

HARVARD SQUARE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Introduction and Purpose

The *Harvard Square Development Guidelines* are intended to help guide future incremental growth and change in the Harvard Square area both as new buildings are constructed and old buildings are adapted and changed to accommodate new uses and changing fashions.

Since the adoption of the Harvard Square Overlay District in 1979 extraordinary changes have taken place in the Square. Through large building projects, like the extension of the Red Line subway to Alewife and the construction of the Charles Square complex on what had been the MBTA's train storage yards, or the accumulation of small physical changes to old buildings and the uses within them, one year after another, the Square has been an ever evolving place. So too has the regulation by the City of that change evolved. The 1979 Overlay District first established height limits in Harvard Square. At that time Harvard Square was thought of as an undifferentiated business district where new development was encouraged to create split-level retail stores, more plazas and mid-block pedestrian paths, and more accessory parking. Amendments to the District's provisions adopted in 1986 significantly lowered permitted heights, recognized for the first time preservation of historic resources as a public goal, and actively encouraged better building design in the context of an existing historic fabric; more accessory parking was not encouraged. Most importantly the revised ordinance, through these *Harvard Square Development Guidelines*, which were first developed in 1986, recognized the Overlay District as a diverse place consisting of several sub-areas, each having a distinctive character worth protecting. The concern for preservation of the historic elements of Harvard Square culminated in 2001 with the establishment of a Harvard Square Historic Overlay District within the larger Overlay District in conjunction with the creation of the Harvard Square Conservation District.

With perhaps a few exceptions, change in the future in the private sphere is likely to be more incremental and at a smaller scale than was the case in the past, as ever fewer large lots remain to be transformed and historic structures are given greater protection. In the public realm, advancement will likely build on the impressive street and plaza improvements initiated by the MBTA when the subway was extended and on the restoration of Winthrop Square and the creation out of whole cloth of the new park at Quincy Square. Both park efforts were future objectives noted in the 1986 *Guidelines*.

Harvard Square Development Guidelines, 2002 derive substantially from the recommendations of the *Final Report of the Cambridge Historical Commission regarding the proposed Harvard Square Conservation District*", dated November 29, 2000. That document updated the goals and guidelines originally published in the *Harvard Square Development Guidelines, 1986*.

The future and past of Harvard Square have long been the concern of the Cambridge residents who use it and the design professionals who have studied its dynamic nature endlessly or designed its new buildings. At least two predecessor studies should be acknowledged as having been influential in shaping thinking about the Square over the years: *Harvard Square Investigations in Urban Design* by Monacelli Associates, dated 1975, and *Development in the Harvard Square Overlay District* by the Special Programs of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, dated 1984.

Jurisdiction and Procedures

Development within the Harvard Square Overlay District is regulated in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Specific use and dimensional limitations apply in several base residential, office and business zoning districts. Those provisions are modified by other requirements found in the Harvard Square Overlay District, which is found in Section 20.50 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Those Overlay District regulations may mandate that some development receive a special permit from the Cambridge Planning Board. Any construction containing more than 2,000 square feet, and any development requiring a special permit or variance regardless of size, must be reviewed by the Harvard Square Advisory Committee for an advisory opinion.

Development in those portions of the Overlay District that are also located within the Harvard Square Conservation District, the Old Cambridge Historic District, the Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District, and the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District is subject to review and approval by the Cambridge Historical Commission or the appropriate Conservation District Commission.

The Community Development Department serves as staff to the Cambridge Planning Board. The Cambridge Historical Commission has its own staff to assist the Commission and the various Conservation District Commissions. Both staffs jointly support the work of the Harvard Square Advisory Committee. Helpful contacts are listed at the end of this document.

Goals of the District

The complex set of regulations that applies to Harvard Square is meant to be in service to the following primary goal.

To guide change and encourage diversity in order to protect the distinctive characteristics of the District's buildings and public spaces, and to enhance the livability and vitality of the District for its residents and all Cambridge residents, students, visitors, and business people. The District seeks to preserve and enhance the unique functional environment and visual form of the District; preserve its architecturally and historically significant structures and their settings, and encourage design compatible therewith; mitigate any adverse impact of new development on adjacent properties and areas; and discourage homogeneity by

maintaining the present diversity of development and open space patterns and building scales and ages. The District must remain a pedestrian-friendly, accessible, human-scaled, mixed-use environment that complements nearby neighborhoods and maintains the history and traditions of its location.

The secondary goals for the District set forth below are intended to provide general guidance in a wide variety of situations, and are not intended to be applied to every project. They are statements of policy, not prescriptive measures that must be applied equally in each situation.

