



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

PLANNING BOARD
City Hall, Room 303
133 William Street,
New Bedford, MA 02740
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www.newbedford-ma.gov

Registry of Deeds/City Clerk Use Only: **CLERK**

2025 DEC 23 PM 12:18

CITY CLERK

NOTICE OF DECISION

Case Number: 25-45				
Request Type: Site Plan Review				
Address: 91 Summer Street				
Zoning: Residential A (RA)				
Recorded Owners: Roman Catholic Bishop of Fall River, Corporation Sole				
Owner Address: c/o St. Lawrence Rectory, 110 Summer Street, New Bedford, MA 02740				
Applicant: Vanko Studio Architects				
Applicant Address: P.O. Box 170757, Boston, MA 02117				
Application Submittal Date		Public Hearing Date(s)		Decision Date
October 15, 2025		December 10, 2025		December 23, 2025
Assessor's Plot Number	Lot Number(s)	Book Number	Page Number	Certificate Number
58	336	1745	764	

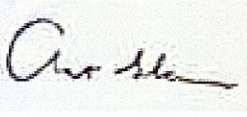
Application: Request by applicant for **Site Plan Review** for redevelopment of a vacant school building to 44 residential units with significant alterations to the public right of way at 91 Summer Street (Map: 58 Lot: 336) a 36,449± square foot site in a Residential A (RA) zoned district.

Action: GRANTED, WITH CONDITIONS, as described in section four (4).

A copy of this decision was filed with the City Clerk of the City of New Bedford on 12/23/25. Any person aggrieved by this decision has twenty (20) days to appeal the decision in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 8 of Chapter 40A of the General Laws of Massachusetts and Section 5490 of the City of New Bedford Site Plan Review Ordinance.

12/23/25

Date



Arthur Glassman, Chair
City of New Bedford Planning Board

1) APPLICATION SUMMARY

Request by applicant for **Site Plan Review** for redevelopment of a vacant school building to 44 residential units with significant alterations to the public right of way at 91 Summer Street (Map: 58 Lot: 336) a 36,449± square foot site in a Residential A (RA) zoned district.

2) MATERIALS REVIEWED BY THE PLANNING BOARD

Plans Considered to be Part of the Application:

The engineered plan submission is shown as "91 Summer Street Adaptive Reuse" dated 10/7/25, and prepared by CEC Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc., of Raynham, MA. The plans are stamped by Meghan K. Bruckman, PE.

The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- C000 COVER SHEET
- C001 GENERAL NOTES
- C100 DEMOLITION & EROSION CONTROL PLAN
- C200 LAYOUT PLAN
- C300 GRADING, DRAINAGE & UTILITY PLAN
- C500 SITE UTILITY PLAN
- C700 LANDSCAPING PLAN
- C701 LANDSCAPING DETAIL SHEET
- C800 DETAIL SHEET
- C801 DETAIL SHEET
- C802 DETAIL SHEET

The engineered site survey submission is shown as "Existing Conditions Plan 91 Summer Street, New Bedford, MA 02740" dated 7/1/25, and prepared by CAB Engineering of New Bedford, MA. The plans are stamped by Richard J. Hood, PLS. The plan set consists of the following sheet:

- 1 SV-1 EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN

The architectural plan submission is shown as "Adaptive Reuse 91 Summer Street, New Bedford, MA 02740" dated 10/10/25, and prepared by Vanko Studio Architects of New Bedford, MA. The plans are stamped by Peter Vanko, RA. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- A100.1-100.3 3D VIEW
- A111 PROPOSED LEVEL 1
- A111.1 GARAGE PLAN
- A112 PROPOSED LEVEL 2
- A113 PROPOSED LEVEL 3
- A114 PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
- A201 SUMMER STREET EAST ELEVATION

Other Documents and Supporting Materials:

- ✦ Staff Report
- ✦ Waste Management Plan
- ✦ Construction Management Plan
- ✦ Existing Building Code Report
- ✦ Parking Garage Study
- ✦ Interior Hallway Rendering indicating Bicycle Storage (A100.4)
- ✦ Subgrade Patio Count Letter to the Board

