

June 10, 2015

Mr. Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Sullivan,



In 2011, you wrote a memo to the Cambridge Historical Commission recommending the start of the landmark process for the Kendall Square Group: 238 Main Street, 264/290 Main Street, and 292 Main Street in order to have MIT and the public reconsider the proposed demolition of 292 Main Street in the Kendall Square Initiative development project. The Commission afforded MIT the opportunity and time to explore options and to discuss those options with you and members of the MIT and Cambridge communities. After extensive dialogue, MIT has concluded that retaining all three buildings provides the best opportunity for creating a gateway along Main Street and into MIT. We believe that it will have the character and scale that will enhance the pedestrian experience and celebrate the area's long history of being a leading center for business and industry in Cambridge.

MIT is excited to present preliminary renderings and site information representing our plans to preserve the Kendall Square Building at 238 Main Street, the JL Hammett Building at 264 Main Street, and the Suffolk Engraving Building at 292 Main Street as part of MIT's Kendall Square Initiative. We have worked with each of our teams to design respectful renovations of the existing historic buildings while adding a new commercial laboratory building behind 238 Main Street (Site 3) and a graduate residence in a new tower behind and over 264 Main Street (Site 4). This residence will replace the 200 graduate beds at E55 (Eastgate) and add approximately 250 new graduate beds. The Suffolk Engraving Building at 292 Main Street will be renovated with retail on the ground floor and an MIT Innovation and Entrepreneurship center on the upper floors.

At Site 3/238 Main Street, the general approach to interfacing with 238 Main Street is to respect the historic building through minimal alterations and a clear distinction between the old and new elements. The new building sits behind 238 Main Street and the upper floors of the tower present a narrow face to Main Street with a clearly separate form and materiality.

Proposed modest alterations to the exterior of 238 Main Street include replacing the swinging doors at the main entrance with glass revolving doors, while maintaining the ornate white entry "frame", replacing windows and doors at either side of entry with frameless glass system for first and 2nd floor that will accentuate the center bay beneath the clock tower.

At Site 4/ 264 and 292 Main Street, the general approach is to preserve the historic features and replace the windows with new historically appropriate windows. The team is looking at dropping the first floors from about 4 feet above grade to the pedestrian grade level for accessibility and to make a more active and attractive pedestrian realm along Main Street. 292 Main Street will house a new MIT Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship above the ground level and 264 Main Street will be retail and office with the graduate residence above and behind it with over 450 beds. The housing tower will be accessed from the public open space to the south of the historic buildings in order to retain more of the historic fabric and character along Main Street. Site 4 is in the early schematic design phase and specific details and images of the preservation approach have yet to be completed. The attached presentation illustrates the key points described above.

With MIT's clear commitment to preserve the three buildings that are included with the landmark study, MIT respectfully requests that the Cambridge Historical Commission close the Landmark Designation process on these three buildings and instead allow continued design review with the Commission staff as is MIT's practice on all historically significant buildings. The broad resolution of preserving the buildings will provide a better foundation for the dialogue and discussion that will take place once MIT has filed the PUD-5 and Article 19 Special Permit applications.

Sincerely,



Anthony Sharon
Deputy Executive Vice President

Attach: Kendall Square Initiative, June 10, 2015