1. Preserve historically or architecturally significant buildings and structures as well as those that contribute to the distinctive visual character or historical significance of the District.

2. Sustain the vitality of the commercial environment by preserving architecturally significant or original building fabric where it currently exists. When this is not possible, support creative, contemporary design for storefront alterations and additions.

3. Support creative, contemporary design for new construction that complements and contributes to its immediate neighbors and the character of the District. Recognize and respect creativity of design and mitigate the functional impacts of development on adjacent areas.

4. Build on and sustain the diversity of existing building form, scale and material. Preserve and encourage flowers, green yards and courtyards and small, free-standing and wood-frame buildings where that character prevails. Encourage streetwall buildings where that character has been set. Encourage ground-ground level, small-scale storefronts to preserve the vitality and character of the streets.

5. Expand the high quality public environment established in the heart of the District with attractive and compatible materials, lighting, and street furniture.

6. Expand the network of pedestrian walkways and paths wherever they can conveniently provide alternate routes through the District. Increase public access to alleys and interior spaces where appropriate, and upgrade paving and landscaping of such pathways and spaces. Enhance accessibility and safety for pedestrians throughout the District.

7. Encourage new residential projects in the District, especially in mixed-use buildings, and support existing residential uses.

8. Encourage projects that will maintain a wide diversity of uses serving the needs of surrounding neighborhoods, students, and visitors from around the world.

9. *Encourage creative solutions to the District's parking and transportation issues, including the problem of on-street deliveries. Discourage loading docks, which do not generally contribute to the historic character of the street.*

Subdistricts

The *Development Guidelines, 1986*, developed for the Harvard Square Overlay District, divided the District into six subdistricts based on architectural characteristics, historical development patterns, and modern usage trends. What follows are revised and updated subdistrict descriptions and goals to reflect the changes in the Square and its regulatory environment since 1986.

Because Harvard Square is such a diverse environment, defining the context of subdistricts is important both in developing long-range planning goals and in assessing the implications for alterations to the physical environment. The six subdistricts are:

- A. Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue
- B. Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square
- C. The Gold Coast
- D. Winthrop Square/JFK Street
- E. Brattle Square
- F. Church Street

The subdistricts do not have precise boundaries, as the characteristics of neighboring subdistricts tend to overlap. In considering some sites, the guidelines for more than one subdistrict should be considered together and weighed according to the individual needs of the site.

A description of the unique qualities of each subdistrict and their specific goals follows. The description is organized with a historical and physical description, followed by a focused discussion on the treatment of public spaces and private sites. A site map accompanies each description. Specific goals for each subdistrict have been identified to help boards and applicants apply the general goals and guidelines of the larger district to the special needs and circumstances of a particular site.

A long-range plan for public and private sidewalk, crosswalk, and lighting improvements throughout Harvard Square, called "Polishing the Trophy," was commissioned in 1997 and funded by a combination of public and private resources. The study recorded existing conditions and makes recommendations for improvements in most of the subdistricts, except Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square and part of the Gold Coast. In 2002 the City Manager appointed a sixteen member citizen advisory committee, with staff and consultant support, whose task will be to identify potential improvements to the public realm in Harvard Square in line with those recommended in the Polishing the Trophy report.

Subdistrict A: Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue

Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the center of Harvard Square and the south side of Massachusetts Avenue to Quincy Square. The area marks the intersection of town and college with Harvard Yard on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue and mixed-use commercial, office, and residential structures on the south side. The strong presence of the MBTA subway station at the center reflects Harvard Square's long history as a transportation hub. In the early years of the Newtowne (later Cambridge) settlement, the area was an open space to the north of the grid-patterned town, south of the Burial Ground, and adjacent to the highway. By 1790, structures built in this area began to orient themselves toward the Square. Development in Harvard Square has always been for mixed uses. Residences, college buildings, several meetinghouses, two courthouses, and a market building were constructed around the Square in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Three- to five-story structures built out to the sidewalk predominate on the south and west sides of Massachusetts Avenue near Harvard Square. The historic structures facing on the south and west sides of the Square itself include the Read Block buildings, the Harvard Cooperative Society, College House, and the Harvard Square Kiosk. Certain mid-twentieth-century structures, such as Holyoke Center and the Fleet Bank (Harvard Trust Company) facade, have attained their own architectural significance. Although the architectural significance of Holyoke Center is acknowledged, another development of its size in the Square is not recommended. Efforts in this subdistrict should focus on the retention of the small retail storefronts that add vitality to the streetscape.

