



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: May 19, 2022
To: Members of the Cambridge Planning Board
From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission
Re: PB 390: 57 JFK Street, Crimson Galeria

The Historical Commission reviewed this project in August and September 2021. The applicants made adjustments to their August plans, and the Commission voted on September 2 to grant an approval in principle for the project with the requirement that the applicants return to the Commission after completing their special permit review with the Planning Board. The Commission will consider their final design and vote on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

In August, the Commission expressed concern about the massing of the residential entrance addition at the west end of the Winthrop Street elevation and its impact on views of the smaller historic house at 96 Winthrop Street. When the project returned at the September hearing, the proponents had pulled the mass of the addition further back from Winthrop Street and eliminated a column at the corner of the second story to conserve views of 96 Winthrop Street. The floor area of the revised proposal was reduced by about 1800 square feet. The proposed height was reduced from 70 feet to 60 feet, reducing shadow impacts on neighboring buildings and Winthrop Park. The Commission found that the revised design met secondary goals #3, 4, 7 and 8 of the Harvard Square Conservation District order.

3. **Contemporary Design.** Where context allows, support creative, contemporary design for new construction that complements the context of abutting buildings and enhances the character of the subdistrict. Recognize and respect well-reasoned contemporary design during the review process. Support innovative approaches to enhancing the unique character of Harvard Square while mitigating the detrimental impacts of development on proximate areas.
4. **Diversity of Form.** Build on and sustain the diversity of existing building form, scale and material. Preserve and encourage appropriate green spaces, scale-appropriate open spaces, and new buildings that support the prevailing character of the subdistrict. Preserve the remaining wood frame buildings throughout the District. Maintain a consistent setback or streetwall condition where that character has been set. Support small-scale storefronts to preserve the vitality and character of the streetscape.
7. **Residential Development. Enhance** the all-hours neighborhood quality of Harvard Square by supporting existing residential uses and encouraging additional residential units in mixed-use buildings.
8. **Compatible Design.** Encourage compatible design that supports a wide diversity of uses serving the needs of surrounding neighborhoods, students, workers and visitors from around the world.