This is an application for zoning approval to develop the northern portion of a Burlington property known as Cambrian Rise containing an historic building, pursuant to Article 5.4.8 of the Citywide General Regulations. The address of the property is 351-375 North Avenue, and it contains the former St. Joseph’s Orphanage which was constructed in 1884 with a 1940 addition. The former orphanage, now known as Liberty House, is the central building on the Cambrian Rise property. The building is listed in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places (“State Register”). Although this current project does not propose direct impacts to the Liberty House building, it involves the redevelopment of the northern portion of the Liberty House property adjacent the historic building with a new condominium building (“Project”).

This Project is being evaluated for potential indirect effects to four historic resources: Liberty House; the National Register of Historic Places (“National Register”) eligible North Avenue Neighborhood District which is across North Avenue to the east of the Project; an individually listed State Register house at 422 North Avenue (within the North Avenue Neighborhood District); and the National Register listed Howard Mortuary Chapel within Lakeview Cemetery, which is adjacent to the north of the Project. See Attachment 1: Historic Resources Map

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Cambrian Rise is a new neighborhood of multi-unit residential buildings, commercial spaces, garage, parking under most buildings, land improvements such as small parks and landscaping, new roadways, and other amenities on a 21.65-acre parcel historically associated with the former St. Joseph’s Orphanage. A 12-acre public park runs along the southern and western boundary of the property, including 1,000’ of sandy beach on Lake Champlain. A new street called Cambrian Way will be built from North Avenue east-west along the north boundary of the property and through the property in a U-shaped design, looping back to North Avenue south of The Rise building. The road will be separated from Lakeview Cemetery to the north by a 30-foot wide, vegetated buffer that will serve as a wildlife corridor. Cambrian Rise will eventually contain 950 residential units, including approximately: 150 “affordable” rental apartments, 450 “market-rate” rental apartments, 262 “market-rate” condominiums and “affordable” condominiums. Included in these numbers are 10 “market-rate” senior rental apartments and 60 “affordable” senior apartments. With the adaptive reuse of the former St. Joseph’s Orphanage as its centerpiece, “the development of the site embraces its location adjacent to Lake Champlain and the Burlington Bike Path by emphasizing transportation alternatives, community gardens, recreation facilities, and public and private view of the lake and the Adirondacks.”¹ See Attachment 2: Cambrian Rise Site Plan.

Liberty House has already been fully renovated to accommodate 64 market-rate rental units and one market-rate condominium. The redevelopment plan for the property is intended to provide an uninterrupted view from Liberty House west to Lake Champlain to preserve the historic relationship between the building and the lake. As of the date of this memorandum, three of the proposed nine new residential buildings on the property have been constructed: The Rise (market-rate rental apartments that comprise the southern addition of the Liberty House building), Laurentide (affordable apartments created in partnership with Champlain Housing Trust), and Juniper House (affordable senior apartments created in partnership with Cathedral Square Corporation). See Attachment 2: Cambrian Rise Site Plan and Attachment 3: Cambrian Rise Rendering.

The Project involves the construction of a new, seven-story (including rooftop greenhouse, terrace, and gardening plots) condominium building to be located on the north portion of the Cambrian Rise property, adjacent to Liberty House. The new building is addressed as 300 Cambrian Way and is depicted as "Building D/E/F" on Attachment 2 and the (2) site plans in Attachment 4. The building will have a 20-foot setback from the North Avenue right-of-way, the same setback that occurs at The Rise building located to the south of Liberty House. This setback is dictated by the Burlington base zoning district that encompasses the Cambrian Rise property, known as the Neighborhood Activity Center – Cambrian Rise ("NAC-CR") district, which states that the maximum setback of a building from the curb must be 20 feet. 300 Cambrian Way is set back between 14 feet and 18 feet from Cambrian Way which will travel along the north side of the building. See Attachment 4: Detailed Site Plans.

The building will be composed of three interconnected blocks that will have varying heights based on the grade of the site and building step backs. The east block fronting North Avenue that will be visible to the north when viewing Liberty House will be five stories tall plus a stepped-back, sixth story level. The south portion of the east block closest to Liberty House will be four stories tall (about 46 feet high) and it will step up to five stories to the north and along the east side (about 59 feet high), eventually progressing to six stories in height where it connects to the six-story tall central block (about 75 feet high). These progressive step backs are designed to reduce the mass of the building closest to Liberty House and to accommodate rooftop terraces. The central block of the building (labeled “Building F” on the site plans) will be composed of six stories with a significantly stepped-back, seventh story greenhouse, terrace, and garden plots. Located further west of the Liberty House façade, this part of the building is designed to be minimally visible from the public right-of-way along North Avenue. The west block (labeled “Building E” on the site plans) will be seven stories tall with a flat roof (about 81 feet high). The west block will be four stories tall from the top of a terrace and will then include three lower levels below the terrace grade; an underpass will delineate these two blocks. The west block will appear lower in height than the central block due to the grade of the site. Extending south from the west end of the central block (bordering the east of the underpass) will be a below-grade extension of the building (labeled "Building D" on the site plans) that will be two levels beneath a paved parking area. This wing will have an exposed, largely glazed facade facing west toward a lower parking area.