Public Space

All publicly-accessible open spaces on private and public properties should be preserved. The public space in the center of Harvard Square should be well maintained for the general enjoyment and safety of its pedestrian users. The materials and design of the public space at the center of the Square can be used as a reference when designing future improvements to open spaces in the district.

The improvements in the Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue subdistrict which were proposed by the Polishing the Trophy study include sidewalk replacement in front of the Read Block and College House, a new crosswalk in front of Holyoke Center, and lighting improvements to Cambridge Savings Bank, Holyoke Center, and the Omphalos statue near the news kiosk. The sidewalk at the Read Block was renewed and the curb extended in conjunction with the redevelopment of that building.

Private Sites

As evidenced by the recent Read Block development proposal, large redevelopment potential does exist in the heart of the Square and along Massachusetts Avenue. Rehabilitation of existing structures should be carefully considered as a first alternative

by developers. Historical photographs can often be valuable references during the design of facade restoration or rehabilitation projects. Investigation of the collections of the Historical Commission is a good starting point for this kind of historical research. The rehabilitation of the Read Block included restoration of the 1896 facade, renovation of the forward portions of the original structures, and construction of a new 3-story structure at the rear. The renovated space accommodates both retail and office uses.

Retention of the small-scale retail environment, with narrow storefronts and interesting signs should be encouraged in this subdistrict. Careful attention should be paid to materials, storefront design, and signage in this area. The 1907 Art Nouveau storefront at 1304 Massachusetts Avenue by Coolidge and Carlson is an example of exceptional storefront design. The unique lines, transparency, and high-quality materials of this storefront can be used as an example of a creative, contemporary approach to retail design in the district. Not every new storefront design in the Square can or should aim to be this unique, but it demonstrates the timelessness of an exceptional design.

Subdistrict B: Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square

Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the properties along Bow Street, Arrow Street, and along the converging lines of Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street, including Putnam Square. It is the easternmost edge of the existing Harvard Square Overlay District. Putnam Square and the eastern portions of Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street are not included within the boundaries of the Harvard Square National Register District.

The highest structures in this subdistrict are the campanile of St. Paul's Catholic Church, the stone spire of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, and the office and residential (?) tower at 1105 Massachusetts Avenue. The locations of these towers correspond with the triangular boundaries of this subdistrict. The careful siting of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street allows for the spire to be seen from several different viewpoints, thus making it a prominent landmark in historic and contemporary photographs. The transition from dense Putnam Square and the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue to the smaller scale of the residential Riverside neighborhood is evident traveling east to west along Mount Auburn Street. This transition of mass, scales, and uses complicated discussions for the development of the Zero Arrow Street site in the 1980s and 1990s. The Harvard Square Advisory Committee worked with the developer, The Gunwyn Company, through several designs and over a number of years to try to address the special needs of this site. While the most recently approved office design has not progressed to construction, an alternate theater use has been proposed in early 2002 for the site with preparations underway to seek the required approvals.

Historically, construction in this area has included small residences, light industry, and churches. Though the industries are no longer active, the Reversible Collar factory at 8-

20 Arrow Street and 21-27 Mount Auburn Street is still a dynamic presence in this subdistrict. It was adaptively re-used for retail and office space in the late 1960s and was renovated through the federal tax act program in the mid-1980s. The commercial nature of Putnam Square and Quincy Square developed primarily in the mid-twentieth-century. The larger office buildings there were constructed in the mid-1970s.

Public Space

The largest public space in this subdistrict is Quincy Square, which was redesigned and landscaped in 1997. The project's purpose was to enhance the area for pedestrians while maintaining vehicular access to all of the streets converging on the square. The prominent location of the park also provided the designers the opportunity to create an attractive gateway to Harvard Square and Harvard Yard. This project was a particularly-successful collaboration between a landscape architect (The Halvorson Company) and an artist (David Phillips). The Quincy Square Design Review Committee reviewed the design during a long, and often contentious, community process. The design included plantings of trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers, and grasses along with stone walls, boulders and sculptures. Sidewalk improvements on the surrounding streets were also part of the total design concept. Some of the money for the construction of this park came from the Harvard Square Improvement Fund established in the Overlay District.

Putnam Square, a very busy traffic intersection, did not contain many amenities for the pedestrian until 1998. The small island with a memorial plaque that is located in the middle of Putnam Square benefited from a new landscaping plan that uses grasses and other landscaping elements to make it a much more pleasant place.

