



---

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

---

To: Planning Board

From: CDD Staff

Date: May 18, 2022

Re: Special Permit **PB-390, 57 JFK Street**

**IRAM FAROOQ**  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

**SANDRA CLARKE**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Administration

**KHALIL MOGASSABI**  
Deputy Director  
Chief of Planning

## Overview

---

Submission Type:	Special Permit Application
Applicant:	Crimson Galeria Limited Partnership
Zoning District(s):	Business B; Harvard Square Overlay District
Proposal Summary:	Construct a residential addition of 40 units to the existing commercial building footprint. The final gross floor area for the proposed residential addition would be 30,527 square feet.
Special Permits Requested:	Additional height in Harvard Square Overlay (20.54.2); Parking and Loading requirements in Harvard Square Overlay (20.54.4); and Building Setbacks requirements in Harvard Square Overlay (20.54.5)
Other City Permits Needed:	Historical Commission Review
Planning Board Action:	Grant or deny requested special permits.
Memo Contents:	Zoning Report, CDD Urban Design Report, Green Building Certification
Other Staff Reports:	Parking and Transportation Dept. (TP+T), Department of Public Works (DPW), in separate documents.

---

<b>Zoning Section</b>	<b>Required Planning Board Findings</b> <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
Harvard Square Overlay District: Building height up to 80 feet (Section 20.54.2)	<p>Those portions of the building in excess of 60 feet must be set back from the street line at least 10 feet and set back from one or more 45-degree sky exposure planes, unless otherwise permitted by the Planning Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed Special Permit exceptions to upper floor setbacks must successfully reduce the overall negative effect of multiple floor setbacks and enhance both the proposed building silhouette and townscape of the block.</li> <li>• Such architectural elements as pergolas, and occupiable corner pavilions, occupiable pavilion directly above the main building entry, and special features that animate the public domain experience.</li> <li>• All such exceptions are to be limited in scope and work cohesively.</li> </ul> <p>All approved facade setbacks are to provide accessible, useable balconies for tenants.</p>
Harvard Square Overlay District: Waiver of parking and loading requirement (Section 20.54.4)	<p>The use is contained in a new structure or new addition to an historic structure provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subject lot is sufficiently small in size as to contribute to a development pattern of diverse, small scale, new structures and the retention of existing structures (for lots exceeding 10,000 square feet a specific finding shall be made that this objective has been met).</li> <li>• The building design is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood and that it is in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in Harvard Square Development Guidelines.</li> <li>• No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building.</li> </ul>
Harvard Square Overlay District: Exemption of yard requirement (Section 20.54.5)	<p>For any new building in any Business, Office or Residence C-3 base-zoning district, for which a building permit is issued after December 15, 1985, the Planning Board issues a Special Permit exempting the building from yard requirements provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The design of the new structure shall be in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in Harvard Square Development Guidelines.</li> </ol>

<b>Zoning Section</b>	<b>Required Planning Board Findings</b> <i>(Summary - see appendix for zoning text excerpts)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. No National Register or contributing building is demolished or so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation as a National Register or contributing building; and</li> <li>c. No National Register or contributing building previously existed on the site in the preceding five (5) years and which has been so altered as to terminate or preclude its designation or demolished prior to the application.</li> </ul>
<p>10.43 – General Special Permit Criteria</p>	<p>Special permits will be normally granted if the zoning requirements are met, unless it is found not to be in the public interest due to one of the criteria enumerated in Section 10.43:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) It appears that requirements of this Ordinance cannot or will not be met, or</li> <li>(b) traffic generated or patterns of access or egress would cause congestion, hazard, or substantial change in established neighborhood character, or</li> <li>(c) the continued operation of or the development of adjacent uses as permitted in the Zoning Ordinance would be adversely affected by the nature of the proposed use, or</li> <li>(d) nuisance or hazard would be created to the detriment of the health, safety and/or welfare of the occupant of the proposed use or the citizens of the City, or</li> <li>(e) for other reasons, the proposed use would impair the integrity of the district or adjoining district, or otherwise derogate from the intent and purpose of this Ordinance, and</li> <li>(f) the new use or building construction is inconsistent with the Urban Design Objectives set forth in Section 19.30.</li> </ul>
<p>Harvard Square Overlay District: Criteria for Issuance of Special Permits (Section 20.53.2)</p>	<p>The special permit granting authority shall be guided by the objectives and criteria contained in the publication Harvard Square Development Guidelines [Document compiled from the Guidelines for Development and Historic Preservation as contained in the Final Report of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee, dated November 29, 2000 and the Harvard Square Development Guidelines, 1986].</p>