- # Stormwater Report
- # Application for a Special Permit
- # Application for Site Plan Review
- # Certified Abutters List
- # Purchase & Sales Agreement
- # Notarized Letter of Authorization
- # Deed
- # Project Narrative
- # Site Photos
- # Video footage of a neighborhood fly-through, most recently accessed 12/12/25
(<https://youtu.be/D6FS2Olb3nl?si= SXI5oHn-SBoXyBHf>)
- # Letter of Support from the Office of the Mayor regarding the Underutilized Properties Program
- # Letter of Opposition from Laura Vaughan
- # Department of Public Infrastructure Memorandum, dated 11/3/25
- # Letter from the Parking Clerk to Vanko Studio Architects, dated 12/5/25
- # Conformance Packet

3) DISCUSSION

This meeting was held virtually in accordance with *An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency*, signed into law by the Governor on March 28, 2025, which extends the temporary provisions pertaining to the open meeting law to June 30, 2027.

Board Members Kathryn Duff, Arthur Glassman, Peter Cruz, Shayne Trimbell, and Jim McKeag attended the 12/10/25, online meeting. Staff Planner Rachel Mulroy and Assistant City Planner Michael McCarthy were also in attendance.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Board member Duff, seconded by Board member Cruz, with all in favor the motion carried.

Chair Glassman notified the applicant and members of the public that Board member Khazan was not present for the hearing.

Board member Cruz recused himself from hearing the case.

Case #25-45 was heard as part of new business. Chair Glassman opened the case and asked if a representative for the applicant was present to discuss the case. Peter Vanko, applicant, came forward and deferred to Planning Staff regarding a request the Board receive and place on file all materials submitted on 12/9/25 and 12/10/25 in response to the Staff Report, issued 12/5/25. Staff Planner Rachel Mulroy addressed the Chair to describe the materials and review protocol.

Chair Glassman requested a motion to receive and place on file the materials as described above. Board member Trimbell made the motion, seconded by Chair Glassman and with all in favor the motion carried.

Vanko reviewed the history of the site and existing conditions. He described the overall vision for the redevelopment and highlighted the reduction of impervious pavement and parking improvements. Vanko referred to the letter he received from the Parking Clerk and explained how the buildout of on-street parking complemented

the proposed basement garage at Chestnut Street. He noted that, with the exception of the area impacted by the partial demo for basement parking, windows and fenestration are to be maintained.

Vanko explained the rationale for the proposal of 1-plus bedrooms and described his vision of who would be living in the building as “young professionals” and “folks in New Bedford who maybe are downsizing.”

He introduced project civil engineer Meghan Bruckman of Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc., who described the conversion of 18% impervious surface to green space. She reviewed the proposal to convert existing sidewalk around the property to new parking without impacting the existing traffic way. Bruckman indicated the proposed curb cut on Chestnut Street for access to off-street parking.

Bruckman identified the proposed stormwater recharge systems at the northwest corner and east side, and the connections to the proposed subgrade patios.

She noted ADA accessways and concluded by explaining the project team met with the Department of Public Infrastructure regarding work proposed in the public way.

Vanko then reviewed trash management plan and explained, “We will be the managers for the property management side of the equation for at least the first year. With our condo developments, we sign our company up as property managers, and that typically...the condo board keeps us on after that first year.” He explained that the trash hauler would remove the waste from the waste rooms in the basement of the building, and estimated that process to take 5-10 minutes, twice weekly.

Construction management plans were reviewed by Vanko as Phase I occurring within 3 months beginning 6/1/26. He explained that the entire property would be fenced off at the existing curb line. Most deliveries, large trucks, and things of that nature will use the construction entrance on Summer Street. The removal of the monumental entry stair for ADA compliance would probably, Vanko said, be one of the first demolition activities. Vanko indicated that most truck movement would be one way in, one way out, with washdowns and major waste management managed within the limits of work. Construction fencing, pedestrian controls, and signage are proposed. He described vehicle parking, storage, and management around the site during construction and explained once the new parking and sidewalks were completed, minimal impacts to the surrounding neighborhood were expected. Deliveries are anticipated through the garage or within the new parking area.