The tip of land at the corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue was landscaped by the city in 1991 after an unsuccessful attempt by the abutting restaurant to privatize the use of the land. An extension of the sidewalk curb at the intersection of Bow and Arrow Streets has created a small pedestrian plaza that might be further enhanced in the future.

Private Sites

The major development sites identified in the 1986 guidelines have since been developed or are currently in process. The Inn at Harvard filled in the former Gulf gasoline station site. While the Planning Board action in approving an office building design at Zero Arrow Street was upheld on appeal, in early 2002 an alternate, theater proposal for the site was advancing steadily through the regulatory process offering the possibility of a resolution to the conflict that has revolved around the development of this very challenging but prominent vacant site. An important site not identified in the 1986 guidelines is the historically and architecturally significant 1906 concrete garage building at 1230 Massachusetts Avenue (One Bow Street). This building has now been sensitively redeveloped with two new stories above a restored original facade.

The Old Cambridge Baptist Church spire and St. Paul's Catholic Church bell tower are important visual landmarks that should be respected by any new development. The recent restoration of the tower at St. Paul's Church and the repairs to the slate roof at Old Cambridge Baptist Church have been recognized by the Historical Commission. The development potential at St. Paul's Church was largely filled up in the late 1980s, with the construction of the new choir school.

Development or adaptive re-use proposals should recognize and be sensitive to the fact that a transition from commercial to residential uses occurs in this subdistrict.

A transition of building materials and scale is also evident at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Bow Street. The rare grouping of six small-scale frame and brick buildings at that intersection represents a 140-year span of residential and commercial building construction in Harvard Square. The earliest buildings in the cluster, 12 Bow Street (ca. 1820) and 1208 Massachusetts Avenue (1842) are examples of residential buildings that were later converted to commercial uses.

Denser development should be confined to Putnam Square. The quiet, residential character along Mount Auburn Street should be maintained, and the wood-frame structures there should also be preserved.

Restoration and/or renovation potential exists in this subdistrict. Prime candidates include the triple-decker residence at 1131 Massachusetts Avenue at the corner of Remington Street the Hong Kong restaurant at 1234-1238 Massachusetts Avenue, and the frame and brick rows at 1156-1166 and 1168-1174 Massachusetts Avenue. Long neglected, Longfellow Court at 1200 Massachusetts Avenue underwent significant upgrading during 2001.

Subdistrict C: The Gold Coast

Historical and Physical Description

The boundaries of this subdistrict stretch from Massachusetts Avenue on the north, Mount Auburn Street on the south, Dunster Street on the west and Bow Street on the east. The name of the area recalls the affluent students for whom the private luxury dormitories and undergraduate clubs were constructed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The quality of the buildings' designs and materials matched the means of the private investors and wealthy students, making the Gold Coast an area as rich in architectural merit as it was rich in assets. Many of the private dormitories were converted to apartments in the 1920s. The architectural character of this subdistrict today is still dominated by these dormitories and clubs. For the most part, commercial establishments remain oriented toward Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street.

Public Space

Although the Gold Coast does not contain any formal public parks or squares, the relationship of architectural facades, courtyards, and sidewalks provide visual interest to the pedestrian. However, the multiple intersections of Mt. Auburn Street, Bow Street and side streets between Holyoke and Linden Streets have created a de facto large square, which is however devoted to parking and vehicle circulation. Any alterations to the landscape and vehicle and pedestrian circulation in this area should respect the historic street pattern. Pedestrian safety concerns, in particular, should be studied at Bow Street and Mount Auburn Street, but any opportunity to enhance the visual qualities of this large, unnamed space should be explored. Parking and loading issues should be investigated and a plan developed to permit all of the necessary activities to function efficiently. Street trees, an important commodity in this dense subdistrict, have been planted and are maintained by the City.

Private courtyards in the Gold Coast subdistrict, though not controlled by the public, do provide a welcome relief to the otherwise dense area. Property owners should be encouraged to preserve these spaces and upgrade the paving and landscaping materials therein. Exemptions to parking requirements could be offered, where necessary, to ensure the preservation of these urban green, or potentially green, spaces. Another important open space in this subdistrict is the open lot at 68 Mount Auburn Street, owned by Harvard University. The lawn provides the only expanse of green along this stretch of Mount Auburn Street.

The Polishing the Trophy study recommends new brick crosswalks on Mount Auburn Street at the intersections of Dunster Street and Holyoke Street and new street lighting on Mount Auburn, Dunster, and Holyoke streets.

