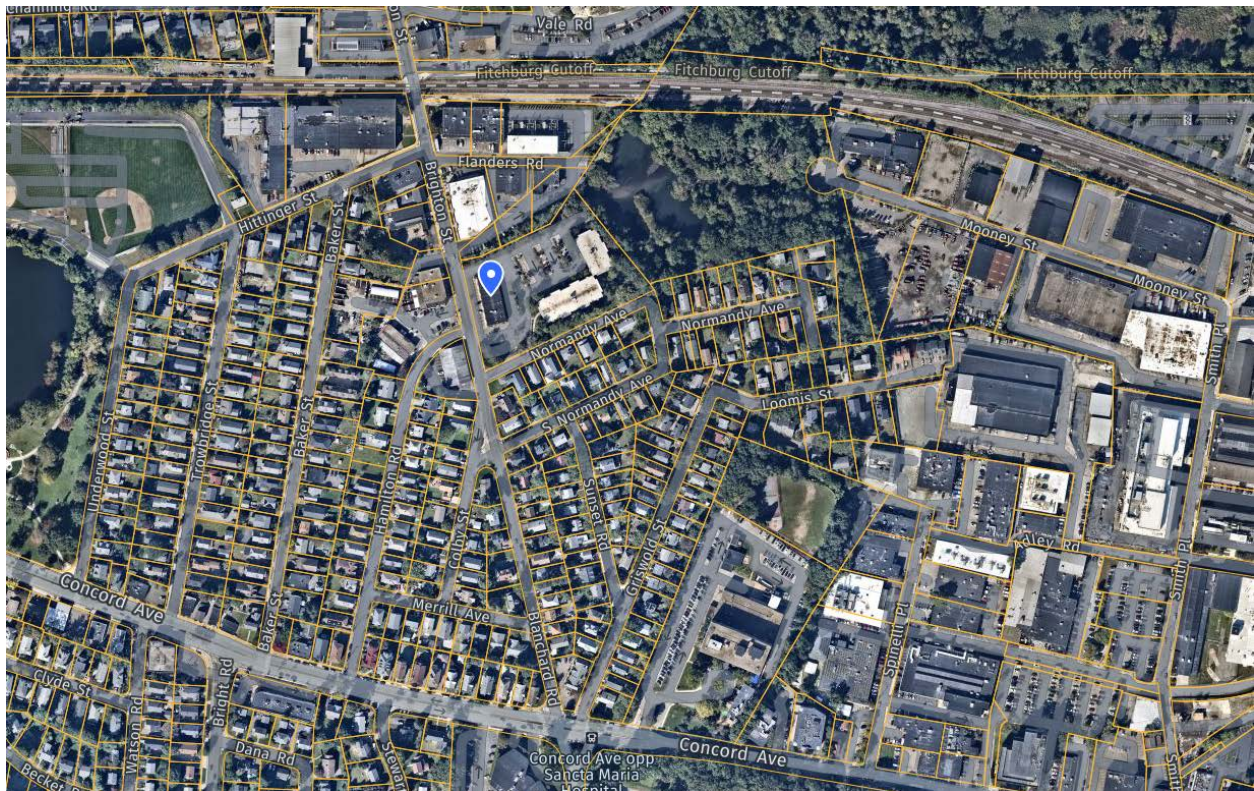
Zoning & Development Staff Report

Site & Zoning Context

Site Context

The site is located at the northeastern corner of Blanchard Road and Normandy Ave, in the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood of northwest Cambridge and just east of the Belmont municipal boundary. Located immediately east of the parcel is Blair Pond, and the Fitchburg Cutoff bike path is approximately two blocks to the north.

Blanchard Road is a mixed-use corridor that is predominately residential in character closer to Concord Ave (consisting of one- and two-story single and two-family homes), but increasingly becomes more of a low-scale commercial street to the north. The project parcel is improved with an existing one-story retail building along Blanchard Road, and a three-story residential development separated into two distinct buildings at the back of the site. There are 118 existing off-street parking spaces serving all three buildings.