Chair Glassman thanked the applicant for the presentation. Board member Duff read a letter of opposition submitted by Laura Vaughan of 103 Summer Street via email to Staff Planner Mulroy on 12/4/25 into the record. Chair Glassman then opened the floor so members of the public could speak in support or opposition.

Laura Vaughan of 103 Summer Street indicated the presentation alleviated at least some concern and noted requested clarification relative to her concerns enumerated in her letter to the Board. Chair Glassman requested the applicant speak to the resident’s concerns. Vanko noted 12 parking spaces were proposed in the garage and described typical condo by-laws relative to ownership and subletting. He expressed his enthusiasm for bringing a new type of development to the city.

Asst. City Planner McCarthy explained the purpose of site plan review under the purview of the Planning Board and the Board’s role as the special permit granting authority for the benefit of the general public.

Colleen Kavanaugh, owner of 121 North Street, indicated that although she wasn’t worried about parking given the number of spaces provided at her property, the matter of traffic circulation concerned her. Chair Glassman asked

the applicant to address traffic concerns. Vanko described the on-street parking proposal relative to lanes of travel and the proposed curb cut on Chestnut Street.

Michelle Costa-Tavares representing the Martha Briggs Educational Club on 128 Mill Street inquired about the time line to file comments. Asst. City Planner McCarthy explained the noticing requirements and appeals process, and encouraged the resident to speak presently. Costa-Tavares declined to offer public comment.

Hearing no further comments from the public, Chair Glassman opened the floor to the Board.

Board member Trimbell raised concerns about street trees and canopy cover into the public way. Bruckman identified the trees to be removed and the 17 trees proposed in the landscape plan. Vanko described the plan at length and Bruckman displayed the plant schedule for the benefit of the Board and general public. Board member Trimbell confirmed with the applicant that landscape maintenance would be the responsibility of the property manager. Bruckman and Vanko described species selection for growth rate and maintenance within an urban environment.

Board member Trimbell inquired about long-term bicycle storage relative to the request for a reduction of parking. Vanko reviewed the proposal to store bicycles within the building hallways and described the capacity for e-bike and stroller storage as well.

Board member McKeag clarified the parking spaces required by the ordinance and the proposed reduction of 76 spaces with the applicant. He and Bruckman reviewed the proposal to provide resident-only spaces in the redeveloped right-of-way to provide, if accepted by the City, a total of 40 parking spaces for residents.

Asst. City Planner McCarthy explained the process of obtaining resident-only parking through the Traffic Commission as proposed for the benefit of the Board and general public.

Board member McKeag raised concerns about stormwater drainage system maintenance relative to the catch basins proposed in the subgrade patio floors. Bruckman outlined the recommendations within the stormwater operations and maintenance plan.

Board member McKeag inquired about the ownership structure relative to the homeowners association and maintenance of the facility. Vanko explained that the condo association terms establish his company as property manager for year one, with an option to change property management by vote of members after the first year. He indicated the intention of the by-laws for property management allowed time for the condo association to become established.

At Board member McKeag's request, Vanko explained the intention of categorizing some units as "one bedroom plus" for the sake of providing another room with some flexibility of use. Board member McKeag noted the plans provided do enumerate the unit mix for members of the public interested in viewing the plan set.

Board member Duff noted her appreciation for the developer's willingness to propose innovative solutions to support the adaptive reuse of the site. She requested clarification on potential impacts to the existing traffic pattern and sight lines, the process for executing a taking of land by the City, how the neighborhood will absorb additional parking, how the applicant intends to resolve parking dimension issues within the garage, and further options to improve long-term bicycle storage year-round. Board member Duff requested additional information on the unit mix relative to ownership and neighborhood impacts, natural lighting of the lower units, ventilation of lower units

especially in consideration of lacking cross-ventilation, and stormwater management in consideration of subsurface patios and roof runoff.

Chair Glassman indicated many of his concerns were raised by Board member Duff. He inquired about the assignment of garage parking, vehicle access restrictions, and noted lack of EV charging ports. Chair Glassman raised concerns about the density of units relative to the parking proposal, and the condo fees relative to the real costs of property management.

