



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic>

Bruce A. Irving, *Chair*, Susannah Barton Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
Joseph V. Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Elizabeth Lyster, Jo M. Solet, Yuting Zhang, *Members*
Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternate Members*

Date: 7/21/2025

To: Tanya L. Ford-Crump, Executive Director
Election Commission

From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Request for Verification of Registered Voters

As required by Chapter 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, the Historical Commission requests that the names on the attached petition be verified as being registered voters of the City of Cambridge. ONLY ~~TEN~~ NAMES NEED TO BE VERIFIED TO VALIDATE THE PETITION. thirty

Please sign and return to the Historical Commission via interoffice mail.

Signatures checked by Kyetha Harris Date 7/25/25

(original)

Protected Landmark Petition: 17 Story Street

DATE: 7/21/25

To: The Cambridge Historical Commission
Mr. Bruce A. Irwin, Chairman
Mr. Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

RECEIVED

JUL 21 2025

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

WHEREAS: 17 Story Street (1846), a rare Regency Style house with Greek Revival pillars and a Mansard roof, is historically significant as the former home of Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897), the author of the important slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Jacobs was born a slave in Edenton, North Carolina, and although she escaped in 1835, she and her two children were not officially free until 1852. In 1871, Jacobs moved to Cambridge and ran the first of two boarding houses, 10 Trowbridge Street, for Harvard students and faculty, the second of which was 17 Story Street, where she moved in 1873 and lived with her daughter, Louisa Jacobs, until 1877.

WHEREAS: A number of distinguished Harvard faculty members boarded at 17 Story Street, such as the philosopher and mathematician Chauncey Wright (1830-1875), geologist and explorer Raphael Pumpelly (1837-1923), jurist and Dean of Harvard Law School Christopher Columbus Langdell (1826-1906), and journalist and rhetorician Adams Sherman Hill (1833-1910). The historian Henry Adams (1838-1918) also boarded at 17 Story Street after his studies at Harvard. This information is drawn from "Harriet Jacobs House Imagined Conversations," a class project in "Hist 12M/160: Abolitionist Women and Their Worlds," taught by Tiya Miles, Michael Garvey Professor of History, Department of History, Harvard University.

WHEREAS: A historical marker on the property, installed by the Cambridge Historical Commission in 1993, affirms the significance of 17 Story Street to Cambridge residents and visitors as a landmark of Black history.

CURRENT THREATS

WHEREAS: 17 Story Street is a key part of the Harvard Square Cultural area, and this area is rapidly undergoing significant change that risks depriving Cambridge of one of its most interesting of historic sites. In April 2020, 17 Story Street and 127-129 Mt. Auburn Street (1912) were purchased by developer Janet Jiang at First Cambridge Capital for \$16.1 million, with the proposed plan of building what was originally described as a boutique hotel; and

WHEREAS: Current designs for the project no longer indicate a “boutique” hotel at 100-plus rooms, and are incompatible with the scale and historic nature of the neighborhood, which it would disturb dramatically. Even where there are buildings with non-residential uses, such as 17 Mt. Auburn Street, these once comprised residential units and their appearance corresponds to the neighborhood. An oversized hotel or hotel-type structure at this location would reduce the neighborhood and long-term residential feel at this site.

WHEREAS: The hotel project would potentially destroy the scale and charm of 17 Story Street by forcing it into an incongruous use jammed against a much larger unrelated hotel building, gutting 17 Story Street in a way that would damage its historic character, thus impeding the preservation of a key landmark of Black history in Cambridge.

WHEREAS: Cambridge citizens have shown concern for the potential homogenization of architecture and use in this neighborhood, as seen in the Preliminary Report of the 2017-19 Harvard Conservation District Study Committee, updated July 19, 2019, page 51, which states that “Perhaps the most vulnerable site in the subdistrict is the 14,000 sq. foot. property that contains 17 Story Street (1846) and 127-129 Mt. Auburn Street (1912). The house at 17 Story is a rare Regency Style house that is historically significant as the home late in life of Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897), author of the slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). The Jacobs house awkwardly shares the lot with a 1912 three-decker and suffers from years of deferred maintenance. It shares a C-2 residential zoning district with the west side of Story Street, which would allow much greater density and height than the present buildings.”
(<https://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/districtsHistoricProperties/harvardsquarencd/harvardsquareconservationdistrictstudycommittee>)

LANDMARK DESIGNATIONS

WHEREAS: Protecting 17 Story Street with local landmark status will enable its unique qualities to be maintained for the benefit of all Cambridge and would “foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge” of its importance; and

WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge has yet to afford official recognition and protected status of 17 Story Street, leaving it vulnerable to demolition or significant alteration, so

THEREFORE do we, the undersigned registered voters of the City of Cambridge, pursuant to Ordinance 1002, Article III, Section 180(D) of Chapter 2.78 of the Cambridge Municipal Code, hereby respectfully pray that the Cambridge Historical Commission initiate with all possible haste the process of designating 17 Story Street as a protected landmark of the City of Cambridge.

