



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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

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APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

1. The undersigned hereby applies to the Cambridge Historical Commission for a Certificate of (check one box): ☒ Appropriateness, ☐ Nonapplicability, or ☐ Hardship, in accordance with Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws and/or Chapter 2.78 of the Municipal Code.

2. Address of property: 14 Plympton St. , Cambridge, Massachusetts

3. Describe the proposed alteration(s), construction or demolition in the space provided below:
(An additional page can be attached, if necessary).

Please see attached description and graphics.

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. The undersigned also attests that he/she has read the statements printed on the reverse.

Name of Property Owner of Record: The Harvard Crimson Trust

Mailing Address: 3 Lincoln Lane, Cambridge, MA 02138

Telephone/Fax: 917-526-3215

E-mail: weintraubjonathan@gmail.com

Signature of Property Owner of Record: *Jonathan Weintraub*, Trustee
(Required field; application will not be considered complete without property owner's signature)

Name of proponent, if not record owner: KPMB Architects

Mailing Address: 351 King St. E, Suite 1200 Toronto, ON M4M 2L4

Telephone/Fax: (416) 977-5104

E-mail: lholland@kpmibarchitects.com

(for office use only):

Date Application Received: _____ Case Number: 5263 Hearing Date: 3/6/25

Type of Certificate Issued: _____ Date Issued: _____

Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

To: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Date: Friday, February 7, 2025

Re: Renovation of The Harvard Crimson, 14 Plympton St.

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

Please find enclosed an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed renovation of the building at 14 Plympton St., owned and occupied by The Harvard Crimson, Harvard College's independent student newspaper. We look forward to presenting this application at the March 6 public hearing.

Please feel free to contact me at 416-977-5105 x 299 with any questions or concerns regarding this application.

Sincerely,



Laurence Holland

Associate, KPMB Architects

cc: Jon Weintraub, Trustee, The Harvard Crimson Trust
Ben Samuels, Harvard Crimson Graduate Board
Paras D. Bhayani, Harvard Crimson Graduate Board
Paulo Rocha, Partner, KPMB
Pat Carroll, Cushman & Wakefield

Project overview

Founded in 1873 as “the Magenta,” The Harvard Crimson is the nation’s oldest continuously published daily college newspaper. After spending its first decades in temporary facilities, in 1910 the paper moved into a newly commissioned building at 14 Plympton St., designed by New York architects Jardine, Hill & Murdoch in the prevailing neo-Georgian style. From the opening of the building until March 2020, The Crimson was printed in-house on presses in the basement.

In subsequent decades, the building has seen incremental modifications and renovations. The last significant renovation was designed by Boston firm DiMarisi and Wolfe in 1991. At that time the interior was substantially reconfigured, and the one-story rear volume of the building was demolished and rebuilt as a two-story steel-and-masonry structure that housed production facilities in the basement, an expanded newsroom on the ground floor, and a separate commercial unit on the second floor. The west side of the rear volume, facing Plympton St., features a shared stair used by both The Crimson and their tenant; an elevator that provides barrier-free access to most of the building; and a loading dock accessed by a narrow alley between 14 and 22 Plympton St.

Critically, while the elevator installed as part of the 1991 renovation provides barrier-free access to almost all of the building, it does not serve the Sanctum – the large room at the front of the building’s second floor that serves as a key space for large staff meetings, social gatherings, and visiting alumni. The Sanctum is separated from the elevator by an exterior roof deck and a short flight of stairs.

Since 1991, The Crimson has undertaken several small projects, including replacing rooftop HVAC equipment in 2019. In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19, Crimson staff shifted to remote work and digital publication. Even though in-person activities at 14 Plympton St. have resumed, the paper is no longer printed in-house. Instead, The Crimson is now a digital-first publication, with a weekly print edition published off-site.

In 2023, to celebrate its 150th year, The Crimson undertook a capital campaign one of whose goals was to raise funds for a significant renovation of the building. The project, whose design is currently in progress, has three broad aims:

- Ensure the building envelope is in a state of good repair, and make strategic upgrades to the envelope to improve energy efficiency
- Reconfigure the interior to serve the needs of a contemporary digital-first publication
- Create an accessible path of travel to the Sanctum.

These goals inform the proposed extent of exterior work, which is summarized below.

Summary of proposed exterior work

1. Façade restoration:

- Cleaning of existing brick, sills, and lintels; removal of graffiti; selective crack repair and re-pointing with grout color to match existing; selective repair of parging at foundation; stripping, cleaning and repainting existing exposed steel lintels.
- Selective restoration or replacement with historically appropriate materials for gutters/downspouts, exposed flashings, and painted metal decorative trim.
- Removal of non-compliant rooftop egress ladder and landing; infill of parapet and extension of existing guardrail to match existing.
- Repointing and new caulk joints at coping of roof of east volume.

2. Windows and doors:

- Removal of non-original six-over-six double-hung aluminum windows; replacement with new six-over-six double-hung wood-clad windows with finish to match existing.
- Replacement of historic exterior doors with solid wood and glass doors with configuration and finish to match existing.
- Replacement of non-original exterior doors with solid wood and glass doors in a historically appropriate configuration and finish to match existing.
- Removal of existing skylight (currently covered) over second-floor hall; replacement with new skylight (not visible from public realm).
- Replacement of non-original window grilles.

3. Rooftop addition

- New walls and roof enclosing a 304-ft² rooftop addition.
- Rendered primarily in black metal, wood, and glass, the addition will respond to the existing roof line of the front volume of the building, but will be distinctly contemporary in architectural expression.
- The addition is necessary to create a barrier-free path of travel from the elevator at the rear of the building to the Sanctum. Other options, including a second elevator, were studied as part of pre-design work. The rooftop addition strategy is both the least disruptive to the historic portion of the building, and the most cost-effective.

4. Other exterior work:

- Replacement of existing non-compliant stack vent.
- Selective repair of the roof membrane at the existing roof deck, adjacent to the new rooftop addition.
- Replacement of existing rubber rooftop mats with pavers on pedestals.