

William Lawrence Galvin Collection

Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Collection ID: CHC001

Provenance: Gift of Martin Hill and Lauren Harder, 2011-2012

Extent: Approx. 30 Linear Feet

Processing and finding aid by: Aliza Leventhal, December 2011-June 2013

Updated by: Emily Magagnosc, October-December 2016

Access: Collection is available for research under the CHC rules of use. The majority of this collection is currently housed offsite, with the exception of 2 oversized boxes of plans and drawings. Please contact the CHC Archivist to request specific boxes.

Collection Description:

The William L. Galvin Collection was donated by Martin Hill and Lauren Harder, property developers who acquired Galvin's house and home office from Galvin's daughters, Patricia C. Galvin and Sheila A. Moe, in 2011. Many of Galvin's personal effects and the contents of his office were in the house at the time of sale, and the new owners allowed the Historical Commission staff to enter the property on several occasions to salvage material of interest.

The collection contains print and photographic materials of William L. Galvin's professional records and architectural drawings. This collection consists of correspondence, writing, articles, government records, photographs and drawings that depict Galvin's professional career. The core of the collection consists of drawings for over 1,000 architectural projects, of which about 530 projects in Cambridge have been catalogued. The collection also includes some objects and ephemera from Galvin's office, including a stainless-steel office sign and an engraved glass transom from one of Galvin's most important commissions, the Cambridge Federal Savings Bank at 38A Brattle Street (1937). This collection provides valuable insight into Galvin's personality and professional work that has left a lasting mark on the landscape of the City of Cambridge.

Biography:

William Lawrence Galvin (March 4, 1902 – August 25, 1983) was a native of Roxbury whose mother moved the family to Cambridge so William could prepare for Harvard. After attending several local schools, including the Rindge Technical School, the Huntington School, and the Cambridge High & Latin School, Galvin was admitted to Harvard College in 1920. His undergraduate academic career involved several instances of academic probation and changes in concentrations. During a leave of absence, Galvin worked for R. Curry Grovestein (1866-1941), a carpenter from Nova Scotia who became

a self-trained architect, builder, and property developer. After this experience Galvin decided to become a "promoting architect" and opened a real estate office in Harvard Square while still an undergraduate. After a final make-up session at summer school in 1925 Galvin graduated with a concentration in Fine Arts, focused on architecture. He returned to Harvard in 1928, and obtained a master's degree from the School of Architecture in 1931.

Galvin's entrepreneurial nature drove his professional career. Beginning his own architectural office in Harvard Square, Galvin aggressively sought commissions for projects big and small throughout the greater Cambridge area. In addition to his architectural work, Galvin sponsored and designed several commercial and residential real estate projects throughout the municipality and also served as an appraiser. As a member of the Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals, Cambridge Citizen Committee, Municipal Affairs Committee (chairman in 1935), and American Institute of Architects, he proved himself to be an invested member of the Cambridge community. In 1938 Galvin married Julia O'Keefe, with whom he had two daughters: Patricia C. Galvin and Sheila A. Moe.

Over a 50-year career, 1927-1979, Galvin made a significant impact on the landscape of Cambridge through his numerous projects and constant support for progressive land use to fit a modernizing Cambridge community. Although several of his most prominent works are no longer standing, his work played an integral role in the growth and development of Cambridge. Acutely interested in high-density housing, Galvin dedicated a large amount of time and effort throughout the 1960s-70s attempting to win permission for a 10-story luxury apartment complex that he called "Golf Pond." This failed project at 680 Huron Avenue demonstrated the limits of Galvin's extensive involvement in local politics and vision for Cambridge's landscape.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains the business records of William Lawrence Galvin, a lifelong architect in Cambridge, MA, during the mid-twentieth century. Due to the limited time and resources, Galvin's Cambridge projects have mainly been catalogued, amounting to about half of his professional output from 1935 until the late 1970s, with the majority of the records dated from the late 1950s/early 1960s and later. A few large-scale architectural drawings of non-Cambridge projects and student work located in the flat files have been catalogued as well. The main project from this period featured in this collection is Galvin's attempted construction of a 10-story luxury apartment complex at 680 Huron Avenue. Plans for sites outside Cambridge have been retained for later cataloguing.