---

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

---

## Zoning & Development Staff Report

Date: May 18, 2022

Case: PB-390

Location: 57 JFK Street

---

## Area Planning and Zoning

### Site Context

Neighborhood/Area: Harvard Square

Zoning District(s): Business B; Harvard Square Overlay District

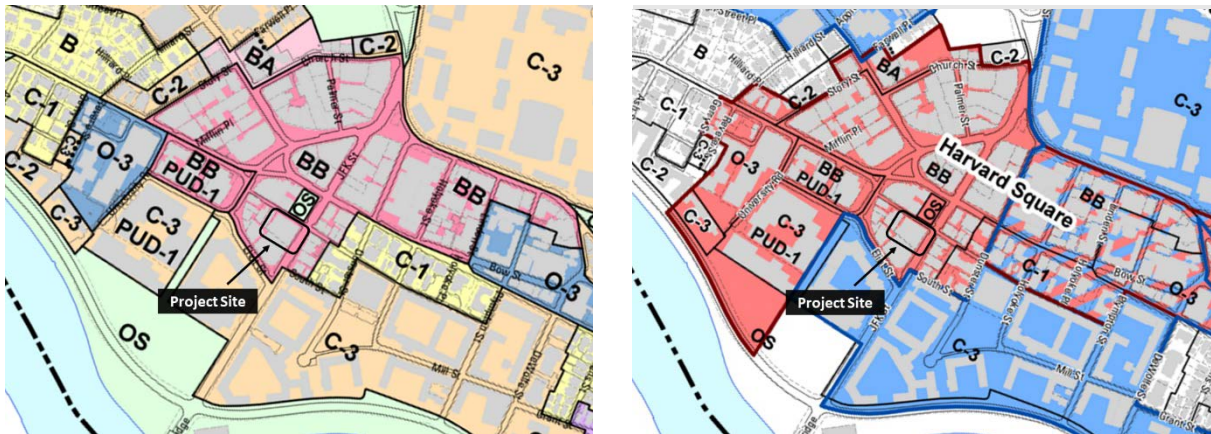
Zoning Description: Residential, commercial, and institutional buildings up to 60 feet in height, additional height and density by special permit; overlay district allows additional FAR, parking waiver, and other modifications by special permit

Existing Development Patterns: Mix of institutional, office, retail, and some residential uses, including many restaurants, shops, and uses affiliated with Harvard University

Nearby Features: Winthrop Park; MBTA Red Line Harvard Square Station; Bluebikes station; Routes 1, 66, 68, and 69 MBTA bus stops



Site context for 57 JFK Street (Source: Nearmap March 23, 2022)



Zoning Map (left) and Overlay Zoning Map (right) showing 57 JFK Street. (Source: City of Cambridge)

### ***Development Plans and Guidelines***

- [Harvard Square Overlay District](#). The Harvard Square Overlay District was created in 1986, following a planning study that established development goals and guidelines for the area. The zoning for HSOD was recently amended in 2020, concurrent with [a study of the Harvard Square Conservation District](#) that was conducted by the Cambridge Historical Commission. The specific design guidelines for Harvard Square are included in the appendix, and include encouraging strong retail frontage, providing visual interest and pedestrian orientation in storefront design, and taking advantage of existing public transportation.
- The [Envision Cambridge](#) comprehensive plan (2019) established city-wide planning goals and recommendations, designating this area as one of several “Squares and Major Mixed-Use Corridors.” Envision Cambridge called for a balanced mix of development types that are sensitive to their context while still advancing the City’s goals in providing affordable housing, environmental resilience, cohesive urban form, and community wellbeing. It advocated for providing both commercial and residential development, as well as preserving and expanding the city’s open space network. In general, Envision Cambridge noted that any redevelopment of sites located in Squares and Major Mixed-Use Corridors should accommodate greater densities than surrounding neighborhoods to incentivize affordable housing, sustainable transportation modes, and a mix of uses. It also identified the importance of supporting independent retail businesses and improving the public realm to sustain thriving commercial districts.

## Current Proposal

### Overview

The Application by Crimson Galeria Limited Partnership proposes to construct a residential addition to an existing commercial building. The addition would maintain the current building footprint, adding three stories to the two-story building. The addition will include 40 units and total 30,527 square feet. With the proposed addition, the building will total 66,904 square feet and will be 65 feet in height.

