



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge MA 02139

617-349-6100

2026 MAR 24 PM 2:02

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

BZA Application Form

BZA Number: 1202871

General Information

The undersigned hereby petitions the Board of Zoning Appeal for the following:

Special Permit: _____ Variance: X Appeal: _____

PETITIONER: President and Fellows of Harvard College C/O Gabriel Ramos, Senior Campus Planner, Harvard University Planning & Design

PETITIONER'S ADDRESS: 1350 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138

LOCATION OF PROPERTY: 10 Garden St., Cambridge, MA

TYPE OF OCCUPANCY: Education

ZONING DISTRICT: Residence C-2 Zone

REASON FOR PETITION:

/Sign/

DESCRIPTION OF PETITIONER'S PROPOSAL:

Seeking to add two wall signs to Fay House (10 Garden Street) where there currently are none. A variance is required because the total amount of signs, on the lot, exceeds what is allowed by-right (which in this case is 14 signs due to there being 7 buildings). There are 17 signs existing today, these two signs will bring the number of signs to 19, which exacerbates the non-conformity and thus requires approval from the BZA.

SECTIONS OF ZONING ORDINANCE CITED:

Article: 7.000 Section: 7.16.21.B (Identification Signs) & 7.16.22.c (Wall Signs).
Article: 10.000 Section: 10.30 (Variance).

Original
Signature(s):

Gabriel Ramos
(Petitioner (s) / Owner)

Gabriel Ramos
(Print Name)

Address: 1350 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
Tel. No. 617.496.1879
E-Mail Address: harvardplanningoffice@harvard.edu

Date: 3/19/2026

BZA Application Form

DIMENSIONAL INFORMATION

Applicant: President and Fellows of Harvard College
Location: 10 Garden St , Cambridge, MA
Phone: 617.496.1879

Present Use/Occupancy: Education
Zone: Residence C-2 Zone
Requested Use/Occupancy: Education

		<u>Existing Conditions</u>	<u>Requested Conditions</u>	<u>Ordinance Requirements</u>	
<u>TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA:</u>		212978	212978	329436	(max.)
<u>LOT AREA:</u>		188249	188249	5000	(min.)
<u>RATIO OF GROSS FLOOR AREA TO LOT AREA: ²</u>		1.13	1.13	1.75	
<u>LOT AREA OF EACH DWELLING UNIT</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>SIZE OF LOT:</u>	WIDTH	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	DEPTH	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>SETBACKS IN FEET:</u>	FRONT	Varies	Varies	Varies	
	REAR	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	LEFT SIDE	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	RIGHT SIDE	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>SIZE OF BUILDING:</u>	HEIGHT	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	WIDTH	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	LENGTH	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>RATIO OF USABLE OPEN SPACE TO LOT AREA:</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>NO. OF DWELLING UNITS:</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>NO. OF PARKING SPACES:</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>NO. OF LOADING AREAS:</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	
<u>DISTANCE TO NEAREST BLDG. ON SAME LOT</u>		n/a	n/a	n/a	

Describe where applicable, other occupancies on the same lot, the size of adjacent buildings on same lot, and type of construction proposed, e.g; wood frame, concrete, brick, steel, etc.:

All other buildings on the lot are Harvard institutional buildings

1. SEE CAMBRIDGE ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE 5.000, SECTION 5.30 (DISTRICT OF DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS).
2. TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA (INCLUDING BASEMENT 7'-0" IN HEIGHT AND ATTIC AREAS GREATER THAN 5') DIVIDED BY LOT AREA.
3. OPEN SPACE SHALL NOT INCLUDE PARKING AREAS, WALKWAYS OR DRIVEWAYS AND SHALL HAVE A MINIMUM DIMENSION OF 15'.

BZA APPLICATION FORM - OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

To be completed by OWNER, signed before a notary and returned to The Secretary of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

I/We President and Fellows of Harvard College (c/o Gabriel Ramos, Harvard University Planning and Design (OWNER)

Address: 1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 573, Cambridge, MA 02138

State that I/We own the property located at 10 Garden Street (Radcliffe Institute) which is the subject of this zoning application.

The record title of this property is in the name of _____
President and Fellows of Harvard College

*Pursuant to a deed of duly recorded in the date See attached, Middlesex South County Registry of Deeds at Book _____, Page _____; or Middlesex Registry District of Land Court, Certificate No. _____
Book _____ Page _____.


