



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** PB 2017-23-MA1-0818

**Date:** November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** Cambridge Crossing (formerly known as NorthPoint) – Parcel EF DSPR Revision

**Applicant Name:** DW NP Property, LLC c/o DivcoWest Real Estate Services  
**Applicant Address:** One Kendall Square, Suite B3201, Cambridge, MA 02139  
**Owner Name:** DW NP Property, LLC c/o DivcoWest Real Estate Services  
**Owner Address:** One Kendall Square, Suite B3201, Cambridge, MA 02139  
**Agent:** Thomas N. O'Brien  
**Agent Address:** One Congress Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02114  
**Alderman:** Matthew McLaughlin

**Legal Notice:** Cambridge Crossing Parcel EF (formerly NorthPoint): (Case # PB 2017-23-MA1-0818) Applicant/Owner DW NP Property LLC c/o DivcoWest Real Estate Services requests a Revision to a Design & Site Plan under §6.6 and §5.4 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance for a reduction in floor to floor height to accommodate a taller penthouse without increasing the height of the building, minor elevation revisions, and changes in materials.  
North Point Special District (NPSD). Ward 1.

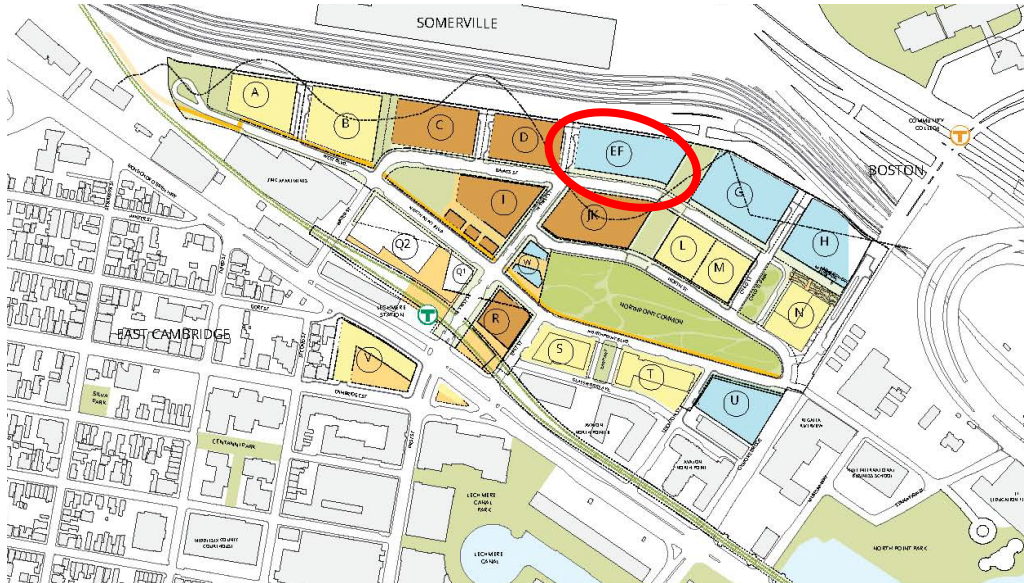
**Dates of Public Hearing:** November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**1. Subject Property:**

“Cambridge Crossing”, formerly known as “NorthPoint”, refers to an area of land along the north bank of the Charles River, over sixty acres in total, inclusive of the area north of Msgr. O'Brien Highway from the MBTA's Fitchburg line right-of-way to the Charles River, on both sides of the Charlestown Avenue (Gilmore) Bridge.



The area is currently under development as twenty (20) building parcels in the mixed-use development. To date, condominium buildings on Lot S and Lot T, a rental residential building on Lot N, Northpoint Common, Child Street Park and related infrastructure and other public amenities (including the Brian P. Murphy Memorial Staircase) have been constructed. The first commercial building is currently under construction with approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the footprint in Somerville.

The subject of this revision, Parcel EF, has an address of 250 Dawes Street and is currently vacant former railroad land. This project received Planning Board approval, PB2017-23, for the Design/Site Plan application on December 17, 2017.

## 2. **Proposal:**

As approved, the Parcel EF building was anticipated to be approximately 483,000 gross square foot Commercial Building to be used for a combination of Commercial Office, R&D and/or Laboratory, and Retail and Consumer Services uses. The building was proposed at 150 feet high (as calculated pursuant to the SZO), with three levels of underground parking containing approximately 379 parking spaces. The Ground Floor includes approximately 2,580 square feet of Retail and Consumer Services, accessed from the street or public area of the building lobby (6,695sf), along with other active uses.