No off-street parking or loading will be provided. Bicycle parking is discussed further below. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the residential addition will be off Winthrop Street.

### Past Proposals

This site has been the subject of past applications to the Planning Board. In 2014, the Planning Board heard a proposal for a three-story, 40-unit residential addition to the existing building (PB-289). After two public hearing sessions, the applicant requested leave to withdraw the application, which was granted.

In 2015, the Board granted a special permit for a three-story office addition (PB-296). The special permit was only to exempt the parking and loading requirements for the addition. That special permit was amended in 2019 to exempt the basement from the calculation of GFA for the site and, as a result, to remove the condition that the permittee make a payment to the Harvard Square Improvement Fund. Although a building permit was issued for enabling structural work within the existing building, the addition was never constructed.

In 2021, the Board granted a special permit for a Cannabis Retail Store in the ground story and basement of the existing building. A building permit has not yet been applied for.

### Proposed Uses

The Application proposes the following uses on the site:

Proposed Uses	Location/Size	Notes
4.35 Retail or Consumer Service Establishments	36,570 ft <sup>2</sup> / basement, ground story, and second story	Allowed use (existing)
4.31g Multifamily dwelling	30,527 ft <sup>2</sup> / third, fourth, and fifth stories	Allowed use

The dimensional form notes that the proposed addition includes 30,527 square feet while the application narrative records that figure as 30,334 square feet. The accurate gross floor area figure will need to be recorded in the special permit.

The Harvard Square Development Guidelines encourages new residential projects in the Harvard Square Overlay District, especially in mixed-use buildings. *Envision Cambridge* recommends redevelopment in the city's squares to create housing in these transit-rich areas.

The residential units will be a mix of studio and one-bedroom units. The unit type breakdown is as follows:

	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1 Bedroom</b>	<b>In-Board 1 Bedroom</b>
<b>Number of Units</b>	14	19	7
<b>Average Unit Size (square feet)</b>	490	593	554
<b>Unit Size Range (square feet)</b>	345-668	431-855	520-581

The Application notes that some of the one-bedroom units will be “in-board,” but it does not explain what this means. “In-board” may be another term for “borrowed light” bedrooms, which are internal rooms with no exterior wall or windows. The Application does not clearly show where windows are located, so it is unclear if some bedrooms are windowless. This is discussed in greater detail in the Urban Design report.

**Proposed Dimensions**

The Application proposes the following dimensions for development on the site:

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Dimensional Standards (BB/HSOD)</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Gross Floor Area (GFA)</b>	58,568 ft <sup>2</sup>	36,570 ft <sup>2</sup>	66,904 ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	4.0, plus 30% Inclusionary bonus	2.50	4.61
<b>Height and Stories</b>	60’, 80’ by special permit	29.5’ over two stories	65’ over five stories
<b>Setbacks (Yards)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front (Winthrop Street): 39.6’</li> <li>• Front (JFK Street): 34.2’</li> <li>• Side (96 Winthrop Street): 26.5’</li> <li>• Side (parking garage): 31.2’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front (Winthrop Street): 5.9’</li> <li>• Front (JFK Street): 0’</li> <li>• Side (96 Winthrop Street): 7.8’</li> <li>• Side (parking garage): 0’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front (Winthrop Street): 5.9’</li> <li>• Front (JFK Street): 0’</li> <li>• Side (96 Winthrop Street): 5’</li> <li>• Side (parking garage): 0’</li> </ul>
<b>Open Space</b>	10% of lot area, reduced based on proportion of residential use	0% of lot area	4.88% of lot area (714 ft <sup>2</sup> )

The Application seeks two special permits relative to the building size and dimensions, one for height and one for setbacks.

### Building Height

The Harvard Square Overlay District reduces the allowed height from 80 feet to 60 feet in the Business B district. Building heights up to 80 feet are allowed by special permit if the parts of the building above 60' are set back from the street by at least 10 feet and along a 45-degree sky exposure plane. The Planning Board can approve modifications to those standards as part of the special permit. The Application shows that the fifth floor of the proposed building will be set back from both JFK and Winthrop Streets to meet both bulk control standards (see Figure 16 in volume 2 of the Application).