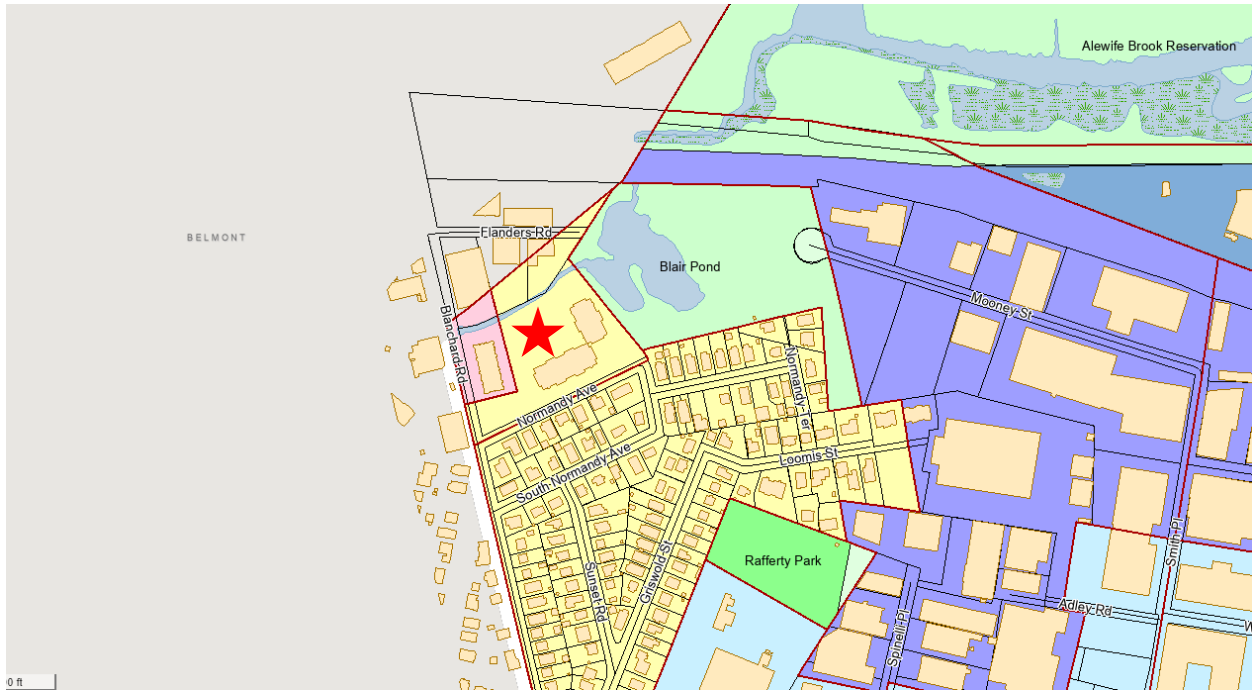


(Source: Nearmap, 2024)

Site Zoning

The site is split-zoned Business A and Residence C-1, with the Business A portion of the site generally located in the area where the one-story retail center currently exists (see zoning map below). The

Business A district is a low-intensity commercial district which permits development up to 45' in height and allows for residential uses and some neighborhood-scale retail and consumer service uses. Residence C-1 is a lower-intensity residential district which permits a max FAR of 0.75 and development up to 35', with a 30% open space requirement.



(Source: Cambridge Cityviewer, 2024)

Comments on Proposal

Project Description

The AHO Project proposes to demolish the existing one-story commercial building and construct an approximately 100,000 square-foot, 6-story, L-shaped building consisting of 110 affordable dwelling units for seniors and approximately 8,000 square feet of non-residential space on the ground story fronting Blanchard Rd. All 110 dwelling units will be one-bedroom units.

The new development will contain thirty new off-street parking spaces (in addition to 80 existing which will remain), 67 long-term bike parking spaces, and a new 19-dock Bluebikes station on the site. The AHO Project will increase the existing open space on the site from 36% (approximately 50,000 square feet) to 38% (53,377 square feet).

Consistency with AHO Development Standards

The AHO development standards applicable to this project are summarized in the table in the introductory section of the memo. The following commentary provides a high-level overview of how the AHO standards compare to this development proposal:

- Use
 - Per the AHO regulations, the proposal for a multifamily dwelling is allowed as-of-right.
 - Per Section 11.207.7.4.e, where existing retail uses are replaced by an AHO project, the AHO Project shall be designed to include active non-residential uses for up to 50% of the existing retail frontage. At this site, the existing retail frontage is 120 linear feet. The AHO project illustrates 63 linear feet of space designated for “Social Services”, which exceeds the 50% requirement.

- Dimensional Standards
 - Height: The maximum height permitted on the site is nine (9) stories or 100’ from grade. The AHO Project consists of six stories and 70’ in height.
 - FAR: The BA zoning district permits up to a 1.75 FAR for residential uses; therefore, there is no maximum FAR applicable to this site. The AHO Project consists of 1.36 FAR.
 - Setbacks: There are no applicable front or side yard setbacks under the AHO. A corner lot contains two front yards and two side yards, and therefore no setbacks apply to the AHO Project.

