



## CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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May 21, 2015

To: Residents of Reservoir Hill

From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director  
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Public hearing

On June 4 the Cambridge Historical Commission will hold a public hearing regarding proposals to initiate a neighborhood conservation district study and/or an expansion of the Old Cambridge Historic District to include the south slope of Reservoir Hill.

Historic districts and neighborhood conservation districts are enacted by the City Council to protect the architectural and historic character of the city. Historic districts are adopted according to Chapter 40C of the General Laws; conservation districts, according to Ch. 2.78, Art. II of the City Code. Both designations give the Historical Commission jurisdiction over demolition, new construction, and alterations visible from a public way. One proposal would expand the Old Cambridge Historic District, which was adopted in 1964 and expanded in 1976 to include properties within 100' of Brattle Street from Mason Street to Fresh Pond Parkway, up the south side of Reservoir Hill. The other proposal, which originated by a petition of thirty neighborhood residents, asked the commission to study establishing a neighborhood conservation district along Highland Street.

The south slope of Reservoir Hill developed from about 1850 through the 1950s as the Tory Row estates were broken up. Socially and architecturally, the area is consistent with the houses on Brattle Street, but it differs greatly from the streetcar suburb on the north slope, which developed after trolley service began on Huron Avenue in 1894.

The boundary on the attached map has been broadly drawn to encompass similar south slope properties between Sparks Street and Fayerweather Street. It excludes properties on Clement Circle, Wyman Road, Hemlock Road, Dunstable Road, and Lincoln Lane because these do not, for the most part, have the public prominence of those on major streets.

The hearing on June 4 is being held to elicit public comment on whether to proceed with the district studies. If the Commission decides to initiate an historic district or neighborhood conservation district study, or both, the next step will be to solicit participation from property owners to help examine the jurisdiction and boundaries of the possible designation and assist with drafting a recommendation to the City Council. We anticipate that the study will include frequent public meetings and will take about one year to complete.

**PROPOSED STUDY AREA SHOWN IN YELLOW**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**OLD CAMBRIDGE**

