

Harvard Square Placemaking Workshop

Out of Town News Kiosk: Historic Restoration & Concept of Use

Wednesday June 17, 2015

Approximately 35 participants attended the meeting

General reactions to ideas

- Idea to turn the OOTN building back into the entrance to the T
- Limitations of size and exhibit space
- Larger space – reduction of commercial space
- Like the idea of sitting with a cup of coffee concept
- What about the possibility of continuing the newsstand?
- Must balance openness and activity
- Digital media – creative use “Red Sox” viewing
- Billboards shouldn’t be there on the historic structure
- Things that help people get around – a map would be very helpful
- Tension of transparency and wayfinding/signage
- The idea to open up the building is a little too transparent or sanitized for how this building should be remembered
- Likes sign- but doesn’t care for the digital component of the sign (doesn’t care for the ticker in Davis Square in Somerville) –
- The information kiosk could be salvaged and turned into a structure to post community events (i.e. Paris)

Ideas for the Out of Town News Kiosk and Possible Uses

- Center for history of Cambridge
- Information stations – Vietnam memorial at the Air Force Museum
- Curated museum
- Art displays and exhibits – once a year puts Cambridge local arts on the map
- Pulling in other supportive areas beyond the kiosk – the building is so small – how can you think about the area more broadly?
- Summer days are packed; concern that if you make a small exhibit space that ends up being a long line and people can’t get in
- Map would be nice – light up the rest of Cambridge
- Use shades when the building is closed at night to set up art installations
- Governance structure – assembling entity to manage – business, staff, community/public
- Concern of bricks and to what extent the historic structure can be altered
- Experience of sitting outside of the glass – strange
- Who is staffing this? – balance tourism and resident needs and interests
- Funded by the City as a possible financial model?
- Not accommodate commercial concerns over public opportunity

- Early morning and late night – how will the structure function? How long will it be open/unlocked?
- Billboards – real time information and transit information info- this is unobtrusive ads for public service
- Routines – attachment to routines – once you establish the space and then fill it with all kinds of stuff, no one will make it their regular place
- Programming – people need to know what to expect
- Cell phone charging stations
- Tension of handheld devices and individual stations – everyone has a phone and they can access information all they want – there is no need for an individual monitor/screen to give you info as suggested in Vietnam Memorial example at Air Force museum
- Concern of the notion of permanent furniture
- There needs to be clear expectations set – what will be allowed to continue, what will be newly incorporated, and what needs to be told to go somewhere else
- Residents information – small promotions for events