The collection consists predominately of Galvin's architectural projects, including those contracted by Galvin, and professional interests, ranging from committee records to article clippings. Galvin's community activism is reflected in his correspondence, personal writings and a variety of professional and political materials saved throughout his career. There are approximately 60 photographs and negatives, presumably taken or acquired by Galvin, connected to this collection of his projects and the general Cambridge area. The inventory of this collection is very detailed and arranged by topic, namely projects and professional development and interests with sub-categories. The boxes are arranged to reflect this order.

Series I – Projects

Galvin worked on a variety of architectural projects including single-family homes, apartment buildings, hotels and office spaces. In addition, he engaged in real estate ventures that resulted in intense correspondence and diligent applications for re-zoning. Over 500 of Galvin's projects are included in this collection, of which the most heavily documented are the Cambridge Federal Savings Bank (1937), a residential development at Brattle Circle (1938-42) and an unbuilt project at 680 Huron Avenue (1960-76). Project plans have been heavily curated: prints were discarded if originals were present, as were design details of buildings known to have been demolished. Design development sketches were uniformly retained.

Series II – Work and Related Interests

Throughout his career, Galvin established himself as an active member of his communities; his involvement in several professional organizations and municipal committees is only partially reflected in this collection. This collection consists of presentation materials, project lists, committee records, and an assortment of articles related to trends in the architectural and urban planning fields.

Series III – Photographs

This is a miscellaneous collection of photographs, most of which have been linked to several of Galvin's major projects such as the Lesley College dormitory and dining hall and his residential development on Brattle Circle. The quality and type of photograph varies as a result of advancements in technology over Galvin's lengthy career.

Series IV – Education

This series sporadically documents the Galvin's education, from his high school diploma, architectural problem sets from graduate school, and personal records obtained through the Harvard College Archives.

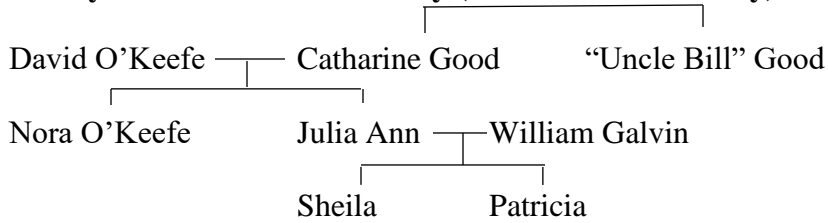
Series V – Miscellany

This is a collection of various mementos from Galvin's life, including: Rotary Club Rosters, and high-quality drafting pencils. This series is the unintentional byproduct of the initial acquisition of Galvin's materials in 2011.

Series VI – Personal and Family

This series primarily consists of photographs and documentation related to Galvin's family. Included are: family vacation photographs, portraits of Galvin and Good family members, Patricia Galvin's high school diploma, Cambridge Public School Association meeting minutes, and Galvin Family Christmas Cards.

Family Tree of the Good Family (Galvin's wife's family):



Series VII – Architectural Drawings

Though the majority of the 500+ rolls of drawings lack dates, it is clear through physical condition and changes in aesthetic styles that this series offers a cross-section glimpse into Galvin's extensive career. Refer to the Galvin Photograph Index for fullest record of each roll and its location.

Cambridge Historical Commission
 October 21, 2013
 Updated October 2016

Return to CHC Collections home:

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/researchaids/archivalcollections>