Bruckman indicated plans will be revised to show traffic direction around the site. She said the proposed on-street parking is compliant with DPI requirements and noted the project team met with DPI to discuss work in the public way to ensure compliance with the 8.5' x 22' standard. Bruckman explained the applicant would address any adverse infrastructure effects resulting from the development, and indicated the design as proposed considered pedestrian safety in consideration of the nearby school.

Bruckman explained the stormwater management design relied on NOAA guidelines for extreme precipitation events and that the system design accounted for capture from all stormwater on site. She offered detailed information on existing roof runoff conditions and indicated the applicant is engaged in ongoing communication with DPI to ensure conformance with mitigation of peak rates. She noted the location of the subsurface recharge system provided a safety precaution for maintaining the integrity of the patio retaining walls. Bruckman concluded the stormwater proposal provided an overall improvement to existing conditions.

Vanko provided more detailed information on the internal rooms of the "one bedroom plus" units and described how the units met building code for ventilation. He pointed out the existing windows and displayed a rendering of the proposed conditions alongside architectural floorplans. Vanko provided further information on the unit mix, how the units would be built out, and described an urbanist vision for the building.

He indicated all units would be owner-occupied and explained that the affordability mix was to be determined based on funding prospects. Vanko insisted upon the need for 44 units to produce a viable project, and indicated confidence that the proposal is the best option for redevelopment of the site. He explained his purchase and sales agreement expired in March and so the team was proactively pursuing all necessary permits, including the taking of land, from the City. Vanko pointed out the proposed property line and addressed maintenance questions from the Board.

Vanko explained the garage parking spaces would be deeded and there would be parameters on vehicle type. He reviewed vehicle length for a few typical models and how they would maneuver through the site. He reviewed the vehicle turns submitted to the Board and enumerated examples of temporary parking and loading at the elevator. EV charging would be provided at 10-20% of spaces depending on overall electric capacity of the site.

The Board discussed the applicant's response to comments among themselves at length.

Board member Duff expressed the need for further understanding of the land taking process, and DPI's comments regarding existing stormwater mitigation and the city tie-in.

Board member McKeag noted that although the redevelopment constituted a significant change in population density, he was less concerned about parking and cited information from the Gateway Cities Institute and Mass Inc. that called for more homeownership opportunities. He deferred to DPI on stormwater matters and supported that as a condition of approval.

Board member Trimbell remarked on the novel proposal of the taking of land but indicated a need to further understand the process relative to the duties and purview of the Board. He noted his appreciation for the applicant's efforts in consideration of the tight timeline, but explained the obligation of the Board to the site and the city. Chair Glassman expressed support for the project and concern for setting precedent. Board member Duff concurred and restated her concerns.

Asst. City Planner McCarthy addressed the Chair for clarification on what information the Board would request of the Solicitor's Office. He explained the City has been engaged with the applicant's attorney on devising a taking mechanism, even prior to submitting for site plan review. He noted the Solicitor's Office has offered to provide feedback for the Board, but asked the Board to first specify what they were looking for from the Solicitor.

Board member Duff requested clarification on the process of a land taking. Asst. City Planner McCarthy explained his understanding of the process based on prior conversations with the Solicitor's Office on this case. Board member Duff and Asst. City Planner McCarthy discussed the procedural processes further.

Vanko added further that the conditions of the Board's decision would provide a contingency that the applicant would be required to appear before the Board for a modification of the approved plan as needed. Asst. City Planner McCarthy confirmed Vanko's statement and explained further that subsequent permits would be required by other City entities.

Board member McKeag confirmed with Asst. City Planner McCarthy that the decision would be conditional to DPI standards.

Chair Glassman asked the Board to consider a motion. The Board members indicated their support for the reduction of parking. Board member Duff reiterated stormwater concerns.

Bruckman provided additional information on stormwater capture and pervious surface conversion on site and indicated the project team understood the requirement to disconnect from the combined sewer overflow if such a connection were found. Board member Duff discussed the details of the stormwater capture with Bruckman at length.

Bruckman explained that the project team met with DPI the day before this meeting and received new comments, which in part require the City inspector on site to view the scoping of existing infrastructure. Board member Duff noted the Board had not received updated comments from DPI. Bruckman indicated the comments were tied to the DPI stormwater permit and speculated that may be why the Board had not received issuance of further comments. She requested the Board consider a motion contingent upon satisfaction of DPI comments.

