



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Board of Zoning Appeal
From: Harvard Square Advisory Committee
Date: September 7, 2021
Re: **2 Bennett Street - Exterior Improvements**

IRAM FAROOQ
*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

SANDRA CLARKE
*Deputy Director
Chief of Administration*

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*Deputy Director
Chief of Planning*

Overview

The Harvard Square Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) met on Thursday, August 26, 2021 to discuss the application by Jason Doo of Wusong Road for various exterior improvements. The meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.50 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in advance of the applicant’s request for a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA). Committee members present were Allison Crosbie, Lauren Curry, Kari Kuelzer, Sara Li, Steven Ng, Alexandra Offiong, and Nicola Williams. After discussion, the Committee decided unanimously to forward a report to the BZA with a positive recommendation.

Proposal Description

The applicant proposes to install signage, a fence, bollards, and lighting on and around the existing building at 2 Bennett Street. The project requires a variance from the BZA because Section 20.55.1.1 of the Zoning Ordinance states that no sign on the outside of a building may extend higher than 20 feet above grade; the applicant proposes one wall sign that measures 24 feet 6 inches above grade. The project has already received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Cambridge Historical Commission, which is attached. The use of the building will remain unchanged as it will continue to be a restaurant.

Committee Comments

Members of the Committee were overwhelmingly supportive of the applicant’s overall proposal. Many Committee members noted that the proposal shows a careful attention to detail and is informed by the particular challenges of the site. They appreciated the applicant’s decision to locate the entrance of the restaurant on Mt. Auburn Street and found that the proposed exterior improvements will help draw people to the site.

Committee members found that the variance for the wall sign on Mt. Auburn Street facing the garage was appropriate. They believed that locating the sign within the architectural brickwork of the building is a sensitive solution and provides crucial visibility for the business. Committee members noted that the scale and context of the building necessitates the size and placement of the proposed sign. They also appreciated that the lease restricts the use of illumination to business hours.

Committee members suggested that the applicant revise their proposal to include additional materials that show the necessity of granting zoning relief. Some members recommended including a neighborhood-scale map, site plan, and/or aerial photograph to put the site in context. Others recommended also including a key plan that identifies where all the proposed signs are located.

Given the Committee’s discussion, a motion was made and seconded to forward a report to the BZA with a positive recommendation that the BZA grant the requested variance on the condition that illumination is restricted to the hours of the business’s operation. All seven members present voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted for the Committee,

Sarah Scott

Sarah Scott

Associate Zoning Planner

Community Development Department