In general, the facades of the building will be clad in fiber cement panels of varying colors and textures interspersed with Ipe or E.Q. wood slats. The building will feature aluminum windows and doors and metal clad balconies and

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2 https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/Map%204.3.1-1%20%20Zoning%20Districts%20%208.5x11_1.pdf
window boxes. The abundant use of glass for balcony railings, doorways, and large windows are designed to soften the mass of the building. See Attachment 5: 300 Cambrian Way Elevation Renderings.

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES**

There are four historic resources in proximity to the Project that are considered Historic Buildings and Sites for the purpose of Section 5.4.8. These historic resources are depicted in Attachment 1: Historic Resources Map.

1. **St. Joseph’s Orphanage (Liberty House)**, 351 North Avenue. Listed in the State Register. Eligible for the National Register as part of the eligible North Avenue Neighborhood District.

   The 1884, 3.5-story plus raised basement, Italianate style former orphanage building was constructed and operated by the Roman Catholic Diocese. In 1940, a 3-story addition was constructed at its southern end which the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (“VDHP”) determined to be a contributing component of the property. The building was fully renovated in 2016-2017. During the renovation, the 1962 gabled entry was removed and the c.1978 parabolic entry on the front elevation at the juncture of the original building and 1940 wing was also removed. A large, southern addition (known as The Rise) was built on the south side of the 1940 wing in 2019-2020. St. Joseph’s Orphanage is located between 24 feet and 52 feet south of the Project. The building is also included in the National Register-eligible North Avenue Neighborhood Historic District (see #3 below).


   Built in 1882, the Howard Mortuary Chapel was designed by Burlington builder / architect A.B. Fisher and built in the southeast portion of Lakeview Cemetery, which was established by the City of Burlington in 1868 in the rural cemetery style. The High Victorian Gothic style chapel was listed in the National Register in 1999 and rehabilitated in the early-2000s. It is located about 200 feet northwest of the Project. The entire Lakeview Cemetery is also included in the National Register-eligible North Avenue Neighborhood Historic District (see #3 below).

3. **North Avenue Neighborhood District**, between 311 North Avenue and the northern end of Lakeview Cemetery. Eligible for listing in the National Register.

   The east side of North Avenue in this district consists primarily of late-19th and early-20th century homes reflecting the Queen Anne, Craftsman, Bungalow, Foursquare, and Colonial Revival styles, with several vernacular Greek Revival homes scattered throughout. The west side of North Avenue in this district contains a stone cottage at 311 North Avenue, the former St. Joseph’s Orphanage, and Lakeview Cemetery which encompasses the Howard Mortuary Chapel and a Gothic Revival caretaker’s cottage. Buildings in the neighborhood retain a relatively high degree of integrity. On April 18, 2016, VDHP determined that this portion of North Avenue in Burlington is locally significant and eligible for the National Register under Criteria A (Event) and C (Architecture).

This 2.5-story house was constructed c.1923 and is located about 145 feet north-northeast of the Project. This house is within the North Avenue Neighborhood District.

**STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (5.4.8[b])**

The following narrative describes the Project within the context of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (“Standards”), codified in 36 CFR 67, which are used by the City of Burlington in the review of all applications involving historic buildings and sites subject to the provisions of Article 5.4.8 and the requirements for Design Review. Because the Project involves construction of a new, standalone building, it will not have direct impacts to historic buildings and sites. As such, only Standards (8), (9), and (10) are applicable to the Project and are included in the analysis below.

8. **Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**

The University of Vermont Consulting Archaeology Program (“UVM CAP”) conducted a Phase I survey of the Cambrian Rise property in June 2016 and concluded that redevelopment of the property would have no effect on archaeological resources. This survey included the Project location. The VDHP concurred with this finding on July 29, 2016.

