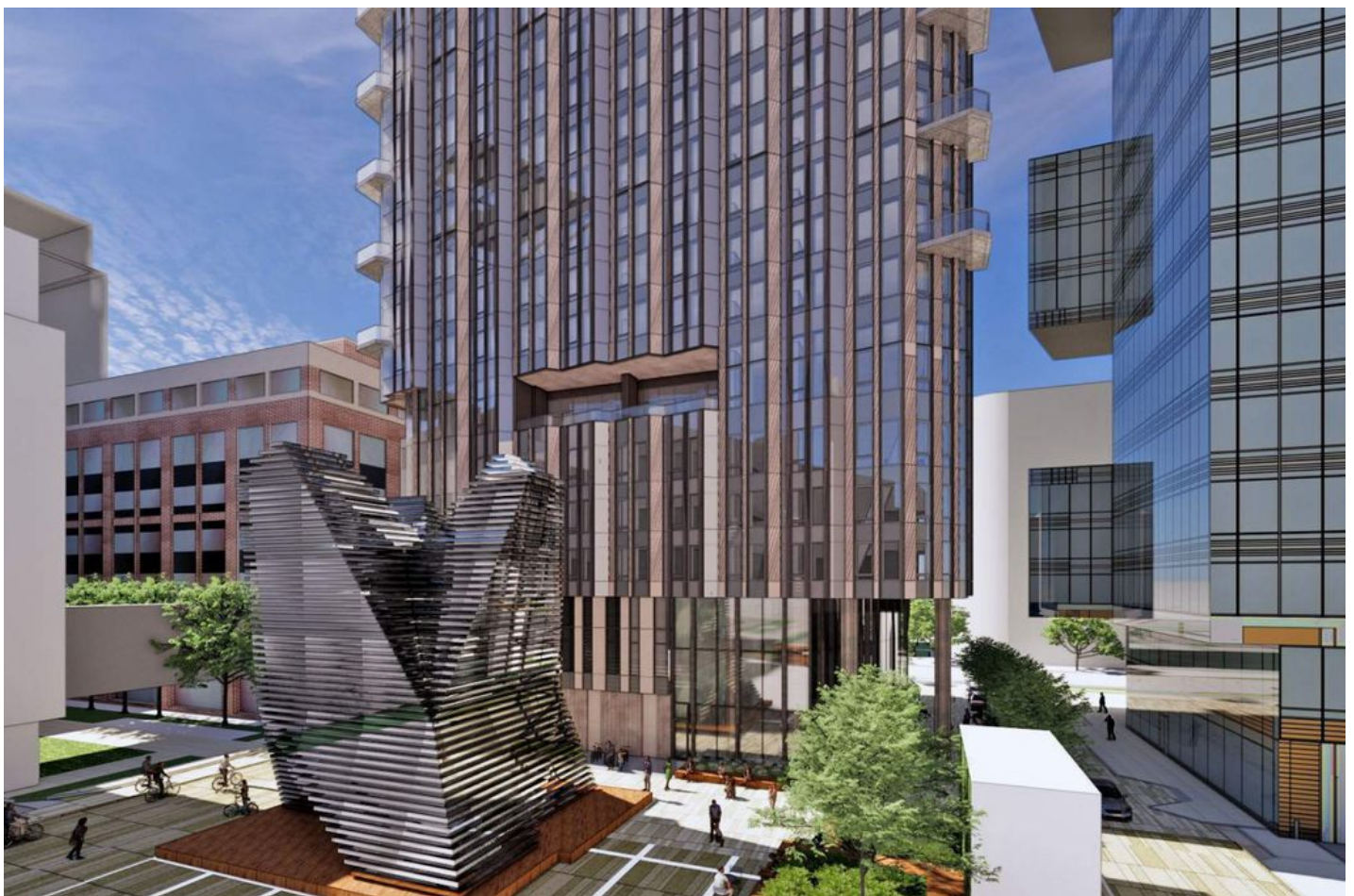


New tower in Kendall would be Cambridge's tallest building

Boston Properties pushes ahead with plan for 38-story residential tower and two lab buildings between Broadway and Binney Street in Kendall Square.

By [Catherine Carlock](#) Globe Staff, Updated April 13, 2022, 3:25 p.m.



Boston Properties is proposing a residential tower at 135 Broadway in Cambridge's Kendall Square, along with two 16-story labs at 250 and 290 Binney St. STANTEC

A Kendall Square tower that would be the tallest building in Cambridge won conditional approval Tuesday night from two city boards, which OK'd the design of a 38-story

residential building at 135 Broadway.

The tower would rise to 454 feet at its tallest point, with a crown-like structure at its roof, and house 439 units, a mix of studios, one-, two-, and three-bedrooms. Boston Properties, the tower's developer, also plans to build two 16-story lab and office buildings nearby at 250 and 290 Binney St. The residential tower and labs would surround a landscaped plaza atop a proposed underground substation for utilities provider Eversource, which would help provide power for the rapidly developing business district.