- Design Standards
 - Transparency: At least 20% of the building’s facades facing a public street must be clear glass windows. The proposed building consists of 24.3% transparency along Blanchard Road, and 23.2% transparency along Normandy Avenue.
 - Where a non-residential use is proposed on the Ground Story, the Ground Story must consist of at least 30% transparent glass windows. The proposed transparency at the Ground Story is 50.5% along Blanchard Road and 30.8% along Normandy Avenue.
 - Non-residential uses on the Ground Story must be at least 15’ in height. The AHO Project illustrates 15’ Ground Story height.
 - Façade Projections/Recesses: Building facades must include projecting and/or recessed elements of at least two feet on an average interval of 40 linear feet along a Public Street, and 80 feet elsewhere. Such projecting or recessed elements do not apply to the lowest or highest Story Above Grade. The AHO Project illustrates such recesses and projections at appropriate depths at the appropriate intervals.
 - Mechanical Equipment & Refuse Screening: Mechanical equipment and refuse areas shall generally be screened from view using a screen that is at least 75% opaque and uniformly distributed across the screening surface.

- Parking and Short-Term Drop Off Loading Areas

- Off-street Parking & Transportation Demand Management (TDM): Thirty new off-street parking spaces are proposed for 110 new dwelling units, which equates to a 0.27 spaces per dwelling unit ratio and is under the minimum parking ratio (0.4 spaces per dwelling unit) requirement for triggering TDM requirements under the AHO. The Applicant has agreed to provide the AHO TDM measures.

- Environmental Design Standards
 - This proposal is subject to the City’s Green Building Requirements as set forth in Section 22.20 of the Zoning Ordinance. The AHO Project has been designed to meet Passive House standards.
 - The City’s Green Roofs Requirement is not applicable to an AHO project.
 - The AHO Project is subject to the City’s Climate Resilience standards. The AHO Project is designed above the City’s 2070 projected 1% probability Long Term Flood Elevation, and the AHO Project meets Green Factor standards as designed.

Further Considerations

The following zoning considerations will need to be reviewed in more detail to confirm zoning compliance before the building permit stage:

- Detail of proposed mechanical screen to ensure screening meets minimum 75% opacity requirement as set forth in Section 11.207.7.5.c.

Urban Design Staff Report

Urban Design Comments

Introduction and Context

The project proposes the redevelopment of an existing, two-story commercial building fronting Blanchard Road into a 6-story building containing 110-unit age-restricted apartments of 100 percent affordable housing. Amenity and social service spaces are to be provided on the ground floor. The footprint is “L” shaped, with one leg oriented along Blanchard Road to the west, and the other aligning with the Blair Pond Stream to the north. To the south and east are two existing, four-story multifamily residential buildings separated from the project by a shared parking lot that will be substantially reconfigured. Abutting the northeast corner of the parcel is Blair Pond, a natural area hydrologically connected to the Alewife Brook Reservation.

Blanchard Road forms the boundary between the Town of Belmont and the City of Cambridge, specifically the Cambridge Highlands neighborhood in which the project is located. Its character changes frequently along its relatively short length, from light industrial/commercial adjacent to the Fitchburg Line tracks to small-scale residential approaching Concord Ave, and thereafter to a mix of residential and open space where it fronts the Fresh Pond Reservation. The project occurs at the transition between the industrial/commercial and residential areas. While no separated bicycle facilities exist along Blanchard Road, the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path is a short distance to the north, and there are protected bike lanes along Concord Avenue to the south.

Consistency with AHO Guidelines for Building Design

The design as proposed generally adheres to the tenants and principles outlined in the AHO guidelines:

- Creating an activated urban edge and street wall that reinforces Blanchard Road.
- Stepping down the height and massing at its approaches smaller-scale adjacent context.
- Creating a highly transparent, sheltered, and visually prominent entry at the building’s corner.
- Employing natural and durable materials that relate to the context.

Recommendations for Building Design

Massing

- The articulation of the two legs of the building is similar despite different contextual conditions. Adjusting the massing and materials to reinforce the reading of a primary bar that addresses Blanchard Road, and a secondary rear bar along the stream may better align the building to its context (*Building Design-1.5*).
- Emphasizing the northwest corner is sensible given its visual prominence and correlation with the building entry. Its articulation may benefit from studying alternative strategies such as larger windows or the inclusion of balconies (*Building Design-1.12, 2.3, 2.10*).
- The port cochere’s design language seems incongruous with the rest of the building. Employing a similar language as the canopy above the Blanchard Road entrance and community spaces could help visually unify the building (*Building Design-2.11*).