Series 1: Projects**Box 1**

Folder Name	Date
680 Huron Avenue (13 folders)	ND
Zoning General	1935-1976
Board of Zoning Appeals: Ordinance & Appeals	1950-1974
Board of Zoning Appeals: Ordinance & Appeals	1964-1967
Correspondence	1960-1971
May Street – Mangano Property	1960
Waste Disposal Correspondence & Images	1963-1968
Letter Drafts (VFW, Board of Zoning Appeals, etc.)	1965-1974
Articles, Correspondence & Writing	1966-1970
Writing	1970
VFW Post Issues	1965-1968
Legal Proceedings	1953-1977
Superior Court – Bill in Equity	1964-1967
Wm. L. Galvin v. City of Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeals	1968-1977
201 Alewife Brook Parkway – Cambridge Federal Savings Bank (3 folders)	ND
Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1937-1965
Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1962
Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1964-1966
16 Garden Street - The Commander Hotel (1 folder)	ND
The Commander Hotel	1949-1951
228, 230 & 13 Brattle - Brattle Circle (2 folders)	ND
228- Brattle Street – Contract	ND
Brattle Circle Receipts for Work	ND, 1941
Brattle Circle Corresponding	1949 – 1961
674-684 Huron Avenue – Cider Mill Pond (1 folder)	
Cedar Mill Pond – Site Investigation	1949-1966
Concord Avenue, Belmont – Belmont & Maine Railroad (3 folders)	ND
Correspondence – Board of Selectmen	1965
Deed of Property	1956-1961
B&M Railroad – 3 Parcels on Concord Avenue	1956-1965
Belmont & Maine Railroad	1965
976 Massachusetts Avenue, Tech Motors (1 folder)	ND
Contract & Finances – Tech Motors	1958
447 Concord Avenue – Lyman Realty – Closing Fern Street (1 folder)	ND
Lyman Realty – Closing Fern Street	1961-1963
Estate of Bertha Cohen (1 folder)	ND
Estate of Bertha Cohen	1963-1965
30 Boylston Street (1 folder)	ND
30 Boylston Street Alteration	1969-1970

127-133 Walden Street	ND
127-133 Walden Street	1971
28-30 Boylston Street (1 folder)	ND
John Waugh – 2 nd Means of Egress	1971

Box 2

28 Boylston Street – Specifications: Alterations to Building	ND
445 Concord Ave. – Office Building for Cambridge Thermionic Corp.	ND
25 Birch Street – Specifications Alterations and Addition to Building	1959
31 Wendell Street – Specifications Additions and Alterations	ND
83 Magazine Street – Veterans Housing Project	1948
468 Broadway – Broadway Supermarket Specifications	ND
B&M Railroad Survey (see box 1 for additional folder of B&M Railroad materials)	ND
38 Brattle St. – photocopy of office photos (original in survey files) & original building	ND

Series 2: Work and Related Interests

Box 3

Stationary & Marketing	1930s
Plans & Film Lists	1941
Presentation Materials	1943-1955
Treasurer of Massachusetts Chapter of AIA	1958-1961
Qualifications & Representative Work	1961-1963
Municipal Affairs Committee	1933-1955
Cambridge Politics	1950s-1970s
Political Writing	1968
Political Article Clippings	1969-1974
Planning Housing Articles	1943-1978
Walter Gropius Articles	1969
Miscellaneous Materials	1969-1971
The Granby Apartments – Specifications & Contracts	1925-1928
Alewife Brook Park Shopping Plaza	1970
Materials Information & Samples	1974
Miscellaneous Correspondence	1939-1966

Box 4

Housing Project: Correspondence	1947-1949, ND
Harvard Square Business Men's Association: Report upon Reduction in Size of Subway Station Building and Platform	1925
Harvard Square Business Men's Association: Correspondence	1972

Harvard Square: Traffic and Parking Study	1962
Harvard Square: Development Impact	1968
Harvard Square: Brattlewalk	1971 - 1972
Harvard Square	ND
Harvard Square: Traffic	1969, ND
CV	

Box 5

House plan brochures	ND
Materials Information	ND

Series 3: Photographs

Box 6

Brattle Circle/Street	ND
1030 Massachusetts Ave. – Shea Cleaners Show Room	ND
Cambridge Federal Savings Bank	1965
Fresh Pond Shopping Center (2 folders)	1954
Lesley College Dormitory and Dining Hall	1957
Somerville School	1935&1953
Bossi Construction – Foss Park Swimming Pools	1953
West Boylston Swimming Pool	1953
Cohen Estate- Medford, Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester Properties	ND
Cohen Estate – Cambridge Properties	ND
Presentation Photographs from Briefcase 1	ND
Documentation of landfill conditions at 680 Huron Ave. & Cider Mill Pond	ND
Miscellaneous Projects	ND
Miscellaneous Images	ND
Negatives	ND
Unidentified photographs	ND
Slides – 680 Huron Ave site condition	1969
Slides – VFW Court & 680 Huron Ave.	1961
Slides – not labelled (3 boxes)	ND