The requested changes, as identified by the Applicant, that comprise this application include:

### Overall

- The floor-to-floor height of the tower (Levels 3 through 8) has been reduced from 16'-0" to 15'-0".
- The height of the penthouse has been increased from 30'-0" to 40'-0" and the material has been changed to flat silver/gray metal panel.
- Exterior materials changed to three (3) colors of metal panel.
- Stone base has been added around the building.
- Considering "view dynamic glass".

### Elevations

#### South (Dawes Street frontage elevation)

- "Completed" the last bay on the south to include three (3) windows to match the other bays.

- The southwest glass tower has been shifted slightly to the west and made slightly narrower.
- The height of the entry portal has been lowered slightly.
- Fritted glass shadowbox band has been added on south facade above entry portal.
- Vertical and Horizontal "fin" snap cap profiles have been added to the south glazing on Levels 1 and 2.

**North**

- More of the "rust" color material has been added to the tower.
- Metal louvers have been added to the penthouse.

**East**

- Eliminated the exterior balconies.
- Moved 8'-0" closer to the park.
- More glass has been added to the ground level.
- Vertical fin snap cap profiles have been added to the glass tower.
- Metal louvers have been added at Level 1.

**West**

- The window pattern has been revised.
- "Rust" colored metal fins have been added to the penthouse.
- Metal fins and wall recess has been added to the southwest tower at Levels 2 through 9.

**Program**

- The loading dock and parking ramp entrance have been flipped.
- Bicycle entry moved to east facade.

These design revisions, while not significant as individual elements as many are material selection or design refinements, combine to create elevation changes beyond those considered de minimis.

**3. Green Building Practices:**

There are no changes to Green Building Practices requested or anticipated based on this application.

**4. Comments:**

This package was not shared given the nature of the application so there are no comments from other departments at this time.

**II. FINDINGS FOR DESIGN & SITE PLAN REVIEW (SZO §6.6.3.B):**

Based on review of the submitted Design & Site Plan Review Application, Staff finds that the proposal meets all of the requirements outlined in §6.6.3 of the SZO.

***Design and Site Plans.******1. Submittal and Review.***

The submittal package includes all the required information. This review of the Design & Site Plan meets the procedural requirements of Section 5.4 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

***2. Scope.***

The application included the entire site and building design information as required. The entire site is within the City of Somerville but accessed and serviced by the City of Cambridge.

***3. Findings and Compliance.***

This section of the report goes through the findings required by §6.6.9-11 in detail.

**6.6.9. Building Types.****A. General.**

- 1. Facades shall be built parallel to a front lot line or to the tangent of a curved front lot line.*

The general alignment of the building has not changed.

- 2. Height limits do not apply to mechanical penthouses; cellular, radio, and internet transmission equipment; or vents or exhausts.*

The proposed building remains 150' high. The height of the penthouse has increased to 40' creating an overall height of approximately 190' – 10' more than originally approved.

- 3. The floor plate of any story shall not be larger in area than the story below.*

No floorplate is larger than the story below it.

**D. Commercial Building.***Form*

- a. Minimum of 80% of the façade must be within the façade build out area.*

The Dawes Street façade is still within the Façade Build-Out area.

- b. Floor plates may be a maximum of 50,000 SF.*

The largest floor plate is the ground floor which is less than 50,000sf.

- c. Minimum Height = 4 Stories. Maximum height = 150 feet.*

The building is 9 stories and 150' to the penthouse measured from the mean grade.

- d. Continuous façade.*

No particular length of the Dawes Street façade is greater than 100' in horizontal width.

*Fenestration*

*Ground Floor; Secondary 50% min.*

*Upper Floors 30% min. - 50% max.*

*Blank Wall 20 feet max.*

The design compliance with the listed requirements has been increased. The façade facing the park (east elevation) has been revised to include windows at the bicycle parking in place of the previous blank but textured wall facing the park.

*Development Standards.*

- a. A minimum of 60% of the ground floor frontage shall be occupied by active uses.*

The program at the ground floor frontage remains the same as the original approval and meets the active use requirements.

- b. Ground floor uses shall be limited to 200' of frontage for each use.*

Each of the ground floor uses is less than 200' of frontage.