### Building Setbacks

Setbacks are not required for non-residential uses in Business B. However, Section 5.28.1 of the Zoning Ordinance stipulates that residential uses in Business B must follow the Residential C-3 dimensional standards. The Harvard Square Overlay District allows yard requirements to be waived by special permit if the building conforms with the Harvard Square Development Guidelines and does not alter National Register or contributing buildings. The property is within the National Register-listed Harvard Square (National Register) Historic District but is identified as a non-contributing building.

The proposed development will modify only one of the building's four setbacks, reducing the side yard setback abutting 96 Winthrop Street – the site of the historically significant Hasty Pudding building – from 7.8 feet to 5 feet to accommodate the residential entry and elevator at the ground story. A similar entryway was shown in the earlier proposal approved by the Planning Board (PB-296), for which the decision noted that floor-mounted bumper rails would be installed in the side alley to protect the historically significant Hasty Pudding building at 96 Winthrop Street. It is unclear if a similar strategy is being proposed here. The Urban Design report provides more detail on how the building conforms with the Harvard Square Development Guidelines.

### Open Space

The Application proposes 714 square feet of private open space, which would equate to approximately 4.88% of the lot area. While open space is not required in Business B, residential uses are subject to the dimensional requirements in Residence C-3. The amount of required open space in a mixed-use building is also prorated to reflect the ratio of residential GFA to total GFA.

The Application materials are unclear but appear to show this open space requirement being met by a third-story courtyard and residential balconies. The Zoning Ordinance sets specific parameters for the amount, type, and location of private open space as follows:

- Private open space must have a minimum dimension of 15 feet by 15 feet, except for balconies.
- At least 50% of the required private open space must be provided at ground level or within 10 feet of the level of the lowest floor used for residential purposes.
- Balconies may count towards the calculation of private open space but cannot account for more than 25% of the total private open space.
- Balconies must be at least 6 feet by 6 feet and have a minimum area of 72 square feet.

To determine if the private open space requirement is being met, the Application would need to be revised to include the above dimensions and calculations. The Harvard Square Overlay District does not



offer a special permit option for waiving or reducing the amount of required open space, so any reductions would require a variance.

***Proposed Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading***

	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
<b>Off-Street Parking</b>	40	0	0 (requires special permit)
<b>Loading Bays</b>	0	0	0
<b>Bicycle Parking</b>	41 long-term spaces 4 short-term spaces	0 long-term spaces 0 short-term spaces	44-46 long-term spaces 4 short-term spaces

Off-Street Parking

The Application seeks a special permit to waive the requirement for off-street parking. In order to grant the special permit, the Board must find that exempting the project from parking and loading requirements will lead to a building design that is more appropriate to its location and the fabric of its neighborhood. Specifically, the building design must be in conformance with the objectives and criteria contained in the Harvard Square Development Guidelines.

Because the lot is larger than 10,000 square feet (the area is 17,608 square feet), the Board must also find that the lot is small enough to contribute to a development pattern of diverse, small scale, new structures and the retention of existing structures.

There is currently no off-street parking or loading at this site, which is common for development in Harvard Square. Providing parking and interior loading would have significant effects on the building design and is likely not even feasible for this site. This is addressed further in the Urban Design report.

Due to concerns from abutters about unauthorized parking and loading activity in the paved area adjacent to the building on the Winthrop Street side, the decision for PB-296 included a condition that the permittee install non-movable planters or other physical elements on the lot to designate the property line along Winthrop Street. The Application does not show planters or other physical elements on their site plan as part of this proposed development. The City has continued to receive complaints about unauthorized parking and loading activity on Winthrop Street, so the Board may want to consider requiring a similar condition to physically prevent motor vehicle parking adjacent to this building.

Bicycle Parking

The dimensional form notes that 44 long-term bicycle parking spaces are being provided, however the Application indicates that 46 spaces will be provided.

The Application proposes locating the four short-term bicycle parking spaces outside of their property line, which is not allowed. If it is not possible to locate zoning-compliant short-term bicycle parking on-site, the Applicant could make a payment to the City’s Public Bicycle Parking Fund instead.

The Application proposes to largely meet the long-term bicycle parking requirement by providing in-unit parking for one bicycle in each of the 40 residential units. This approach does not meet the zoning standards because bicycle parking needs to be provided by building dedicated spaces to be maintained exclusively as bicycle parking. Designating a portion of the unit as a bicycle parking area would not meet this standard, because that space would likely become used for something else. Six bicycle parking spaces will also be provided in the basement, with two of those spaces intended for tandem bicycles. Modifications to the bicycle parking requirements would need a special permit from the Planning Board, which is not being sought.