Series 4: Education

Box 7

Harvard University Records	1920-1951
Fine Arts Course Booklets	1923
Architecture 5c & 5b Textbook	1927
Architectural Problem Sets 5c (2 folders)	1927
Architectural Problem Sets 5b (2 folders)	1927

Construction Problems	1927-1928
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Box 8

Architect/Handbook - Killam	ND
Architectural Detail Drawings: Details of Harvard Buildings	ND
Architectural Detail Drawings: General Drawings, No Special Place	ND
Architectural Detail Drawings: Details of Other Buildings	ND

Box 9

Exam Drawings (Fragile, not able to be flattened)	ND
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Series 5: Miscellany**Box 10**

Rotary Club Rosters	1950 & 1952
Random Key – Dickson Bros. – Galvin, 5 PM	ND
Retractable measuring tape – from Reliance Co-Operative Bank, Cambridge, MA	ND
Pocket Plexiglas Magnifying Glass	ND
Key Chain – “MEN 1381 L Street 1954”	1954?
Inspector Badge – Junior Fire Dept. – Cambridge (housed with the CHC Objects collection)	ND
Lock w/ key (missing)	ND
2 Boxes of Drafting Pencils	ND
Dietzgen Ruler in Case	ND
Pocket Metric Converter	ND
5 Small Rulers	ND
Cambridge-Somerville & Vicinity Street Guide and Directory of Information, map of Somerville	ND
Harvard University Dunster House painting on wood block	ND
Miscellaneous cards (probably from wallet)	ND
Collapsible ruler	ND
1939 World's Fair travel brochure & postcard book	ND
Ceramic nameplate	ND
Plastic nameplate	ND
A.I.A. Convention ceramic trivet	1960
American Institute of Architects member name tag and delegate ribbon	ND
Cambridge Federal Saving and Loan Association envelope	c. 1940s
Retractable crayon	ND
Business cards	ND

Patricia Galvin Rent Control Board Booklet	ND
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Series 6: Personal and Family

Box 11

Harvard Alumni Chorus – correspondence and notes	1952-53
Photographs – trips to NYC and San Francisco	ND
Deaths – prayer book, funeral prayer cards, cemetery plot receipt	ND
Photographs – portrait and family	ND
Family history – Julia’s Family	1975
Nora O’Keefe childhood portrait in frame	ND
“Uncle Bill” Good Portrait	ND
Galvin Family Christmas cards	1939 & ND
Postcards	ND
Personal Correspondence	1938-39, 1961, 1973, ND
Group photograph – subjects unknown	
Cambridge Public School Association meeting minutes – notebook believed to be Galvin’s mother’s	1914-1931
William Galvin portrait	c. 1951
Catharine Good portrait	ND
Patricia Galvin’s high school diploma	1963
Slides – Galvin family (4 boxes)	1961 & ND
St. Louis Globe-Democrat article featuring Rev. W. F. Galvin	1948

Box 12

Harvard Class of 1926 15 th Reunion 1939 (rolled photograph)	1939
Men’s Dinner Class of 1926 – 25 th Reunion 1949 (rolled photograph)	1949
Testimonial Dinner – Justice Edward A. Coughlin, Nov. 17, 1949	1949
“Spectators”	ND

Series 7: Architectural Drawings

Oversized materials Boxes 1-12 and Flat Files

Refer to Appendix A for fullest record of each drawing and its location. P stands for photograph, R stands for roll.

Refer to Appendix B for record of drawings that will not be photographed at this time (Not Cambridge).

Oversized Boxes 1-10 are housed off-site. Two bins of oversized non-Cambridge materials are also housed offsite (unnumbered). Boxes 11 and 12 are onsite. Box 11 contains rolled non-Cambridge drawings. Box 12 contains student work awaiting off-site conservation. These will be added to the flat files.