- c. Ground floor uses shall have individual entrances with access directly onto a sidewalk for each use.*

The ground floor uses that are located on the Dawes Street façade have individual entrances onto the sidewalk.

- d. Upper story uses shall be accessed by a prominent common lobby entrance.*

The common lobby to access upper story uses is located on the south side of the building facing Dawes Street. The entrance has been further enhanced with a canopy and articulation line.

- e. Fenestration shall be calculated for the wall area of each floor.*

The Dawes Street façade complies with the listed requirements. See above.

**E. Design Standards for All Building Types.**

- 1. Facade Articulation.*

*a. Building facades shall be articulated vertically with a rhythm of bays to create an equal, central, and/or ends focused composition.*

The Dawes Street façade still has a central composition although the number of projecting bays on the upper floors have increased.

*b. Facades greater than 100' in horizontal width shall have a change in vertical plane that divides the building form into distinct massing elements that break up its apparent mass.*

The Dawes Street façade has been redesigned with 6 (instead of 5) projecting bays approximately 20' wide with 4' reveals between the bays to break up the apparent mass.

*c. Building facades shall be articulated with clearly defined base, middle, and top.*

The Dawes Street façade remains consistent to the original approval with a base defined by the podium level, a middle defined by the tenant floors, and a top defined by the two story penthouse.

## **2. Fenestration.**

*a. All openings shall be square or vertical in proportion, excluding windows for first floor Retail and Consumer Service or Commercial Office uses.*

All façades feature vertically proportioned fenestration – even within the curtainwall.

*b. Each horizontal element of a building (base, middle, and top) shall have a fenestration pattern that is aligned vertically and horizontally.*

All façades have vertically and horizontally aligned fenestration.

## **3. Towers**

Not applicable. (This section refers to residential podium towers.)

## **6.6.10. Parking and Loading.**

### **A. Motor Vehicle Parking.**

*1. Development proposals will not be required to provide off-street motor vehicle parking, but may elect to provide off-street motor vehicle parking according to Table 6.6.10.*

The program of the building has not changed, 379 parking spaces will still be provided.

### **B. Bicycle Parking.**

*1. Short term outdoor bicycle racks shall be provided near the main entrances of any Retail & Consumer Service uses.*

No Short-Term Spaces are required for the retail space.

*2. Sheltered, long-term bicycle parking shall be provided internal to a building for all other use categories.*

The project will provide 100 Long-Term Spaces in the building on the ground floor.

### **C. Parking Location.**

*1. All off-street parking spaces shall be located in underground parking structures, except lots abutting rail rights-of-way.*

All off-street parking spaces are located underground.

### **D. Parking Management.**

All parking management will be reviewed and administered by the City of Cambridge.

### **E. Parking Access.**

*1. A minimum of one pedestrian exit from any parking lot/structure shall lead directly to a public sidewalk except underground levels which may be exited directly into a building.*

No change - the underground garage has exit stairs discharging directly to the sidewalk at either end of the building.

*2. Vehicular entrances to parking lots or parking structures shall not be permitted along any primary front lot line.*

The entrance to the below grade parking is located on the west side of the building from a driveway accessed from Dawes Street. The access to the loading docks and automobile parking have been flipped to reduce potential vehicle conflicts.

*3. Vehicular entrances to parking lots, parking structures, loading docks, and service areas shall be no wider than twenty-four (24) feet along any front lot line.*

No change.

#### **G. Loading Docks and Service Areas.**

*1. Loading docks and service areas shall not be permitted along front lot lines except by special permit.*

The entrance to the loading docks is still located on the west side of the building accessed from a driveway accessed off Dawes Street.

#### **6.6.11. Environmental Performance.**

There are no changes to any environmental performance elements with this revision.

#### **12.4. Signs in Nonresidential Districts.**

The conditions regarding signage are still applicable – signage is subject to review and approval by the Planning Director.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Design & Site Plan Review under §5.4 & §6.6**

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the submitted **REVISIONS TO THE DESIGN & SITE PLAN**.

Approval is for the revisions to Cambridge Crossing (formerly NorthPoint) Parcel EF Design & Site Plan Review application for the Commercial Building wholly in the City of Somerville but accessed and serviced by the City of Cambridge. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant to the City Clerk's Office on August 30, 2018. Any changes to the approved special permit that are not *de minimis* must receive approval from the Planning Board. All conditions from the original approval are still in effect.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.