Private Sites

Many of the Harvard clubs have donated preservation easements to the City, granting review of alterations to the Historical Commission. Though buildings in the Gold Coast are predominantly of masonry construction, a few examples of wood frame construction remain. The Greek Revival house at 43-45 Mount Auburn Street is a prime candidate for a careful restoration. Improvements to this structure would greatly enhance the subdistrict.

Other examples of wood-frame architecture that should be preserved are:

- 20 Holyoke Street, a pre-1854 residence, remodeled in the Stick style in 1870s;
- 9 Bow Street, a Mansard with elaborate Queen Anne ornamentation; and
- 30 Plympton Street storefronts, rare survival of 19th-century with few alterations.

The blocks south of Mt. Auburn Street between JFK Street and Plympton Street contain a rich mix of mostly freestanding Greek Revival houses, Harvard clubs and small apartment buildings. Those blocks act as a buffer between Harvard's river houses and the commercial activity across Mt. Auburn Street and as a group they share a very distinctive character expressed in the height, density and scale of their buildings. That character must be respected by the designer of any new building added in the future.

Commercial development on the south side of Mount Auburn Street, although severely restricted generally, should continue to be carefully regulated where it is permitted. Restorations and renovations of existing storefronts along Mount Auburn Street are encouraged. Any new development in this subdistrict would require a sensitive approach to architectural context and open space considerations. The open lot at 68 Mount Auburn Street and the commercial buildings at 45 1/2-49 Mount Auburn Street are two potential development sites to monitor.

A few sites have been redeveloped in the last decade. The Hillel Center at 52 Mount Auburn Street, which was designed by architect Moshe Safdie to complement the Lampon's architecture, is an exemplary modern structure that respects the distinctive character of the south-of-Mt. Auburn Street blocks described above; it was the first new building constructed there since 1930. On a larger scale, the St. Paul's Catholic Church complex, which was designed by Koetter Kim & Associates, includes a European-styled courtyard that accommodates both cars and pedestrians. A substantial expansion project and the restoration of the bell tower have been completed at St. Paul's. The Harvard Lampon building has also undergone a restoration in recent years.

Subdistrict D: Winthrop Square/JFK Street

Historical and Physical Description

John F. Kennedy Street (formerly Boylston Street) is the primary entryway into Harvard Square from Memorial Drive and Boston. The subdistrict includes the properties along JFK Street and around Winthrop Square. This subdistrict includes an eclectic mix of architecture that spans 200 years of Cambridge history. At the center is Winthrop Square, a house lot of the original settlement that was never built upon and was used as a public market place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The buildings located around Winthrop Square and on the northern section of JFK Street represent a mixture of frame and masonry construction. Most of the older buildings, including residences and light-industrial buildings have been converted to commercial uses. The built environment along JFK Street near the river has undergone a dramatic transformation in the twentieth century. The Harvard residences, Kirkland House and Eliot House, were constructed in 1913 and 1930, respectively. The Kennedy School of Government, constructed in the 1970s and 1980s, dominates the other side of JFK Street.

Public Space

Winthrop Square has been renovated within the last ten years. A ten-foot wide strip of paving, anticipating a widening of JFK Street that never happened, was returned to turf and grass, the pathways through the park were returned to an earlier configuration, and a new post fence was installed along the perimeter. A public artwork, designed by Carlos Dorrien, stands at the center of the park. As the trees mature from that recent park renovation and heavy use and increasing shade wear out the grass, and with the

completion of the major mixed use development on the west side of the Square, it may be time to explore further options for enhancing this important public space.

As indicated in the 1986 Guidelines, consideration should be given to excluding passenger vehicles from the block of Winthrop Street between JFK Street and Eliot Square. The result would reduced traffic congestion on this narrow street with several small-scale historic structures, thus enhancing the pedestrian's experience and making it a safer place. Elimination of automobiles might also allow appropriate reconfiguration of the Street's profile to allow better pedestrian access to abutting private lots.

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study include repair of sidewalks along much of JFK Street, new brick crosswalks at the intersections of Mount Auburn Street and Eliot Street, and new street lights along the length of JFK Street.