Flat files contain Cambridge and non-Cambridge projects as well as student work. (September 2018)

Appendix A: Galvin Photograph Index

Available online in PDF format and on the Historical Share Drive at the CHC.

Appendix B: Galvin Non-Cambridge Rolled Drawing Index

Available online in PDF format and on the Historical Share Drive at the CHC.

Appendix C: Galvin's Abbreviated Library

The following books, pamphlets, programs, and magazines were unintentionally acquired during the first collection of Galvin materials in 2011. These do not reflect Galvin's complete library, nor can they be considered a cross-section of his collecting habits. The majority of these texts can be located in the Cambridge Historical Commission's Library; several have been distributed to other local institutions.

*Items in **Red** may potentially be transferred to Historic New England, as of 8/21/2018.

1964 Annual Report Cambridge, Massachusetts. City of Cambridge City Manager, 1964.

Annual Report of the Planning Board to the City Council 1950. City of Cambridge City Manager, January, 1951.

Architectural and Building Code Service, Frame Construction Details, Chicago, IL, Washington, D.C.: National Lumber Manufacturers Association, 1923.

Architectural Record, The New Age of Architecture: The New Role of the Architect; Vol. 140 No. 1 (July 1966). 75th Anniversary Issue

Architectural Woodwork, vols. 1-7, 9, 10, 12, 14. Chicago: Architectural Woodwork Institute, 1954-1961.

Architectural Woodwork, vols. 5, 7. Nashville: Architectural Woodwork Institute, 1964-1966.

Atkinson, Robert et al. A Book of Design: By Senior Students of the Architectural Association School. London: Ernest Benn, LTD., 1924.

Bacon, Edwin M., *Boston: A Guide Book*, Cambridge: The Anthanaem Press, 1928 (Compliments of Ginn and Company)

Bell & Gosset Co., B&G Handbook, Morton Grove, IL: Bell & Gossett Co., 1940.

Blaney, Henry R., Old Boston: reproduction of etchings in half tones, Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1896 (wood cuts)

Brooks, Oliver. *The Harvard Square Comprehensive Policy Plan.* Harvard Square Development Task Force, City of Cambridge, ND.

- Building Code of Cambridge, Massachusetts, *Construction, Use, Maintenance, and Inspections of Buildings and Structures*. Cambridge: The Miche Company, 1944.
- Building Homes for Cambridge Families: Report at the Mid-Century*. Cambridge Housing Authority, 1950.
- Built Through Thrift, Growing Through Service 1913-1950*. Cambridge Federal Savings and Loan Association, 1950.
- The Bulletin of the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design*, various volumes. New York: Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, 1927-1932.
- Characteristics of Modern Woods*. Marshfield, WI: Roddis Lumber & Veneer Company, 1937.
- City of Cambridge Annual Report 1966*. City of Cambridge City Manager, 1966.
- City of Cambridge, Mass. Annual Report of the Planning Board to the City Council: '51 Accomplishments, '52 Problems and Opportunities*. Cambridge City Council Planning Board, 1952.
- City of Cambridge Massachusetts Zoning Ordinance*, Cambridge, MA: Authority of the Council of The City of Cambridge, 1943. (MAP INCLUDED)
- City of Cambridge Wards and Precincts Map, 1960.
- Civic Bulletin*. Cambridge Civic Association, June, 1949.
- Clark, Kenneth. "Newport, Rhode Island: An Early American Seaport," *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* VIII, no. 3 (1922).
- Committee of Municipal Affairs, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. *The Tax Situation in Cambridge: What It Means, Why It Exists, How To Attack It*. A business analysis of the municipal tax problem of the City of Cambridge Report. Feb. 7, 1941.
- Committee on Home Hygiene. *Housing Conditions In Part of Cambridge*. Cambridge, MA, 1952.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration of Architects, *Registered Architects Roster as of 1 May 1966*. "Publication of this Document Approved by Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent." **Contains annotations by WLG
- Comparative Architectural Details: The Pencil Point Series – 1937-1938*. New York: The Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1939.
- Connection: Visual Arts at Harvard, Urban Design Issue*. Harvard Graduate School of Design, May 4, 1964.
- Dedication of the Harvard Square Post Office*. Harvard Square Benevolent Society Organization Committee, Jan. 16, 1954.