Name (signed)

Name (printed)

Address

- ✓ Anita Patterson Anita Patterson 14 Hilliard St. 02138
- ✓ Orlando Patterson Orlando Patterson 14 Hilliard St. 02138
- ✓ Donald R. Ware Donald R. Ware 16 Hilliard St. 02138
- ✓ Susan Ware SUSAN WARE 16 Hilliard St 02138
- ✓ Nicole Bryant NICOLE BRYANT 18 Hilliard St 02138
- ✓ Ted Achten Ted Achten 18 Hilliard St 02138
- ✓ Annie Labadie Annie Labadie 163 Mt. Auburn
- ✓ MAI HASSAN MAI HASSAN 12 HILLIARD St 02138
- ✓ Noah Nathan NOAH NATHAN 12 HILLIARD ST 02138
- ✓ Robin Young Robin Young 10 Hilliard St 02138
- ✓ Sherman H Starr Jr Sherman H Starr Jr 9 Hilliard St 02138
- ✓ Raine Figueroa Raine Figueroa 9 Hilliard St 02138

Name (signed)

Name (printed)

Address

✓ Emily G. Cooper	Emily G. Cooper	13 Hilliard St.
✓ Aaron M. Cooper	Aaron M. Cooper	13 Hilliard St.
✓ Sean M. Coughlin	Sean M. Coughlin	6 Hilliard St.
✓ Paul Funk	Paul Funk	8 Hilliard St.
✓ Laurence Hammel	LAURENCE HAMMEL	10 Hilliard St.
✓ Robert A. White	RF-White	10 Hilliard St.
✓ J. Black	J. BLACK	10 Hilliard St.
✓ Ann. Wheeler	Ann. Wheeler	1 Fuller Pl.
✓ David Brenninkmeyer		1 Fuller Pl.
✓ Jack DeFord	Jack DeFord	3 Fuller Pl.
✓ Suzanne Bliev	Suz - S. BL	5 Fuller Pl.
✓ Rudolph Bliev	RUDOLPH BLIEV	5 FULLER PL

Name (signed)

Name (printed)

Address

✓ R Heifetz

Ronnie Heifetz

20 Hilliard St.,
Cambridge, MA 02138

✓ Sean M. Coughlin

Sean M. Coughlin

6 Hilliard Pl. Cambridge, MA 02138

✓ Nina Mitchell

Nina Mitchell

6 Hilliard Pl Cambridge MA 02138

✓ Molly Klotz

Molly Klotz

4 Walnut Ave. 02140

N Katie Elias

Katie Elias

4 Walnut Ave. Cambridge 02140

✓ Courtney Flynn

Courtney Flynn

196 Vassal Ln Cambridge, 02138

✓ Alex Tzelnic

Alex Tzelnic

196 Vassal Ln Cambridge, 02138

Cambridge

✓ Janet Amphlett

Janet Amphlett

8 1/2 Ash St. Pl MA
02138

✓ Tim Shaw

Tim Shaw

147 Mt. Auburn St.

✓ Sam Langmann

Sam Langmann

67 Bishop Allen Dr. Cambridge
MA 02138

N Sandy Battulga

Sandy Battulga

183 Columbia St Cambridge, MA 02139

✓ Mike RICE

MIKE RICE

151 MT AUBURN ST, CAMBRIDGE 02143

Name (signed)

Name (printed)

Address

✓ Timur Yildiz Timur Yildiz 42 Hawthorn Street.

✓ Donald K. McInnes Donald K. McInnes 48 Hawthorn St.

✓ Jeannette McInnes Jeannette McInnes 48 Hawthorn St.

✓ Leyla Yildiz Leyla Yildiz 42 Hawthorn

✓ Heidi HAMILTON LORD 9 Acacia

✓ Michelle Lord Michelle Lord 9 Acacia

✓ B. Ringree Billie Ringree 29 Edward T Sullivan

✓ Kaia Patterson Kaia Patterson 14 Hilliard Street