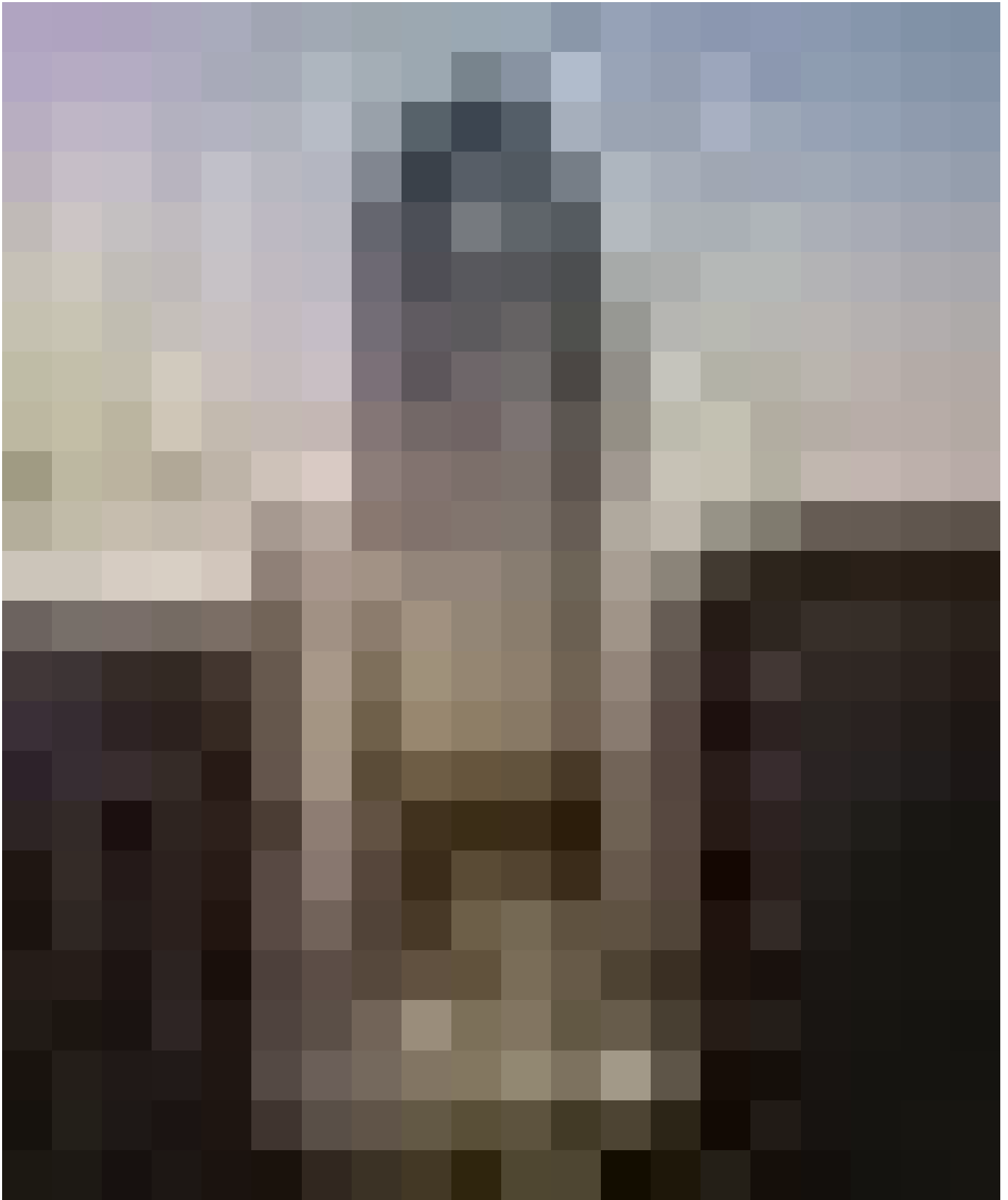
“While it has a very unique and sort of instantly recognizable form ... it also plays a very prominent part in creating the Broadway streetscape,” said Louis Kraft, an architect with Stantec, at a joint meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board and the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority on Tuesday evening.

The tower would be located next to the Akamai Technologies headquarters at 145 Broadway — which Boston Properties also developed — and a Biogen building at 105 Broadway. Boston Properties plans to demolish the existing Blue Garage at 290 Binney St., with the public plaza between the two future Binney Street labs and residential tower.

The project will abut the 14-acre future Volpe Center redevelopment, where work is underway on a new building for the US Department of Transportation and MIT is eventually planning 1.7 million square feet of office and labs and 1,400 residential units in eight buildings. Zoning and permits for the Volpe site allow for a 500-foot tower, according to a Cambridge official.

The tower's design inspiration was the Simplex Wire & Cable Co. on Sidney Street, the project team said, as both a nod to the area's industrial and technological history and Kendall Square's current status as the world's preeminent biotechnology hub. Features of the residential tower include a soaring lobby entrance reaching almost 35 feet tall, a 37th-story sky deck, and sixth-floor dog run, along with a ground-floor residential porch and water feature.

Members of both boards spoke highly of the tower's design but added they would like to see further review on its proposed lighting, play area, water feature, and more.



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Planning board member Hugh Russell described the proposal as “very distinguished.”

“This has reached a rarely, rarely achieved level of design,” added Barry Zevin, a member of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority board. “It’s really, really good.”

At Tuesday’s meeting, representatives from both Boston Properties and Eversource said moving forward with the residential tower was essential to the future construction schedule of the Eversource substation. That facility is necessary to generate enough power for the electrical load demand in the area projected starting in 2028, said Maija Benjamins, director of strategic project development for Eversource Energy, at the meeting.

Eversource had previously planned a substation on nearby Fulkerson Street, near an elementary school. That proposal faced fierce community opposition, leading Cambridge officials to call for an alternative substation site.

“This is a massive Swiss watch with multiple third parties, and time is beyond the essence,” said Michael Tilford, a vice president of development with Boston Properties, at the meeting.

The company forecasts starting work on the residential tower and one of the Binney Street labs by late this year and wrapping up in mid-2027. Construction on the second Binney Street lab would start in early 2024 and finish in mid-2028.

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