Private Sites

The redevelopment of the mixed use, private "Winthrop Square" complex is a model of restoration, adaptive reuse, and sensitive infill construction. The relocation of the Chapman Heirs' House to face Winthrop Square and the renovation of the Pi Eta Club (Grendel's) at 91 Winthrop Street secures the setting of the important public open space. Potential development sites in this subdistrict include the Banker properties on Eliot Street, which were proposed for redevelopment in the late 1980s. The small houses on Winthrop Street are underdeveloped, but are largely protected as individual landmarks or through preservation restrictions. The 18th century wall that runs behind the properties on Winthrop, Eliot, and South Streets is a critically-important artifact of early development in Harvard Square and should be protected and exposed to public view in any future development

Storefront and signage designs vary widely along JFK Street. While the bold 1980's remodeling of the triple-deckers at 52-56 JFK Street with two-color striped siding is valued by many as a product of its era and for its eccentricity, similar treatment of other wood-frame buildings in the Square is not encouraged. The house at 98 Winthrop Street (c. 1800) is an important historical structure. Its small and delicate aspect requires sensitive treatment in any reuse of or addition to the building. The Cambridge Historical Commission has been reviewing a proposal that would make use of the historic structure as part of the dining area for a restaurant that would be accommodated in an addition to the small house. Final approval may occur in 2002. The work would protect the stone wall, which immediately borders the site.

Aggressive signage can be noted throughout the subdistrict, from the eclectic collection seen on the JFK Street triple-deckers to the integral new signage program developed for The Garage building. New proposals for signage should follow the general design guidelines for the district, but it would not be out of character for signs in this subdistrict to be more dynamic than in the quieter subdistricts of the Square such as the Gold Coast.

Subdistrict E: Brattle Square

Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the properties around Brattle, Mount Auburn, and Eliot streets and at Brattle Square, where these three streets intersect. The north (or west) side of Story Street has been included within the Harvard Square Conservation District, as it was left completely unprotected by its exclusion from the Harvard Square Overlay District, the Harvard Square National Register District, and the Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District.

In 1810, Mount Auburn Street was extended west, through the former Brattle estate. By 1840, it seemed that a neighborhood of homes would be built near the Brattle mansion (42 Brattle Street), but the residential character of Brattle Square changed when the Brattle House, a 106-room hotel, was constructed there in 1849. Brattle Square, Palmer Street, and Church Street became the favored locations for stables, blacksmiths, carriage shops, and saloons. The hotel soon failed, and the building became the University Press printing plant. The site of the University Press was largely vacant from 1893 until the mid 1980s, when University Place was constructed.

After World War I, the Harvard Square shopping district expanded to include Brattle Square, where a new post office was built in 1919, and the Sage family replaced the old Jacob Bates House with a Georgian-style market in 1926. George Dow assembled most of the remaining frontage on Brattle Street between Palmer and Church streets, which was occupied by a collection of storefronts and one substantial building at 11-25 Brattle Street. By 1941, the Dows had removed the upper stories of 17-25 Brattle Street and refaced the entire row with a cast-stone Moderne facade. This complex is sometimes called the Brines Block, which refers to the Brine's Sporting Goods store, a long-time retailer in the block.

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study include new brick sidewalks at the intersection of Eliot and Bennett streets, and at either end of Story Street, and street lighting improvements throughout the subdistrict.

Public Space

In the 1980s, the curve of Brattle Street was narrowed to form a T intersection and to create the plaza and sidewalks in front of the Brines Block. The historic street pattern is still discernable by the strong visual effect of the curve of the buildings of the Brines Block. This curve should be maintained in the future. The terraced public space has created a buffer for pedestrians, and it is now a vibrant part of the Square, providing space for street performances.

The One Brattle Square building was designed with multiple street-level entrances to retail stores, but most of those entrances have been closed off by the single retailer that first occupied the space. As vacancies occur on the first floor of the building, there may be future opportunities to restore the original intent of multiple stores along the ground

floor of the building. Future re-developments in the subdistrict should respect the historical tradition of narrow storefronts and multiple entrances along a large facade. The Brines Block would make an excellent reference to inform new retail construction.

Private Sites

Two potential development sites in this subdistrict are the Harvard Motor Inn and the Brines Block. Development on those sites or anywhere in the subdistrict should be built to the property line, respecting and further contributing to the vitality of the sidewalk and plaza spaces. Improved mid-block connections, such as at Mifflin Place, would be welcome as complementary to the subdistrict's public open spaces in the area. In 2002, new construction at the Post Office site essentially completed the redevelopment the entire block. The new four (five?) story building finally introduced a strong urban presence at this prominent corner. Associated street improvements expanded the public sidewalks, repaved them in brick, and in association with a greatly enhanced last leg of the mid-block pedestrian passageway, re-oriented crosswalks to align with established foot traffic. Especially welcome was the continued presence of the Post Office after the site was redeveloped.