### ***Other Special Permits***

#### **Building and Site Plan Requirements**

The Application is not seeking a Project Review Special Permit but remains subject to the Building and Site Plan Requirements in Section 19.50 because the proposed new construction is greater than 25,000 square feet. The project appears to meet most of the requirements with the exception of Section 19.59, which requires that at least 15% of the lot be devoted to Green Area or Permeable Open Space, regardless of the use.

The Zoning Ordinance defines Green Area Open Space as “a landscaped area of land” located at grade consisting of friable, permeable materials. Green Area Open Space generally consists entirely of living trees, grass, ground cover, bushes, shrubs, and/or similar vegetation, as well as water and other natural features of the site. Permeable Open Space is a type of Green Area Open Space where the surface material must be permeable, whether that is in the form of vegetation, landscaping materials, or pavers.

As noted above, the Application proposes 714 square feet of private open space in the form of a third-story courtyard and residential balconies. The Application does not show any open space being provided at grade. A special permit may be granted by the Planning Board to waive any requirements of Section 19.50 if the Planning Board finds that the general Citywide Urban Design Objectives in Section 19.30 are being met. However, such a special permit is not being sought in the current application.

### ***Other Zoning Requirements***

#### **Green Building Requirements**

This project is subject to the City’s Green Building requirements, which mandate designing to a minimum LEED Gold, Passive House, or Enterprise Green Communities standard. Based on the documents submitted, the project is expected to achieve LEED Gold certification with 74.5 points (60 points is the required minimum). The project is seeking LEED certification with USGBC.

CDD staff issued a determination that the Application demonstrates compliance with the Green Building Requirements applicable to the Special Permit stage. Staff offered the following recommendations:

- Staff recommend the use of centralized heat pump technology for heating, cooling and DHW.
- For low emitting materials, staff recommend reaching the 90% threshold in at least three product categories.

- Since the project is primarily residential, staff recommends the use of WELL standards or Fitwel guidelines, in addition to LEED.
- Staff recommend conducting a whole-building life-cycle analysis (LCA) for the Project, which would account for the embodied greenhouse gas emissions from building materials.
- Future updates from the applicant should include the following:
  - A sustainable design specification section for the emission levels of composite wood products, paints, sealants, and finishes, as well as for carpet, carpet pads, and adhesives.
  - An updated roof plan showing mechanical equipment and identifying areas that could potentially be dedicated to green roof or solar array systems.
- Staff recommend pursuing enhanced indoor air quality strategies, especially using higher filtration levels above 8 MERV preferably 10-13 MERV to do better in capturing 1-3 microns particle size.

### Green Roof Requirement

The Green Roof Requirement applies “to any new building or structure of twenty-five thousand (25,000) gross square feet or more.” In general, the requirement would not apply to additions, but the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) will need to determine whether the proposal qualifies as a “new building or structure.” Because the new GFA is residential, the Green Roof Requirement could be met by covering at least 80% of the new roof area with a Green Roof, Biosolar Roof, or Solar Energy System. The Applicant could also seek a special permit from the Planning Board to waive the requirement.

The Application indicates that the project “will seek to make 75% of the lot non-absorptive,” but it is unclear what that means in terms of roofing materials.

Even if the project is not subject to the Green Roof Requirement, staff would recommend that the roof meet the LEED standards for high-SRI (solar reflectance index). The Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force recommended that all new construction have high-SRI roofs, otherwise known as “cool roofs” or “white roofs.”

### Inclusionary Housing

The project is subject to the Inclusionary Housing requirement. As such, 20% of the total Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area within the project must be devoted to Affordable Dwelling Units. If the Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area equals 30,000 square feet or more, the project will be required to provide a certain amount of Family-Sized Affordable Dwelling Units, which is defined as having three or more bedrooms and not less than 1,100 square feet of Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area. The Application does not note the amount of Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area, so it is unclear if this requirement will be triggered.

Prior to receiving a building permit, the Applicant will be required to share detailed floor plans, unit layouts, and description of amenities with CDD staff as part of the Inclusionary Housing review. While this information is not required at the special permit stage, it can be helpful for staff to troubleshoot any potential issues with the Applicant as early as possible. In general, staff recommend that two- or three-bedroom units are provided for Inclusionary Housing tenants.

***Advisory Review***

The Application is subject to review by the Harvard Square Advisory Committee. The Committee met on May 18, 2022 to discuss the Application and submitted comments through the attached report.