9. **New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**

The Project will not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

300 Cambrian Way has been designed with the following tenet: to create a building that is compatible with the adjacent historic Liberty House and North Avenue Neighborhood District that also complies with the standards of the NAC-CR zoning district and is large enough to be economically viable. The NAC-CR district describes how development should be densely concentrated and oriented towards North Avenue, with “new buildings that are complimentary to the iconic historic former-orphanage” activating North Avenue and promoting pedestrian interest, comfort, and safety.⁴ 300 Cambrian Way is designed to comply with the standards of this zoning district, framing the historic building and emphasizing it as the focal point of the Cambrian Rise property. The property will be developed in such a way that the historic, uninterrupted space between Liberty House and Lake Champlain to the west will be preserved. The location of 300 Cambrian Way to the north of Liberty House will not impede this relationship.

The new building will be contemporary in design and therefore differentiated in style from the adjacent Liberty House. However, the proposed design will be compatible with Liberty House. Building materials are

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⁴ [https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/20201216%20ART04-Districts_1.pdf](https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/20201216%20ART04-Districts_1.pdf) (page 4-21).
drawn from both the palate of Liberty House and the surrounding natural environment and include fiber cement panels in colors that match the Isle La Motte limestone sills of Liberty House; wood lap siding to connect with the surrounding vegetation; and metal referencing the broad metal roof of Liberty House. The symmetrical fenestration echoes that of Liberty House, and the prolific glazing on the building softens its mass thereby minimizing its visual impact on Liberty House.

Although Liberty House is set back approximately 75 feet from the North Avenue curb, 300 Cambrian Way has been sited to comply with the existing NAC-CR zoning district, which dictates that a building be located no more than 20 feet away from the curb (the building utilizes the maximum curb setback allowed). Most portions of the new building are within the maximum 65-foot height allowance in this district, although the central block of the building is about ten feet higher (75 feet) due to an Inclusionary Zoning bonus granted to the Project. The top height of Liberty House (at the cupola) is 70 feet above ground level ("AGL"). Portions of the new building that are closest to Liberty House (the eastern end) will be lower in height than Liberty House – only 46 feet to 59 feet AGL – to reduce the building’s scale in relationship to Liberty House and to allow Liberty House’s character-defining roofline and cupola to remain a focal point on the property as viewed from both North Avenue and from areas to the west. It is important to note that due to the grade of the site, the central block of the building will still be lower in AGL height than the cupola of Liberty House, preserving Liberty House as the tallest building on the property.

Regarding potential impacts to the North Avenue Neighborhood District, the redevelopment of the Cambrian Rise property, including the Project building, will affect the historic setting of the district. However, overall, the site plan, landscaping, and design elements of the property’s redevelopment all help tie the new buildings to the historic streetscape. Although 300 Cambrian Way will be visible mainly from the central portion of the district (including 422 North Avenue), it will be buffered by vegetation planted in front of and to the sides of the building to help it blend into the surrounding natural and built environment. The vegetation will also help maintain the sense of greenery that has historically been associated with the property. The North Avenue Neighborhood District encompasses the east side of North Avenue in this area, and much of the district’s significance is drawn from its clear architectural expression as a late-19th to early-20th century residential neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. The Project will not be visible when viewing these residential properties on the east side of the North Avenue Neighborhood District; as such, their historic development pattern and setting on the east side of the street will remain intact.

Regarding potential impacts to the Howard Mortuary Chapel within Lakeview Cemetery, 300 Cambrian Way will not disrupt the setting of the chapel and will hardly be visible (if at all) from the chapel. The cemetery is buffered by existing mature vegetation along the Cambrian Rise property’s northern property line, and additional trees are proposed along this boundary to augment the existing vegetation.

A future phase of the Cambrian Rise will include the widening of North Avenue on the west side to allow for on-street parking, a protected bike lane (consistent with the North Avenue Corridor Study), a pull-off for public transit buses, a traffic light at the southern intersection of North Avenue and Cambrian Way, a protected pedestrian crossing, and additional street trees. These improvements will combine to reinforce the neighborhood street quality of this section of North Avenue and serve to calm thru-traffic.
10. **New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.**

The new building will be constructed in such a manner that, in the unlikely event that it is removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would remain relatively intact. The Cambrian Rise property will be developed in such a way that the historic, uninterrupted space between Liberty House and Lake Champlain to the west will be preserved. 300 Cambrian Way will not impede this relationship.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment 1: Historic Resources Map
Attachment 2: Cambrian Rise Site Plan
Attachment 3: Cambrian Rise Rendering
Attachment 4: Detailed Site Plans
Attachment 5: 300 Cambrian Way Elevation Renderings
Attachment 6: Photographs
Attachment 1:

