

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**CITY OF NEWTON**

Massachusetts

**DATE:** January 23, 2026

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Sondria Berman, Senior Planner for Current Planning

**SUBJECT:** Consistency Request 11 Florence Street

**Application Materials:** <https://newtonma.portal.opengov.com/records/904384>

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The petitioner obtained a joint Special Permit #356-22 and Re-zoning Order #355-22 on November 8, 2023. Special Permit # 356-22 granted relief to construct a five-story Elder Housing development in excess of 20,000 square feet, and to allow signage, parking, and dimensional relief for the buildings, parking configuration, and retaining walls over four feet in height. The re-zoning order #355-22 re-zoned both 11 Florence Street and 318 Boylston Street from Multi-Residence 1 and Business 2 districts, respectively, to Business 4 districts.

On December 1, 2025, a request for a Consistency Review was formally filed by the petitioner (ahead of a building permit application) for the proposed development at 11 Florence Street. On December 23, 2025, Building Commissioner Anthony Ciccariello notified the petitioner that based on his review, some of the requested changes to the site plan would be deemed minor in nature. He found many of the proposed changes to be consistent with the intent and purpose of Special Permit #356-22 including the addition of fall prevention railings to the top of retaining walls on the east and west sides of the site, a change in color for the front entry, the replacement of the gazebo with an at-grade patio, the substitution of patio pavers with standard concrete, the reduction of light bollards by 50 percent, the removal of the full-height roof access stairway with a metal stairway to a roof hatch, and window size and configuration changes due to interior layout changes.

Mr. Ciccariello noted, however, that other substantial deviations to the exterior would require further review and consideration from the Land Use Committee. Mr. Cicarello's letter specified that the relocation of the memory care units from levels three and four to level two rendered more substantive changes to the exterior including the relocation of an interior stair as a result of the change with corresponding adjustments to windows and doors, the addition of unit balconies above existing roof areas, and the addition of at-grade patios constituted more significant changes and therefore recommended further review from the Land Use Committee..

With the proposed relocation of the memory care terrace to the second floor instead of the third and fourth floors as approved, the south-facing balconies on floors three and four were removed and a western balcony and screening were added to the second floor, as shown on architectural plans titled, "Special Permit Elevation Comparison" dated 11/12/2025. Smaller unit balconies were added to floors three and four on the south facing facade but are smaller in size due to code restrictions. Additional balconies were also added to the existing roofs on portions of the third, fourth and fifth levels, all facing the south and western lot lines. Doors and associated safety railings were also added to balconies for fall protection. Window sizes and configurations were also changed due to the interior layout, affecting all facades.

The stairwell with roof access was altered due to the interior program shifts and the stair extension to the roof was removed and replaced with a metal stair and roof hatch. As a result of the stairwell relocation, windows and doors were adjusted to minimize the impacts to the exterior design.

Building code required the addition of fall protection railings for the top of retaining walls along the east and south sides of the building for added safety.

Proposed alterations to the front façade of the building facing Florence Street and Boylston Street include changing the color of the first floor entryway façade from yellow to gray. In addition, the petitioner proposes to remove the approved pavers for the roadway in front of the entrance and replace this area with standard concrete.

With respect to landscaping changes, the revised Landscape Plan titled, "Landscape Materials" prepared by Market Street Architects, dated 11/5/2025 shows a reduction in site lighting bollards by 50% to the west of the building in the courtyard area. The courtyard area to the west of the building will also remove proposed pavers in an outdoor seating area and replace this area with standard concrete. The proposed gazebo in the courtyard area will also be replaced with an at-grade patio.

Lastly, the site plan titled, "Construction Layout Plan" prepared by Market Street Architects, dated 1/20/2026 includes the relocation of a transformer from the southern portion of the lot at the rear of the building to the front (northeast corner) of the building. The proposed relocation reduces the front setback from 42 feet to 39 feet but does not require zoning relief as it is outside the minimum 30-foot front setback. Furthermore, the revised Landscaping Plan, dated 1/19/2026, shows additional landscape screening around three sides of the transformer to the north, west, and south.

Overall, the most substantive changes proposed to the façades of the building reflect interior, programmatic changes that shift the layout and sizing of windows, doors, balconies, patios and stairwells but do not alter the original footprint of the building. Changes to the landscaping plan involve modifications to materials as well as structures and lighting, however, the overall square footage of open space remains consistent and accessible for outdoor recreational use.

**ATTACHMENT A:** Consistency Ruling to Special Permit #356-22 from Commissioner Ciccariello, dated December 23, 2025

City of Newton



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

## Inspectional Services Department

Anthony Ciccariello, Commissioner  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
Newton, MA 02459  
www.newtonma.gov

Telephone  
(617) 796-1060  
Fax  
(617) 796-1086  
Email  
ISD@newtonma.gov

December 23, 2025

Katherine Braucher Adams  
Schlesinger and Buchbinder, LLP  
1200 Walnut Street  
Newton, MA 02461

Re: 11 Florence Street Consistency Ruling to Special Permit #356-22

Dear Katherine,

I am in receipt of your letter dated December 1, 2025, requesting a consistency ruling for Special Permit #356-22. Several of the changes shown on the plans and elevations submitted for review are considered minor in nature, including the following:

- Addition of fall protection railings to the top of retaining walls on the east and west sides of the site.
- Change in the front entry color from yellow to gray.
- Replacement of the gazebo with an at-grade patio.
- Substitution of patio pavers with standard concrete.
- Reduction of light bollards by 50 percent.
- Removal of the full-height roof access stairway and replacement with a metal stairway to a roof hatch.
- Window size and configuration change due to interior layout.

I find the modifications listed above to be consistent with the intent and purpose of Special Permit #356-22.

The changes outlined below are contingent upon the relocation of the memory care terrace:

- Relocation of the memory care terrace from levels three and four to level two due to a programmatic change.
- Relocation of an interior stair as a result of the change, with corresponding adjustments to windows and doors.
- Addition of unit balconies above existing roof areas and the addition of at-grade patios.

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Accordingly, I am requesting that the Planning Department refer this matter to the Land Use Committee for its opinion as to whether the relocation of the memory care terrace from levels three and four to level two, as well as the decorative wall along the Florence Street sidewalk, may be deemed consistent with the approved plans under Special Permit #356-22.

I hope this serves your purpose. Please contact this office if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anthony Ciccariello".

Anthony Ciccariello  
Commissioner