***Non-Zoning Requirements***

Although the property is a non-contributing building in the National Register-listed Harvard Square (National Register) Historic District because it is located in the Harvard Square Conservation District, the project requires review by the Cambridge Historical Commission. The Application has received a preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness from the Cambridge Historical Commission. The final Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued following a hearing held after the Planning Board grants the requested special permits.

Consistent with previous Special Permits issued for the Parcel, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will be looking to confirm, prior to issuance of a building permit, that the development is meeting all current DPW standards. The Applicant shall be prepared to provide documentation related to utility and infrastructure demands and impacts of the development, as well as plans showing impacts to public rights of way. The project will require a Stormwater Control Permit from DPW and confirmation of anticipated sewer flows resulting from the change in use from the initial proposal of office use.

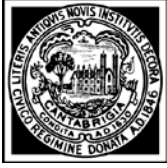
***Community Engagement***

According to the Application, the Applicant held one in-person community meeting on the site, on July 12, 2021. The Application does not detail the number of attendees, nor does it report out on the feedback that was heard at the community meeting. The Applicant also presented the project at a meeting of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Association and at a meeting of the Harvard Square Business Association.

### Special Permit Conditions

If the Board decides to grant the special permit, the following list summarizes the general categories of conditions recommended for this development based on the requested special permits:

1. Approved Development: Authorized development would need to conform with the submitted application materials. An Approved Dimensional Form would be attached as an Appendix.
2. Permitted Uses: The special permit would authorize multifamily residential use for the addition to the existing building. In the future, uses that are allowed by zoning but not authorized by the special permit would require Planning Board approval, and uses that are limited by the Zoning Ordinance (e.g., requiring a separate special permit from the Planning Board or BZA) would need to seek the necessary relief.
3. Design Review: CDD staff would review and approve design details at the construction documents phase, prior to issuance of a building permit, to certify that the plans conform to the Planning Board’s approval. Board members may cite specific areas of focus for detailed review, based on the Urban Design Report and Board discussion.
4. Transportation and Infrastructure: Work being done on City property would be subject to review and approval by appropriate City departments, including DPW, TP+T and CDD. The Board could add a condition that the Applicant shall install non-movable planters or other physical elements on the lot to designate the property line along Winthrop Street to physically prevent motor vehicle parking adjacent to this building.
5. Sustainability: Development will be subject to the Green Building Requirements in Section 22.20, which will be reviewed again by CDD staff at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages. If applicable, ISD would also review for compliance with Green Roof Requirements in Section 22.35.
6. Housing: Development will be subject to Inclusionary Housing requirements, which will be certified by the CDD Housing staff at the building permit and certificate of occupancy stages.
7. Construction Management Program: Per Section 18.20, staff would recommend a Construction Management Program be provided and approved by TP+T, DPW, and other applicable City departments before issuance of a building permit. This program would also include a community outreach program designating a point of contact to provide information to the public during the construction process and notification panels posted on the site with project information.



---

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

---

## Urban Design Staff Report

Date: May 18, 2022

Case: PB-390

Location: 57 JFK Street

---

## Urban Design Comments

### Summary of relevant design objectives and guidelines

The overall goal of the Harvard Square Conservation District is to protect the District's distinctive physical and experiential characteristics and to enhance livability and vitality. Means to achieve this include the preservation of historically significant buildings and creative design that provides a diversity of development and open space patterns, offers a diversity of architectural scales and ages, and supports a pedestrian friendly, accessible, quirky, and human scaled mixed-use environment.

Secondary goals include to:

- Preserve historically or architecturally significant buildings.
- Sustain the vitality of the commercial environment.
- Support creative, contemporary design for new construction that complements and contributes to its immediate neighbors and the character of the District.
- Build on and sustain the diversity of existing building form, scale, and material.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience by creating a high-quality public environment with attractive and compatible materials, lighting, and street furniture.
- Enhance the all-hours neighborhood quality of Harvard Square by supporting existing residential uses and encouraging additional residential units in mixed-use buildings.
- Encourage creative solutions to the District's parking and transportation issues.

Conversion of the existing commercial building to a mixed-use project will serve many of the District's goals and guidelines related to the vitality of the neighborhood and the positive impacts of residential activation. As the existing Galleria building is non-contributory to the Harvard Square Conservation District, the project also presents an opportunity for contemporary architectural design that keeps the Square fresh and vibrant, while complementing the diverse historic context.

