

Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee

Amended Statement of Goals and Secondary Goals

The Goal of the District and of this Order is to guide change and encourage diversity **of the District's buildings and public spaces** in order to protect **its** distinctive physical and experiential characteristics and to enhance the livability and vitality of the District for all people. The Historical Commission should seek to preserve and enhance the unique physical environment and visual form of the District; preserve its architecturally and historically significant structures and their settings and encourage creative design compatible therewith; mitigate character-diminishing impacts of new development on adjacent properties and areas; and discourage homogeneity by retaining and encouraging diversity of development and open space patterns and building scales and ages. The District must remain a pedestrian-friendly, accessible, human-scale, mixed-use environment that supports **commercial urban experiences**, complements nearby neighborhoods, and respects the history and traditions of its location.

The following Secondary Goals for the District 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. **Significant Buildings.** 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. **Commercial Environment.** Sustain the vitality of the commercial environment while preserving architecturally-significant or original building fabric at street level and above. Encourage the restoration of missing features where these have been documented. Except for protected storefronts, encourage creative contemporary commercial design inside the restored framework of storefront openings. Encourage creative signage. Support below-grade commercial spaces where appropriate. If retail use is no longer viable, encourage architectural solutions that preserve storefront fabric and utility.
3. **Contemporary Design.** Support creative, contemporary designs for new construction that complements the context of abutting buildings and enhances the character of the Sub-District. Recognize and respect well-reasoned contemporary design during the review process. Support

innovative approaches to enhancing the unique character of Harvard Square while mitigating the detrimental impacts of development on proximate areas.

4. **Diversity of Form.** Build on and sustain the diversity of existing building form, scale and material. Preserve and encourage appropriate greenspaces, scale-appropriate open spaces, and new buildings that support the prevailing character of the Sub-District. Preserve the remaining wood frame buildings throughout the District. Maintain a consistent setback or streetwall condition where that character has been set. Support small-scale storefronts to preserve the vitality and character of the streetscape.
5. **Public Environment.** Create a high quality public environment in the District with compatible materials, lighting, signage, and street furniture such as bollards, benches, moveable seating, and the like. Provide adequate facilities for trash and recycling and surfaces that can be cleaned and maintained. Encourage planted greenspaces and accommodate trees where possible.
6. **Pedestrian Experience.** Protect and enhance the pedestrian experience. 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 the paving and landscaping of such spaces. Enhance accessibility and safety for pedestrians throughout the District.
7. **Residential Uses.** Enhance the all-hours neighborhood quality of Harvard Square by supporting existing residential uses and encouraging additional residential units in mixed-use buildings.
8. **Compatible Design.** Encourage compatible design that supports a wide diversity of uses serving the needs of surrounding neighborhoods, students, workers and visitors from around the world.
9. **Transportation.** Encourage creative solutions to the District's transportation issues, including parking, passenger drop-off, deliveries and cycling facilities. Provide adequate bicycle parking throughout the District. Protect pedestrian safety and experience through careful design and placement of features such as loading docks, curb cuts, and trash receptacles. Encourage the replacement of surface parking lots with compatible new structures.
10. **Environmental Sustainability.** Encourage environmentally sustainable development that takes into consideration the embodied energy of the existing built environment, material life cycles, passive design, energy conservation, and current LEED standards. **Alterations to existing buildings**

that seek to promote energy conservation should be accomplished in a manner that respects historic materials and designs.

11. **Architectural Lighting.** Ensure that architectural lighting, when allowed, meets goals for energy efficiency and night-sky light pollution, avoids spill-over glare into adjoining residential areas, complements rather than overwhelms architectural features, and is consistent in character with Harvard Square’s commercial environment.

The foregoing goals also recite the standards for preservation and change within the District. In addition to the factors specified in Section 2.78.220, and subject to any specific provisions of this Order, in exercising its authority with respect to the District and in considering applications for certificates of appropriateness, hardship, or nonapplicability, the Historical Commission shall be guided by the preceding general goal for the District as a whole and by such of the preceding secondary goals as it determines to be applicable to the project or situation before it.

The Historical Commission shall also be guided by the standards and guidelines described in the “Final Report of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee,” dated November 29, 2000, as amended by recommendations of the current Study Committee, which after public hearing the Historical Commission may adopt as regulations and thereafter amend from time to time.

The Historical Commission and project proponents should also consider the goals and recommendations specific to each of the six subdistricts that make up the Harvard Square Conservation District. The subdistrict goals and recommendations—including in Chapter VII of the November 29, 2000 report and as amended by recommendation of the current Study Committee—describe the physical and historical development of each area over time, identify some of the more notable buildings and spaces, and set forth some of the preservation priorities and recommendations for each sub-area.

As permitted by Chapter 2.78.190.B, the Historical Commission may determine from time to time after public hearing that certain categories of exterior architectural features, structures, or signs may be altered without review by the Commission; provided, however, that every such alteration shall be determined by the Executive Director of the Historical Commission to conform to the regulations adopted by the Commission for the administration of the District.