The north (or west) side of Story Street contains several wood-frame residential buildings. It is important that these buildings be maintained because the street is a transition point from the mixed-use character of Harvard Square to the primarily residential nature of the Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District. The setting of 127 Mount Auburn Street (17 Story Street, an important mansion of 1846) should be respected, and enhanced in the future when the opportunity presents itself.

Subdistrict F: Church Street

Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes both sides of Church Street, Brattle Street to Farwell Place, and the whole of Palmer Street. The structures along the north side of Church Street from Massachusetts Avenue to the Church Street parking lot and the eastern half of Farwell Place are located within the boundaries of the Old Cambridge Historic District and are thus under the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Historical Commission. The sites of the greatest historical significance in this small subdistrict are the First Church Unitarian, the Burying Ground, the Torrey Hancock House/Cambridge School of Architecture building (53 Church Street), and a former police station at 31-33 Church Street (now Starbucks). Farwell Place is a small residential enclave that is protected as part of the Old Cambridge Historic District.

As in Brattle Square, Palmer Street and Church Street in the nineteenth century were home to stables, blacksmiths, carriage shops, and saloons. The industrial character of the subdistrict has been successfully translated to retail uses. The former carriage factory at 26 Church Street (1857) has been renovated and now serves as the home to the Globe Corner Bookstore and Club Passim. A brick police station was constructed at 31 Church

Street in 1864 and is now occupied by a Starbucks coffee shop and a hair salon. A controversial proposal to close Palmer Street in the 1960s was defeated by community opposition, and the street was paved with granite blocks and brick sidewalks in 1964-67. This urban design improvement added interest to the narrow side street, though more retail storefronts would help enliven it; maintenance however appears to be a constant problem.

Public Space

The street and sidewalk improvements suggested in the 1986 Guidelines have not yet been realized. The sidewalk on the east side of Church Street is so narrow that it does not meet ADA requirements. Pedestrians need to be better accommodated on the busy sidewalks.

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study for this area include sidewalk replacement on Church, Palmer, and Brattle streets, new brick crosswalks at the intersection of Church and Brattle streets, and new street lighting along Church, Palmer, and Brattle streets.

Private Sites

The Church Street parking lot is the most obvious potential development site in the subdistrict. Abutting the parking lot on the west is the Torrey Hancock House. The Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture addition to the Torrey Hancock House is an important site to American women's history. These two structures are historically significant and should be preserved. Both were renovated and substantially upgraded to provide handicapped access in 2002. Any new development on the parking lot site should emphasize retail storefronts, and the mass should be broken up to avoid a severe street presence on the expansive site. The architecture of a new development should take cues from the scale, massing, and setbacks of the historic structures on either side of the lot. Special consideration should be given to the development's relationship to the Old Burying Ground and the smaller-scale residences on Farwell Place.

Guidance in Altering Existing Buildings and In New Construction

A. Demolition of Structures

Demolition of any structure within the Harvard Square Overlay District is subject to city regulation. The Cambridge Historical Commission or any of the Neighborhood Conservation District Commissions may prohibit demolition within the Harvard Square Conservation District, Old Cambridge Historic District, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District and the Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District all of which are found in part within the Harvard Square Overlay District. For structures not located within any of those local historic or conservation districts, the

Cambridge Historical Commission may delay the demolition of any structure for six months under the provisions of the citywide Demolition Delay Ordinance ().

The purpose of reviewing any proposed demolition is to assure the preservation of significant old buildings and thus ensure the diversity of building ages, styles, and forms that help to define the historical character of the Square. Other benefits to such a review include the opportunity to determine the significance of individual buildings in the context of specific development proposals, to consider creative re-use possibilities, and to encourage the care and maintenance of the building stock.

Buildings over fifty years old, contributing structures in the Harvard Square National Register District, or one of the Square's dwindling inventory of wood-frame structures, are generally assumed to be valuable for their contribution to the character of the Square. Therefore, their preservation will be strongly preferred to demolition. Nevertheless, each proposal for demolition will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; as a result all structures may not be protected from demolition.

B. New Construction

Creative design solutions to development and renovation efforts are encouraged to ensure that the unique resources and character of Harvard Square are protected.

1. *New Construction/Additions to Existing Buildings*

Harvard Square is a kaleidoscopic urban environment that has always changed with time. That continuous evolution of architectural design and site development has been positive and necessary to keep the Square fresh, vibrant, and economically viable. Contemporary design expression is encouraged, as is new construction that accommodates older structures on or adjacent to the site. Construction that only incorporates portions of older structures may be acceptable if those portions are substantial and significant; however, use of isolated and token historic elements is discouraged. Demolition involving only the retention of facades to allow replacement of historic structures with new construction behind is discouraged unless the supporting historic fabric is found not to be salvageable.