SIGNATURE BY LAND OWNER OR
AUTHORIZED TRUSTEE, OFFICER OR AGENT*

**Written evidence of Agent's standing to represent petitioner may be requested.*

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of Middlesex

The above-name Gabriel Ramos personally appeared before me, this 18th of March, 2026, and made oath that the above statement is true.

Regina Dues Notary

My commission expires 12/13/2030 (Notary Seal).

- If ownership is not shown in recorded deed, e.g. if by court order, recent deed, or inheritance, please include documentation.

BZA Application Form

SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR A VARIANCE

EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS FOR A VARIANCE MUST BE ESTABLISHED AND SET FORTH IN COMPLETE DETAIL BY THE APPLICANT IN ACCORDANCE WITH MGL 40A, SECTION 10.

- A)** A literal enforcement of the provisions of this Ordinance would involve a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant for the following reasons:

The Harvard Radcliffe Institute is a multi-building educational campus surrounding Radcliffe Yard. The core of the campus occupies an entire city block, is enclosed on multiple sides by tall brick walls, and is accessible from several entry points along the perimeter. Twelve entrances serve the campus in total — six formal gates and six additional access points from surrounding streets. Within the campus, there are eight separate buildings, each with a unique street address. The campus also hosts a number of uses that regularly draw significant numbers of visitors, including the Agassiz Theatre, which serves as both a performing arts venue and the Visitor Information Center for Harvard College; the Knafel Center, which regularly hosts lectures, meetings, and special events; and Schlesinger Library, which is frequented by visiting scholars and researchers.

Taken together, these factors underscore the need for adequate signage to help visitors identify the Harvard Radcliffe Institute upon arrival and navigate to their destination.

A literal enforcement of CZO Section 7.16 would permit a maximum of two signs per building and limit freestanding signs to a height of four feet, placed at half the depth of the required front yard. This restriction would prevent Harvard from adequately identifying its campus at key public-facing entry points. The two proposed signs would be installed on Fay House, a building that currently has no exterior wall signage. Strict application of CZO Section 7.16 would prohibit any wall signage on that building, creating confusion for visitors attempting to locate it.

- B)** The hardship is owing to the following circumstances relating to the soil conditions, shape or topography of such land or structures and especially affecting such land or structures but not affecting generally the zoning district in which it is located for the following reasons:

The Harvard Radcliffe Institute has evolved over time into a multi-building educational campus whose core occupies an entire city block. The campus features multiple entrances and access points, with historic brick walls comprising approximately 40% of its street frontage. Primary building entrances are often oriented toward Radcliffe Yard rather than adjacent streets, and several major buildings — including Agassiz House, the Knafel Center, and Schlesinger Library — have their rear facades facing the surrounding streets. These characteristics make it difficult for many visitors to understand the relationship between campus entry points and their intended destinations. This challenge is further compounded by the fact that several buildings host uses that regularly attract large numbers of occasional visitors, increasing the need for clear and welcoming identification signage.

Given the physical characteristics of this multi-building campus, additional signage is necessary to identify key access points and support visitor wayfinding. The need for greater flexibility in permitted signage for non-residential uses in the Residence C-2 zoning district is a direct result of the unique demands of a multi-building educational campus and is not a need that would typically arise for other uses within the same zoning district.

- C)** **DESIRABLE RELIEF MAY BE GRANTED WITHOUT EITHER:**

- 1)** Desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good for the following reasons:

The requested variance is necessary to address the need for clear identification and wayfinding signage that supports a welcoming environment for the significant number of visitors who come to the campus on a regular basis. The proposed signage will also improve the overall appearance of the campus by establishing a consistent design aesthetic along its public-facing frontages. For these reasons, granting the variance would not be detrimental to the public good — on the contrary, it would provide a public benefit by allowing for easy identification of Fay House.

- 2) Desirable relief may be granted without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of this Ordinance for the following reasons:

The requested variance would allow for adequate signage to better identify Fay House for guests and visitors to the Harvard Radcliffe Institute. This is consistent with the CZO's recognition that the public interest is served when businesses and institutions use signs to identify their premises and the products or services they offer.