Façade

- The application of brick should ideally be weighted towards the most publicly visible elevation along Blanchard Road. The brick facades would be further enriched by including techniques such as soldier courses, lintels, and pilasters (*Building Design-2.7*).

- The bays add depth and a residential scale to the façade. However, the proposed use of clapboard cladding seems incongruous with similar instances found throughout the neighborhood (*Building Design-2.2, 2.4, 2.6*).
- The combination of balance of brick and panelized cladding on the lower portion along Blanchard Road may benefit from further study and refinement.
- The ground floor at the northwest corner is appropriately visually distinct. The design would benefit from a similarly clear definition of the building's base along the rest of the west elevation (*Building Design-2.13*).

Ground Floor

- The inclusion of amenity spaces along the Blair Pond Stream creates a strong relationship between the building and the site by highlighting an existing natural amenity. Exchanging the location of the Bicycle Storage Room with the Common Room/Community Deck could avoid potential conflicts caused by cyclists having to cross the community deck (*Site Design-3.7*).
- The Bicycle Storage Room may want to include spaces for tricycles and larger bicycles given the intended resident demographic.
- The single 1-Bedroom Unit in the rear portion could benefit from a buffer, such as vegetation or a low wall, to block the headlights of cars parking in the adjacent spaces at night.
- The depth and design of the proposed landscaping along Blanchard Road will greatly enhance the pedestrian experience. An additional strategy might be including direct front entries into each of the first-floor residential units facing it to further reinforce the residential scale and activate Blanchard Road (*Site Design-3.3, Building Design-2.14*).

Consistency with AHO Guidelines for Site Design

The design as proposed generally follows the tenants and principles outlined in the AHO guidelines:

- Locating the building to visually shield surface parking from the public realm.
- Expanding and further naturalizing the riparian environment along the Blair Pond Stream.
- Providing pedestrian pathways that anticipate long-term connections to Blair Pond.
- Increasing the amount of permeable and planted open space, especially along Blanchard Road.

Recommendations for Site Design

Parking Lot

- Widening the area between the interior parking bays would accommodate additional trees that will provide shade and reduce the heat island effect (*Site Design-2.9, 4.5*).
- Additional vegetation between the rear volume of the building and the parking lot would provide a visual buffer for adjacent uses (*Site Design-2.13*).
- The curb cut as shown does not conform to City standards.

Blair Pond

- The proposed pathway along the Blair Pond Stream creates a wonderful opportunity for residents and the public to experience this currently hidden natural amenity. Any opportunity to collaborate with the adjacent site owners on future extensions that connect to Blair Pond are encouraged (*Site Design-2.2, 2.3*).

Blanchard Road

- The nearby MBTA bus stop may benefit from being relocated adjacent to the project. It would be ideal if the landscape plan could anticipate this potential future scenario.

- The proposed trees in the front yard setback could be located closer to Blanchard Road to further shade the sidewalk as there are no street trees along this portion of the street.
- Given the target population, exploring the financial impact of upgrading the proposed Blue Bike station to one that supports charging electric bikes may be worthwhile to understand if it can be accomplished.

Public Art

- The guidelines suggest incorporating public art into proposed projects. The pathway and spaces along the Blair Pond Stream could be an ideal location for doing so (*Site Design-7.1*).

Consistency with AHO Guidelines for Sustainable Design

The design as proposed generally follows the tenants and principles outlined in the AHO guidelines:

- The building is designed to Passive House standards and is compliant with Article 22.
- The building and all critical infrastructure are positioned above the 2070 projected flood levels.
- The building is sited to maximize solar orientation and employs operable windows.
- The landscape enhances and expands the natural riparian area of the Blair Pond Stream.

Recommendations for Sustainable Design

- Incorporating sun shading devices, canopies, porches, or brise-soleils on shade strongly sunlit facades can help lower thermal gain during warmer seasons (*Sustainable Design, 1.6*).
- Employing renewable and low-carbon energy features such as solar photovoltaic systems, solar heating systems, or geothermal heating and cooling systems where feasible can help sustainably lower energy costs (*Sustainable Design, 1.10*).
- Given the increasing number of electric vehicles, incorporating car chargers for tenants would be beneficial. The nine covered spaces may be the most logical place to install them (*Sustainable Design, 1.12*).
- Integrating “cool roof” or “green roof” systems where possible can contribute to strategies for stormwater management and green infrastructure (*Sustainable Design, 1.14*).
- Including frequent outlets in the bike room will allow for residents to charge their E-Bikes.