In the Square's historic context, new building design should be guided by the particular considerations of its place, such as the appropriateness of the structure's height, scale, mass, proportions, orientation, and lot coverage; the vertical and horizontal emphasis, rhythm of openings, transparency, texture, and materials of the publicly-visible facades; sunlight and shadow effects; relationship to public open space; and landscaping.

Any design should be further guided by consideration of the relationship of a proposed building to the site and to other buildings and structures in the vicinity. In that regard, Harvard Square has been divided into the six smaller areas, or subdistricts described above, which are distinctive in their built character. Designers should refer to the

discussion of the *existing conditions* and *preservation and development goals* for the particular subdistrict in which they are working.

2. *Alterations to Existing Buildings*

Where exterior architectural features of a building are proposed to be altered, a property owner or developer is encouraged to retain and repair, rather than replace, original or significant exterior building elements.

b. *Storefronts*

Storefronts are a source of Harvard Square's continuing vitality and visual appeal. Therefore, creativity is encouraged in the design of new storefronts. Most storefronts are regarded as impermanent. Imaginative alterations that meet the particular needs of a retailer or office tenant should be fostered as long as the original structure framing the storefront, and its finishes, are maintained or recovered where they still exist. Alterations to upper stories are more problematic because those upper floors tend to retain more of a building's original detail. Changes there have the potential for significant and permanent adverse impacts on exiting historic building fabric. Reversible changes to storefronts are not discouraged as long as they do not obscure or damage the structure or any original architectural features.

However, any change to the design of storefronts should serve the overriding public interest in maintaining their transparency when viewed by the public on the adjacent city sidewalks; opaque glass or solid materials should be avoided.

Storefront alterations made in the 1980s and 1990s that are consistent with the objectives of the Overlay District can be seen at 1420-1442 Massachusetts Avenue and at 8 and 20 Brattle Street. In these three cases, structural members or decorative finishes of the original first floor facades were uncovered or restored, and new storefronts were inserted within them.

A few storefronts in the Square have retained their original design or present a subsequent design that is significant architecturally or historically. Such storefronts can be seen at 1304 Massachusetts Avenue, 1316 Massachusetts Avenue, 1320-22 Massachusetts Avenue, and 30-30A Plympton Street.

c. *Windows*

Windows, particularly above the ground floor, are usually critical to maintaining the characteristic appearance of any building, historic or contemporary. In older buildings in particular, replacement of traditional, old wood windows with inappropriate modern units can destroy the appearance of a building. Fortunately, in almost all cases, modern replacement windows are available that match the originals in appearance while offering significant contemporary benefits like energy efficiency. While retention of original fabric is always encouraged, new windows might be considered if they do not change the

size of the opening, configuration of the muntins, material, or transparency. More radical changes from the historic precedents can be expected to elicit much more careful scrutiny from regulatory authorities.

d. *Masonry*

Harvard Square contains many outstanding examples of brick masonry construction. The appearance of such buildings can be substantially or irreversibly altered if the masonry is improperly pointed or cleaned. Painting causes similar damage. Careful consideration of these matters is essential when any building is being rehabilitated or altered as part of a new development or a program of modernization.

e. *Signs*

Signs in Harvard Square should, and do, contribute to the richness and vitality of its commercial activity. Uniformity of signs and conformance to conjectural "historic" designs is not an objective of the Overlay District. However, new signs should not be so exuberant that they obscure any original architectural features of the building on which they are placed. The Overlay District's regulations have been modified to allow greater flexibility in the design and placement of signs with the concurrence of the Cambridge Historical Commission. Retailers and other tenants are encouraged to take advantage of that flexibility to design and install truly imaginative and exciting new signs in the Square.

Reference Material

For more complete information the following documents can be consulted:

- Practical Guide to Permitting in the Harvard Square Conservation District*, May 2001
- Final Report of the Cambridge Historical Commission regarding the proposed Harvard Square Conservation District*, November 29, 2000
- Demolition Ordinance
- Mid-Cambridge Conservation District enabling ordinance
- Half Crown Conservation District enabling ordinance
- Old Cambridge Historic District enabling ordinance
- Chadourne Study
- Moncelli Study
- Polishing the Trophy*,
- Cambridge Zoning Ordinance
- Map of Contributing Buildings in the National Register District
- Map of the Harvard Square Overlay District