### Massing and Siting

The stepped massing of the addition is principally a response to the 45-degree bulk control setback plane and the need to limit shadow impacts on Winthrop Square. Recessed terraces and balconies subtract from the massing to create a Jenga-like form, while a strong cornice line at each floor level

maintains a consistent horizontal datum on the JFK Street elevation and portions of the Winthrop Street elevation. On JFK Street, the new third floor generally maintains the plane of the existing façade below, which helps the building achieve a taller streetwall presence and relate to the façade of the adjoining parking garage.

New access to the addition is to be provided by a recessed, residential entrance and elevator located within the alley between the site and the Hasty Pudding building (96 Winthrop Street). The mass of the entrance has been pulled back from the street to open up the view of the Hasty Pudding building, which helps mitigate concerns about the reduced side setback noted in the Zoning and Development report. Such massing moves are consistent with the District’s guidelines that focus on creating sensitive relationships with adjacent, historically significant structures. The entrance and elevator shaft also provide a strong vertical tower element that anchors the building at its western end. In some views though, the elevator tower does appear a little imposing in relation to the modest Hasty Pudding building.

Further development of the following elements of the building’s massing could bring the project into greater accord with the guidelines:

- The recessed area above the centrally located building entrance on JFK Street seems to create an odd relationship with the double height space below. Consideration should be given to deleting this recess, so that the horizontal beam does not appear to be floating and the streetwall can be reinforced.
- Additional views of the project from further west on Winthrop Street and from Winthrop Square should be provided to gain a better understanding of the visual impacts of the building’s mass.

#### Architectural character

The stepped addition follows the same bay patterns as the existing building, which helps to create some continuity between old and new. The addition has a contemporary design aesthetic, which expresses the building structure to achieve a modular grid. The grid is created by projecting metal panel frames that are infilled with glazed curtainwall units. This provides a strong contrast with the horizontal emphasis of the existing building.

The concrete panels of the existing building are proposed to be re-clad in metal panel to match the addition, although in some perspectives it appears that some architectural details (e.g. the I-beam profile of the horizontal beam above Shake Shack) are to be maintained. The existing commercial entrances will be improved, although specific details are unclear in the application materials. The large expanses of glass on the facades of the existing building will remain unchanged other than the introduction of spandrel glass at the top of the second floor.

As the project advances, Staff suggest exploration of the following:

- Consideration should be given to introducing additional vertical columns/fins to reduce the horizontal emphasis of the existing building’s glazed facades.

- Since the third floor generally aligns with the façade below, consideration could be given to providing it with more of an affinity with the façade design of the existing first and second floors.
- The metal panel cladding profiles should be reviewed to consider adding visual interest, richness and texture through joint patterns and edge definition.
- Extensive areas of glazing on the new addition, particularly on the west elevation, should be carefully considered in relation to solar gain. Architectural treatments to help mitigate solar gain should be considered, including shading devices, or use of more solid/opaque infill panels within the structural grid.
- Application materials should provide greater clarity regarding what elements of the existing building façades are to be maintained.
- Elevations should be revised to show more details about existing conditions to be maintained, materials, joint patterns, through-wall vents, etc.

### Ground Floor Design

According to the application materials, the storefront facades are to be preserved and the two main commercial entrances are to be improved. While details are unclear, it appears that a dark grey framing element will be added to the façade surrounding each entrance. The new residential entrance will further enliven Winthrop Street, and create a sense of threshold and transitional semi-public semi-private space, while improving the appearance of the alley.

Staff suggest exploration of the following:

- As noted above, changes to the ground floor street facades could create more vertical rhythm and a human scale, which is more in keeping with the traditional storefront character of Harvard Square as recommended in the District’s guidelines.
- There is perhaps an opportunity to further celebrate and define the main building entrances with color or contrasting materials. The JFK Street entrance appears very dark in some of the renderings and the framing element tends to lack definition.
- Staff would recommend that ground floor details of the façade treatment be called out for continuing staff review.

### Materials, Colors & Details

The addition and improvements to the existing facades will primarily comprise bronze metal panel, and vision and spandrel glass. The metal panel appears sleek and contemporary in the renderings, and the color palette is intended to provide warmth, yet enable the existing building and new addition to recede into the background. Nevertheless, the elevations, renderings, and color palette (Figure 28) do not provide enough details regarding the proposed materials and details as is customary for Special Permit applications.

As the project develops, staff suggest that:

- Information regarding the visual light transparency and reflectance of all glazing should be provided.