Historic Resources Map
Cambrian Rise Project - 300 Cambrian Way

Historic Resources

Sources:
- Background Imagery from Nearmap - Collected on 4/19/20
- VCGI (Vermont Center for Geographic Information - 2021)
- VHB - 2021

Legend:
- Historic Resource (VHB)
- Approximate Boundary of North Ave. Neighborhood District (VHB)
- Approximate Footprint of 300 Cambrian Way (VHB)
- Parcel Boundary (VCGI)
Attachment 2:
Cambrian Rise Site Plan
PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Note:
1. The official name of the public street is Cambrian Way as shown in this drawing. On all other drawings, exhibits, and narratives, the street is split into three sections and referred to as or labeled "North Road," "West Road," and "South Road." These labels are used solely for the purposes of being able to distinguish between the different sections of road during design, permitting, and construction.
2. For major updates to the site plan, see L-201, L-202, and L-206.
Attachment 3:
Cambrian Rise Site Rendering
Attachment 4:
Detailed Site Plans
Attachment 5:

300 Cambrian Way Elevation Renderings
Cambrian Rise Building D-E-F | Burlington, VT
East Elevation  scale: 3/32" = 1'-0"

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Cambrian Rise Building D-E-F | Burlington, VT
Building Elevations scale: 1" = 20'-0"

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Attachment 6:
Photographs
Photograph 1: Looking south towards Liberty House from North Ave. 300 Cambrian Way would be at center. The driveway marks the location of the new roadway that will be on the north side of the new building.

Photograph 2: Looking southwest from within the North Avenue Neighborhood District toward the location of 300 Cambrian Way. Liberty House is at left.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photographs Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 3: Looking west-northwest from the North Avenue Neighborhood District toward the location of 300 Cambrian Way at center and right. Liberty House is at left.

Photograph 4: Looking northwest along North Ave. within the North Avenue Neighborhood District. 300 Cambrian Way would be left of center.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photograph Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 5: Looking northwest from the Liberty House front circle towards the location of 300 Cambrian Way at center. Liberty House is at left.

Photograph 6: Looking northwest along North Ave. within the North Avenue Neighborhood District. 300 Cambrian Way would be partly visible at the very edge of the left side of the photo.
Photograph 7: Looking north from the front steps of Liberty House toward the North Avenue Neighborhood District and the location of 300 Cambrian Way at left.

Photograph 8: Looking south toward Liberty House with the 1940 addition at center and The Rise addition at left. The Rise building is set back approximately 20 feet from the curb, the same distance that 300 Cambrian Way will be set back from the curb.
Photograph 9: Looking southeast along North Avenue with the North Avenue Neighborhood District at left. As noted above, 300 Cambrian Way will be set back the same distance from the curb as The Rise building at center.

Photograph 10: Looking northwest across the location of 300 Cambrian Way and towards Lakeview Cemetery beyond.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photographs Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 11: Looking west-northwest from Liberty House across the north portion of the Cambrian Rise property and Lakeview Cemetery beyond. 300 Cambrian Way will extend west to about as far as the small dirt piles at left.

Photograph 12: Looking southwest across the Cambrian Rise property from the center of Liberty House. This view from Liberty House across the property to the lake will not be disrupted as new buildings will be constructed along the periphery of the property.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photographs Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 13: Looking east-northeast toward Liberty House from near the northern boundary of the Cambrian Rise property, in the approximate location of the proposed new road. 300 Cambrian Rise would occupy the central portion of this photograph.

Photograph 14: Looking southeast from Lakeview Cemetery toward Liberty House, which would be obscured by 300 Cambrian Way from this viewpoint. The Louisa Howard Mortuary Chapel is at right. Additional trees will be planted between the new building and the cemetery to minimize the new building’s visibility.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photographs Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 15: Looking east from Lakeview Cemetery toward Liberty House, which would be obscured by 300 Cambrian Way from this viewpoint. Additional trees will be planted between the new building and the cemetery to minimize the building’s visibility.

Photograph 16: Looking southwest along the northern Cambrian Rise property boundary at the location of the new road (dirt path). Lakeview Cemetery is at right. A portion of 300 Cambrian Way would be visible at far left. Additional trees will be planted between the road and the cemetery to buffer views of new development from the cemetery and to create a wildlife corridor.

Photographer: Britta Tonn, VHB
Photographs Taken: April 19, 2021
Photograph 17: Looking northeast from the entrance of the new road toward residential development within the North Avenue Neighborhood District. The State Register-listed 422 North Avenue is at left.