- Frances Loeb Library*. Informational pamphlet. Harvard Graduate School of Design, ND.
- First Report of the Alumni in Architecture of Harvard University*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1932.
- Freeman, Donald (ed.), The Boston Society of Architects chapter of American Institute of Architects, *Boston Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1970.
- Frost, Jack. *Harvard & Cambridge: A Sketch Book*, New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1940.
- Galvin, William Francis. *Collections of the Massachusetts Archives Civil War Records*. Massachusetts Archives, ND.
- Galvin, William Francis. *Massachusetts Facts: A Review of the History, Government, and Symbols of the Commonwealth*. Secretary of the Commonwealth Citizen Information Service. 1999.
- Geib, Louis and Arthur P. Windolph, *Chimney – Pieces: Supplement No. 2-4*, New York: Jacobson Mantel & Ornament Co, 1929. Provided by Robert S. Bickford via AIA '28
- Gropius, Walter. Scope of Total Architecture, New York: Collier Books, 1970 (4th edition).*
- Hannah Winthrop Chapter, N.S.D.A.R., *Historic Guide to Cambridge*, Cambridge, MA: 1907.
- Harvard Magazine*. Harvard University, May-June, 1988.
- Harvard University 1960: An Inventory for Planning*. Prepared by the Staff of the Harvard University Planning Office. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1960.
- Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, *a Guide to Boston Architecture 1637-1954: Including Other Communities within Easy Driving Distance*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1954. (For AIA)
- The Information Center of Harvard University, *Building Harvard: Architecture of Three Centuries*. Cambridge, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1968.
- Institute of Real Estate Management, New England Chapter. *Condominiums: One Day Seminar*. October 1, 1969.
- Johnson, Thomas F., James R. Morris and Joseph G. Butts, *Renewing America's Cities*. Washington D.C.: The Institute for Social Science Research, 1962 (2 copies)
- Lamb, George N. *The Mahogany Book*. 3rd ed. Chicago: Mahogany Association, Inc., 1939.
- Luckman, Charles, *The Future of Design*. Address at the 29th annual dinner meeting Massachusetts Building Congress, Inc. Boston, MA January 14, 1960
- ND – Interstate's Street Guide & Directory of Information – 2 copies

ND – no title – 11” X 14.5” album of great world architecture, mostly European, cardboard mounted.

Plan for Cambridge Highlands. Cambridge Planning Board, 1952.

Pine Homes and Pine Interiors. Shevlin, Carpenter & Clarke Company, 1930.

Printed under the direction of the City Council Committee, *Cambridge: Seventy-Five Years a City*. Boston: E.L. Grimes Company Printers, 1922.

Professional Builder Apartment and Business Volume II. *The Kitchen*. A Cahners Publication. 1975.

Raley, Dorothy (ed.), *A Century of Progress: Homes and Furnishing as exhibited at the World's Fair, Chicago 1934*, Chicago, IL: M.A. Ring Company Publishers, 1934

Richards, J.M. *An Introduction to Modern Architecture*, London: Penguin Books, 1940.

Rouillion, Louis, and Charles G. Ramsey, *Architectural Details*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1924. **WLG's SCHOOL BOOK**

Smith, Nettie S. and Dorothea Fricke. *Plants and Design*. New York: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1933.

Statement of Condition. Cambridge Federal Savings and Loan Association, June 30, 1950.

The Stucco House. New York: Atlas Portland Cement Company, 1921.

Truesdell, Leon E., *Housing: Analytical Maps Cambridge, MA: Block Statistics*. New York City, WPA War Services.

“The Rebuilding of Three Cities.” *USA Tomorrow*, vol. 1 no.1. New York: USA Tomorrow, INC, 1954.

Walter Gropius Lecture Fund. Solicitation brochure. Walter Gropius Lecture Fund Committee, ND.

Your City Leads. Annual Report of the Cambridge Housing Authority, 1950-1951.

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