***If you have any questions as to whether you can establish all of the applicable legal requirements, you should consult with an attorney.**

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND DESIGN



March 18, 2026

Peter McLaughlin, Commissioner
City of Cambridge Inspectional Services Department
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge MA 02139

Re: Zoning Variance – Fay House Signage, Harvard Radcliffe Institute (10 Garden Street)

Dear Commissioner McLaughlin,

Please find enclosed a variance application for two proposed signs at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute campus, 10 Garden Street. The Radcliffe Institute is seeking a variance to permit the installation of two exterior wall signs on Fay House. The primary objective of these proposed signs is to address a gap in campus signage, as Fay House currently has no exterior wall signage identifying the building.

As helpful context, Radcliffe is separately undertaking a broader effort to replace various existing campus signs in order to create a more unified wayfinding experience. Those replacements, which don't require a variance, have been approved by CHC and CDD. However, the two proposed signs for Fay House require a variance because CZO Section 7.16.21.B limits signage for non-residential uses in the Residence C-2 zoning district to two non-banner signs per building and a total area of 30 square feet per building.

Although Fay House currently has no exterior wall signage, the total number of signs across the Radcliffe lot — including both wall and freestanding signage — exceeds the ratio of two signs per building when considered at the lot level. A variance is therefore required to add signage to buildings that currently have none, which in this case is just Fay House. It is also worth noting that the two proposed signs will not be visible from the public way.

We respectfully request that this application be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeal at its earliest convenience. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at 617.496.1879 with any questions. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Ramos

Gabriel A. Ramos
Senior Campus Planner

cc: Joe Fisher, Harvard Radcliffe Institute
Alexandra Offiong, Harvard University Planning & Design

Harvard Radcliffe Institute Campus Signage

Proposed Updates

March 2026





Campus Signage

The Radcliffe Institute is seeking a variance to permit the installation of two exterior wall signs on Fay House. The primary objective of these proposed signs is to address a gap in campus signage, as Fay House currently has no exterior wall signage identifying the building.

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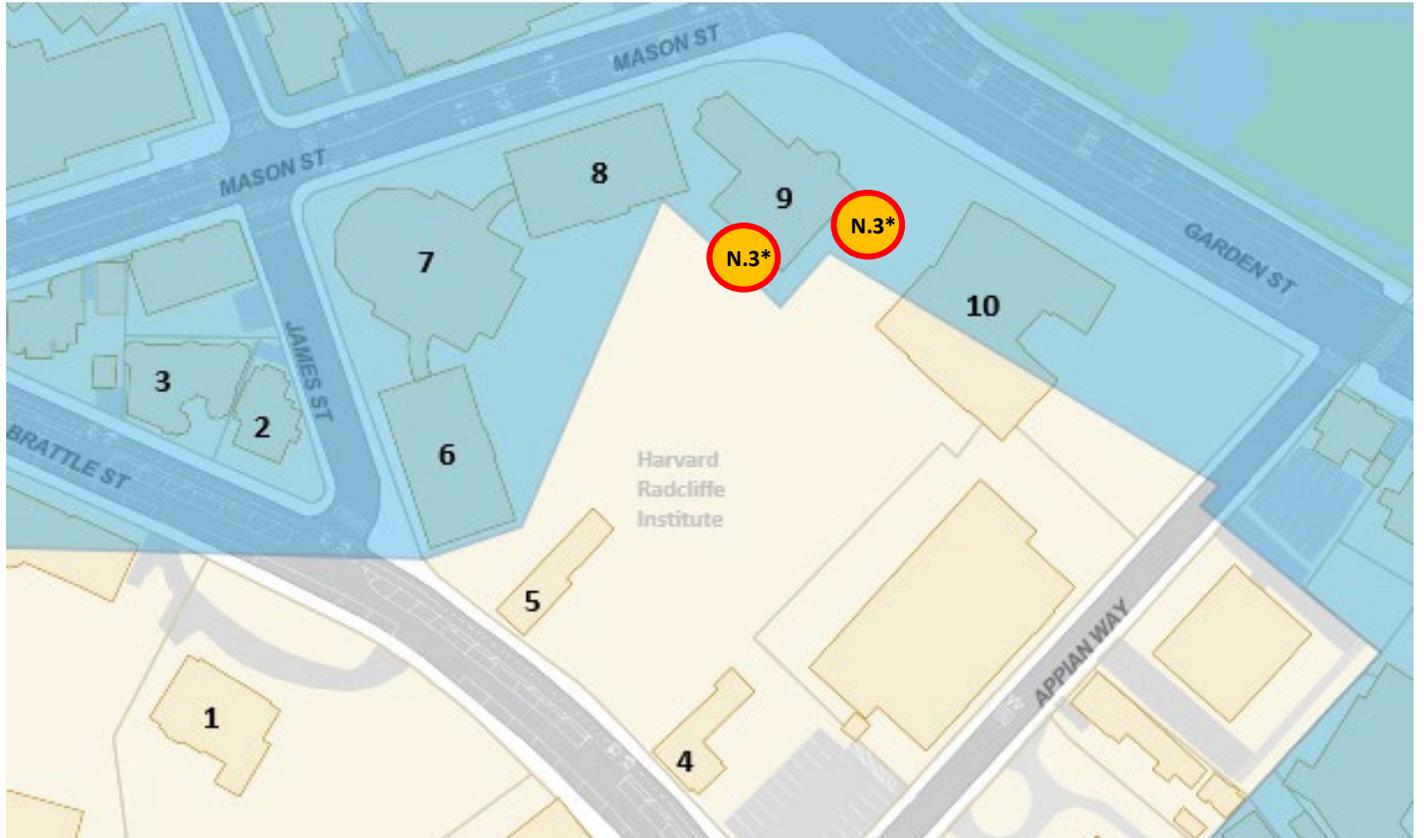
Building identification signs will be consistent with existing signage dimensions and installation, using concealed mounting hardware with screws and anchors installed through brick or siding.