Consistency with Citywide Urban Design Objectives

This project aligns well with the City’s objectives for urban design. It replaces a low-scale, auto-centric building with affordable housing at a building scale that modulates the transition between the different development patterns along Blanchard Road. It creates an activated street frontage that provides a substantially improved pedestrian experience with a generous landscaped setback that helps soften the scale of the building and integrate it into the site. The massing tapers down at the end of each leg to bridge the difference in height between the project and the adjacent context. The landscape along the adjacent Blair Pond Stream will be expanded and further naturalized, enhancing its hydrological function as well as providing an amenity for the residents and neighborhood. The parking is visually shielded from the public realm and the amount of existing impermeable surface will be reduced. While there remain opportunities for further refinement of the design as noted above, by and large the project sets a beneficial precedent for the future transformation of the northern portion of Blanchard Road.

The project’s provision of affordable residential units is 110 units (100%). 77 Units will be affordable for individuals or households with incomes at or below 60% of AMI, and 33 units will be affordable for individuals or households with incomes at or below 30% of AMI.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development Department

IRAM FAROOQ

Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE

Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

MEMORANDUM

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Christopher Cotter, Housing Director
Date: June 27, 2024
Re: Request for Annual Appropriations for FY2025

As the beginning of the new fiscal year approaches, we are requesting a commitment of \$710,115 in Trust funds from the City’s budget funds. Funding will be used in FY2025 for housing preservation and development contracts with Homeowner’s Rehab, Inc. and Just-A-Start and operating support for CDD’s Housing Division.

Non-Profit Housing Preservation & Development

Non-Profit Agency Contracts:

For FY2025, we are requesting \$445,115 in support for Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI) and Just A Start Corporation (JAS) to be used to support their efforts to develop and preserve affordable rental and homeownership housing in Cambridge. This funding is provided in addition significant funding provided by the Trust to each agency for specific affordable housing developments.

The following table summarizes the funding being requested to support each agency's housing development and preservation work:

	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>
Just A Start	\$191,767	\$191,767
Homeowner’s Rehab, Inc.	\$253,348	\$253,348
Total – Housing Pres. & Dev. Contracts	\$445,115	\$445,115

For FY2025, we will continue the approach that the Trust fully fund the non-profit development contracts, while both HOME and CDBG funding will remain available to assist directly with affordable housing development and preservation efforts. In addition, CDBG funds will continue to be used to fund other City housing programs including the home improvement programs run by HRI and JAS, CEOC’s tenant organizing work, and JAS’ Mediation Services and Youthbuild programs.

Expiring-use Funding:

In addition, we are also requesting \$40,000 in funding for expiring-use preservation work including assistance in oversight of compliance with funding and affordability requirements at Fresh Pond Apartments as well as other activities. .

	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>
Expiring Use Consulting	\$40,000	\$40,000

CDD Housing Division Staffing and Programs

CDD Staffing:

Since 2017, the Trust has provided funding to support Housing Department staffing for housing development and preservation work. The funding provided by the Trust has funded one full-time staff position and one part-time intern position. This Trust-funded staffing is in addition to the current 17 full-time positions in the Housing Department which are funded by the City.

For FY2025 we are requesting \$150,000 which will continue funding for one full time position in the Housing Division and one part-time intern position.

	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>
CDD Staffing	\$150,000	\$150,000

Homeownership Management Software:

In FY2025, we are requesting \$15,000 in funding to cover the cost of our homeownership management software. This system is used for the ongoing management of the homeownership portfolio, including homeowners, applications, affordability restrictions, unit turnover, and financial management of the program. This request is unchanged from the amount that was approved in FY2024:

	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>
Homeownership Management Software	\$15,000	\$15,000

Legal Services and Administrative Costs:

For FY2025, we are requesting \$50,000 for the Housing Department's real estate legal services.

We are also requesting \$10,000 for miscellaneous administrative items. These amounts have increased from FY2024:

	FY2024	FY2025
Legal Services	\$50,000	\$50,000
Administrative Costs	\$7,500	\$10,000

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Trust approve the following funds for FY2024 affordable housing efforts as outlined herein:

Non-profit Housing Preservation & Development	\$445,115
Expiring Use Preservation Funding	\$40,000
Housing Department Staffing	\$150,000
Homeownership Software	\$15,000
Legal Services	\$50,000
Miscellaneous / Administrative	\$7,500
TOTAL:	\$710,115