The applicant discussed DPI comments and property management concerns with Board member Duff.

Asst. City Planner McCarthy indicated the time and the need to move on to other agenda items. Chair Glassman discussed a motion with Board member Duff, who asked Asst. City Planner McCarthy for guidance on the City Council and Zoning Board of Appeals timelines relative to Planning Board. Asst. City Planner McCarthy indicated they would want the site plan finalized so that the new property lines could be set for the taking, once the site plan is approved. He reviewed the typical timeline process for board approvals, should the Planning Board make a motion to continue the case to January.

The Board discussed a motion among themselves at length.

Board member Trimbell asked whether an agreement for work in the public way and maintenance of that space had been negotiated, and whether the Board should condition a decision to any such agreement.

Vanko indicated there is not an agreement at present, but his company has typically entered into such agreements in other cities.

Asst. City Planner recommended the Planning Department coordinate with DPI for clarification.

Board member Duff indicated her support for inclusion of such a condition.

Board members Duff and Trimbell discussed further conditions of a decision.

Chair Glassman asked for a motion.

4) DECISION

Board Member Trimbell made the motion, seconded by Board Member to approve the request by applicant for Site Plan Review for redevelopment of a vacant school building to 44 residential units with significant alterations to the public right of way at 91 Summer Street (Map: 58 Lot: 336) a 36,449± square foot site in a Residential A (RA) zoned district. Owner: Roman Catholic Bishop of Fall River, Corporation Sole (c/o St. Lawrence Rectory, 110 Summer Street, New Bedford, MA 02740) Applicant: Vanko Studio Architects (P.O. Box 170757, Boston, MA 02117)

The approval is based upon a determination that, as hereinafter conditioned, the site plan meets the objectives set forth in Section 5470 of the Ordinance.

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

The following SPECIFIC conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit evidence of a condominium association and or homeowners association agreement to the Department of City Planning for review by the City Solicitor prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
2. The applicant acknowledges that signage is not approved as part of the site plan. Any future signage will need to be submitted for permitting review and approval.
3. The applicant shall coordinate with the Department of Public Infrastructure to resolve all comments in their memo dated 11-3-25 prior to the issuance of a building permit.
4. The developer shall require that the condominium association and or homeowners association be structured to include an escrow account with a financial capacity of fully replacing said pump stations or other special drainage devices at the time of issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
5. All exterior lighting shall be down-shielded and dark-sky friendly. The applicant shall revise plans to show any new exterior lighting fixtures and submit specifications to the Department of City Planning for administrative review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
6. The applicant shall complete construction of paved surfaces within the right-of-way proposed to be taken by the City of New Bedford.
7. The applicant shall return to this board if the site plan is modified as a result of the stormwater investigation.
8. The parking plan shall be modified to show the location and type of EV charger, the location of the temporary bicycle and stroller storage.
9. All trees planted along the perimeter of the parcel shall comply with City of New Bedford Street Tree specifications.

10. The applicant shall prepare a taking agreement for the approval by the New Bedford City Solicitor and acceptance by City Council.

With the following GENERAL conditions:

11. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
12. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be part of the conditions specified by the Planning Board.
13. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
14. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
15. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within three years from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
16. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.
17. The applicant shall submit final as-built plans to the Department of City Planning and a final site visit shall be conducted by Planning Staff prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
18. The applicant shall submit evidence of compliance with the final, approved plant schedule prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

As a result of such consideration, the Board moves approval on the subject application with the conditions so noted. The motion being properly made and seconded, the Chair called for a roll call vote which was taken and unanimously approved four (4) to zero (0).

Board Member Duff - Yes

Board Member Trimbell – Yes

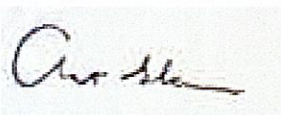
Board Member Glassman – Yes

Board Member McKeag – Yes

Filed with the City Clerk on:

12/23/25

Date



Arthur Glassman, Chair
City of New Bedford Planning Board