Campus Signage

Campus Map with sign legend

Blue shading represents Old Cambridge Historic District

Building Number	Building Name
1	Greenleaf House
2	Alumnae House
3	83 Brattle Street
4	Putnam House
5	Wallach House
6	Schlesinger Library
7	Agassiz House
8	Knafel Center
9	Fay House
10	Byerly Hall



 Building ID Sign (new)

* Asterisk denotes sign is not visible from public way

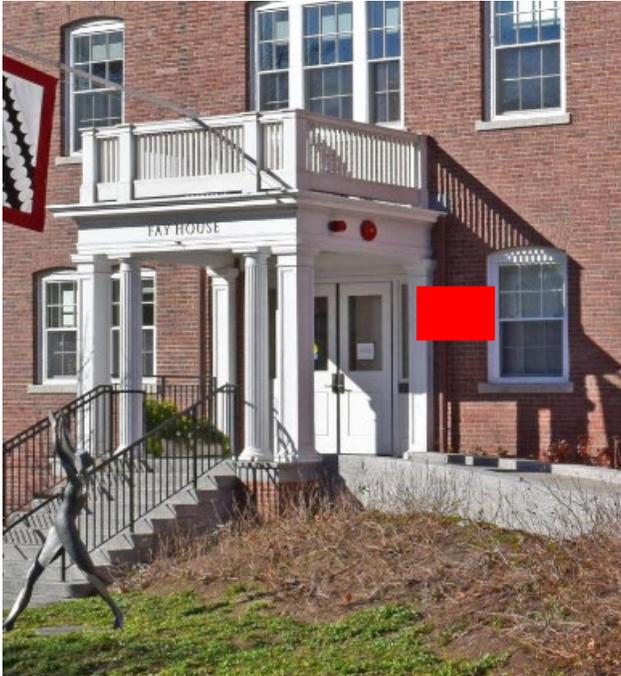
Campus Signage by Type (New Exterior Building ID Signs)

Sign ID	Sign Type	Dimensions (W x H)	Sign Area (sq ft)	Material	Viewable from Public Way	Height from ground	Weight of sign (lbs)	Width of building façade
N3 (two signs: A & B)	Building Identification Sign (Wall Sign / on building)	1'-8" W x 1'-1.5" H	1.875	painted acrylic panel silkscreened graphics	No	Varies by sign location, <10 feet	~5 lbs	Varies by sign location

Sign heights and weights are approximate values

N.3 Fay House

2 Sign Locations



Existing Sign(s): None



Proposed Sign
13.5"H x 20"W



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139

SIGN CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

Please fill out this application to indicate the number, type, and dimensions of signage for your building. If you are unsure of the type of sign and/or allowable dimensions, please review the following pages of this application and [Article 7.000](#) of the Zoning Ordinance. Please note the following additional requirements:

- **All signs must receive a permit from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) before installation.** Community Development Department certification action does NOT constitute issuance of a permit or certification that all other code requirements have been met. **Do not contract for the fabrication** of a sign until all permits have been issued, including City Council approval if necessary, for signs in the public way.
- Any sign or portion of a sign extending more than six (6) inches into the public way/sidewalk must receive approval from the Cambridge City Council and a bond must be posted with the City Clerk. For questions or additional information, please contact cddzoning@cambridgema.gov.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: President and Fellows of Harvard College

Phone: 617.496.1879

Email: gabriel_ramos@harvard.edu

Sign Address: 10 Garden Street (Two identical building ID signs at this address: N.3 - Sign 1, N.3 -

PROPOSED SIGN

Please fill out the information below and **attach a sketch of the proposed sign** to the application. Each proposed sign requires an individual form to be filled out. For further information on sign types, see the below page.

Sign text: Fay House 10 Garden Street

Sign type: Wall Sign

Area in square feet: 1.875

Dimensions: 13.5 H x 20 L

Placement height in feet: n/a

Depth from façade: n/a

Illumination: Natural (no illumination)

Sign frontage in feet: n/a

Area of existing signs to remain: n/a

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT CERTIFICATION

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Sign conforms to requirements of Article 7.000: No

Sign requires a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals: Yes

Comments: The proposed N3 and N3* signs are exempt as they do not exceed 6 square feet per sign face and are not visible from the public way. However, adding these two signs increases the total number of signs to 19 signs across 7 buildings (Buildings 4-10), in a residential district, where only two signs per building are allowed. While the existing 17 signs are already non-conforming, the additional two signs will further exacerbate the non-conformity, therefore requiring a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeal.

Signature: *Idelcia Mapure*
Idelcia Mapure

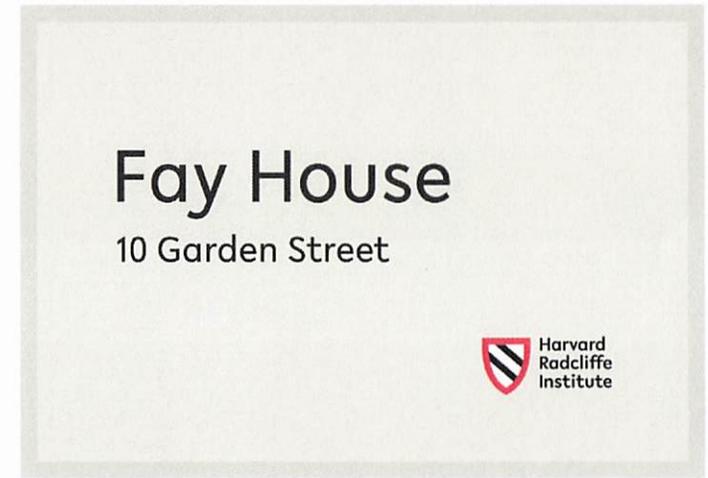
3/11/2026

CDD Representative

Date

N.3 Fay House

2 Sign Locations



Existing Sign(s): None

Proposed Sign
13.5"H x 20"W

BZA APPLICATION FORM - OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

Radcliffe Yard Lot – Deed Book and Page Nos.

Recorded Date	Book	Page
August 18, 1885	1717	124
March 30, 1887	1793	552
June 14, 1894	2283	567
June 8, 1894	2283	569
January 28, 1895	2335	559
July 27, 1896	2487	343
November 10, 1896	2512	491
March 4, 1897	2554	356
June 15, 1897	2568	166
February 15, 1897	2568	167
November 29, 1899	2785	7
October 28, 1905	3195	123
October 5, 1909	3474	458
October 5, 1909	3474	459
March 1, 1911	3584	478
August 19, 1911	3632	274
July 11, 1916	4070	281
September 12, 1917	4160	236
July 19, 1949	7458	27
February 5, 1962	10064	481



170
Parcel Block Map

0 20 40 80 Feet
1 inch = 44 feet

N

DISCLAIMER: The City of Cambridge warrants that the information shown on this map was derived from the best available information at the time of the map's preparation. The City of Cambridge assumes no liability for any inaccuracies or omissions on this map.