- Likewise, the actual metal panel system should be specified, and details regarding panel sizes, joint patterns and profiles should be provided. Standing seam is shown in the precedent images on Figure 28, but is not depicted in the perspective views.
- Consideration should be given to whether the flat metal panels should have more of an expression of edges, like the I-beam shape of the columns in the existing building.
- Color and finish selection should ensure that the bronze panel has a matte/low sheen finish.

#### Rooftop Mechanicals

In contrast to the previous approvals, all mechanicals appear to be housed on the rooftop within a fully screened, setback enclosure. Specific materials and details are unclear currently. While the mechanicals appear to be well shielded, the additional rooftop structure does add additional bulk to the building, which had previously been a concern in relation to impacts on view lines from Winthrop Square.

As the project develops, staff suggest the following:

- Additional perspective views from Winthrop Square should be provided to determine if the rooftop mechanical screening is highly visible.

#### Loading, parking and services

There are significant urban design benefits associated with not providing loading and parking on this site: continuation of the streetwall and active ground floor facades is achieved; and the pedestrian environment remains uninterrupted and contiguous around the site. Loading, deliveries and residential move-ins for the addition are proposed to take place on Winthrop Street. The alley that is currently used for loading will be transformed into an attractive residential entrance, and its appearance will be greatly improved, particularly by the addition of new brick paving and a gate.

Trash and recycling for the residential addition will be stored in the basement, which is an improvement on the previous proposal. It is unclear how the current commercial tenants' trash and recycling will be handled and what the existing platforms to the rear of the alley are to be used for. In addition, since the trash and recycling bins will need to be moved from the basement to Winthrop Street via the alley, the need to protect the historically significant Hasty Pudding building is likely still a concern.

As the project develops, staff suggest the following:

- It would be helpful if the basement and first floor plans provided more information regarding building services, access routes, trash, recycling, etc. for all uses. An enlarged plan of the alley would also assist with understanding some of the building logistics.
- Consideration should be given to utilizing floor-mounted bumper rails to protect the Hasty Pudding building.

#### Open Space and Public Realm

As an existing urban streetwall building, the building occupies most of the site, apart from a large setback on Winthrop Street, which is treated as part of the shared street/public realm. Opportunities for additional open space and public realm benefits are therefore limited.

A south-facing courtyard is notched into the building mass, which helps provide light and air to the rear facing residential units. It does appear that some studio units are awkwardly laid out as a result. Green roofs/plantings on each setback terrace area and planters within the recesses are shown in the renderings; however, these are not depicted in the floor plans. It also appears that only one balcony is occupiable, which seems to be a missed opportunity for future residents, and conflicts with the perspective drawings that depict these spaces as inhabited.

As the project develops, staff suggest the following:

- Consideration should be given to reinstating the Winthrop Street planters, which were approved in the previous proposal.
- The existing street trees on JFK Street should be protected, and the potential for an additional tree close to the crosswalk should be studied.
- Access to rooftop terraces and recessed areas, additional plantings, and areas for green roofs should be clarified.

#### Bicycle Parking

As noted in the Zoning and Development Report, long-term bicycle parking is largely proposed to be accommodated within each residential unit, which does not meet City standards. Two short-term bicycle racks are proposed to be located along the Winthrop Street curb line outside the property line, which is also inconsistent with city standards. Further review of these bicycle racks is recommended to ensure that their location meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and aligns with the existing streetlights and bollards, which are used to define the pedestrian zone of the shared street.

#### Shadow Impacts

Winthrop Square, which lies immediately to the north of the site, is one of the most highly utilized open spaces in Cambridge. From review of the solar studies submitted with the Application, shadows do appear to impact significant portions of the square during the afternoon on the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes and the early afternoon on the Winter Solstice. The previously approved design (PB#296) was carefully designed in response to shadow impacts and was substantially more setback from Winthrop Square than the current proposal.

#### Application Materials

The application appears to lack several details that are pertinent to the design review. The following should be submitted.

- Existing conditions photographs that are current and include more of the context.
- The north arrow on the Site Plan should be corrected.
- Updated floor plans to clearly show planters, green roof areas, access to balconies, all existing building uses -trash, recycling, etc.
- Revised elevations showing more material details as discussed above.
- Revised materials palette with all materials identified and specified.
- Additional perspectives, including pedestrian level views of the new residential entrance, the building looking east from the western end of Winthrop Street, and from Winthrop Square.