City of Cambridge Assessing Department
795 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

10 Lot Number
170 Block Number
10 Cam Street Number
(125.0) Dead Dimension

100 Parcel size in Sq. Ft.
44.0 LC Land Court Dimension
65.0 Survey Dimensions

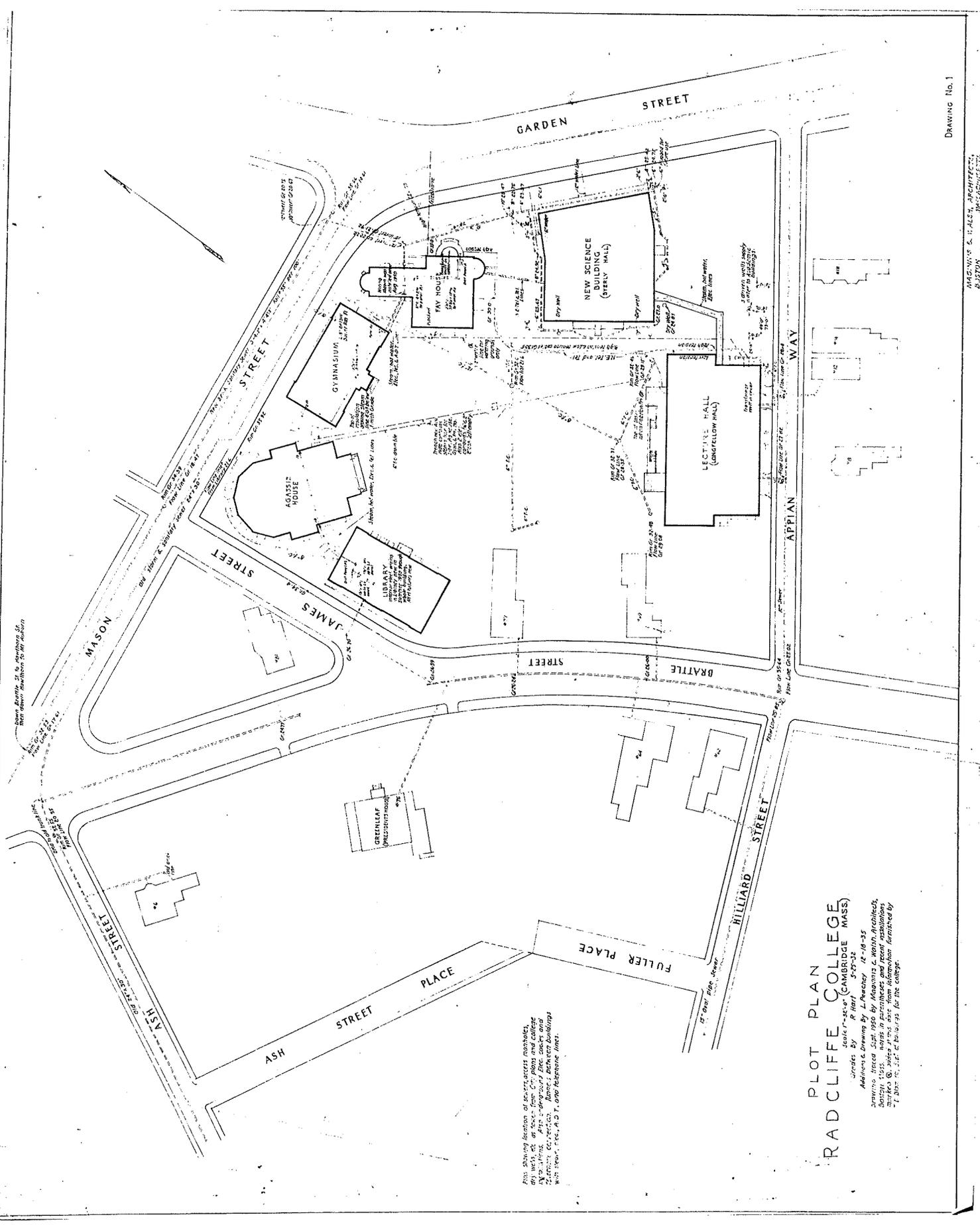
Buildings
Lot Line
Block Line
City Boundary

Water
Sub-Parcel Line
Easement
Railway



BLOCK 170

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**PLOT PLAN
RADCLIFFE COLLEGE**
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Drawings by L. WALSH, ARCHITECTS, BOSTON
 Address & Drawing By: L. WALSH, ARCHITECTS, BOSTON
 Address: 100 State Street, Boston, Mass.
 Date: Sept. 1930
 This plan shows the location of the buildings and the college as a whole. It is based on the plan of the college as it existed in 1930. It shows the location of the buildings and the college as a whole. It is based on the plan of the college as it existed in 1930.

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