

Preliminary Report of the 2017-18 Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee

Recommendations for Amending the Goals,
Guidelines, and Order Establishing the District

The Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee was appointed by the City Manager in August 2017 and began meeting that October. Monthly meetings continued through June 2018 and resumed in September. Attendees discussed the events that led to the establishment of the district in 2000 and the record of its operations and effectiveness. Representatives of the Community Development Department described zoning and sign regulations. Focusing on the *Final Report of the Cambridge Historical Commission Regarding the Proposed Harvard Square Conservation District*, the committee held detailed discussions about the goals, secondary goals, and guidelines of the District; the application of those goals and guidelines to matters of demolition, new construction, and alterations. The evolving character of the subdistricts was also discussed.

The next step is preparation of the Preliminary Report of the Study Committee for transmission to the Cambridge Historical Commission. The Historical Commission will discuss the Study Committee's recommendations at a public hearing and send a Final Report to the City Council for action. Following is a provisional outline of the Preliminary Report.

Preliminary Report of the 2017-18 Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee
With Recommendations for Amending the Goals, Guidelines, and Order Establishing the District

Summary of Recommendations

- I. Establishment and Operations of the District, 2000-2018
- II. Deliberations of the 2017-18 Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee
- III. **Amended Statement of Goals and Secondary Goals**
- IV. **Amended Guidelines for Demolition, Construction, and Alterations**
- V. Amended Description and Guidelines for Subdistricts
- VI. Recommendations for Amending the Harvard Square Overlay District
- VII. Amended Order Establishing the District

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II. Deliberations of the 2017-18 Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee

The Harvard Square Conservation District Study Committee was appointed by the City Manager in August 2017 and began meeting in October. With some lapses, monthly meetings continued through January 2022. Attendees discussed the events that led to the establishment of the district in 2000 and the record of its operations and effectiveness. Representatives of the Community Development Department described zoning and sign regulations. Focusing on the *Final Report of the Cambridge Historical Commission Regarding the Proposed Harvard Square Conservation District*, the committee held detailed discussions about the goals, secondary goals, and guidelines of the District; the application of those goals and guidelines to matters of demolition, new construction, and alterations. The evolving character of the subdistricts was also discussed.

[more to follow]

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III. Amended Statement of Goals and Secondary Goals

The goals statement developed by the original Harvard Square Conservation District Study and incorporated in the Order in 2000 is the foundational document of the District. The goals and the accompanying secondary goals are meant to underlie every decision made by the Cambridge Historical Commission as it administers the district and should be cited in any motion to accept or deny an application for Certificates of Appropriateness, Non-applicability, or Hardship.

The amended goals statement maintains the structure of the original while clarifying some of the language. New language (in red below) supports commercial urban experiences; creative signage, below-grade commercial spaces, and preservation of storefronts; residential development additional bicycle parking; and energy conservation. One new goal refers to the regulation of architectural lighting. Major changes are discussed below.

- a. Commercial urban experiences (introductory statement). The Study Committee debated the desirability of expressing support for locally-owned businesses, but there was no a consensus on how or whether this should be accomplished. Some businesses are unique enterprises owned and operated by Cambridge residents; others may be locally-owned franchises of regional or national firms. All contribute to the vibrant commercial environment of the Square. The introductory statement now reads as follows:

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.

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- b. Creative signage; below-grade commercial spaces; preservation of storefronts. (Goal #2)
Creative signage has historically been an important component of Harvard Square's exciting commercial environment. The Historical Commission is authorized to grant Certificates of Appropriateness for signs that do not conform to certain aspects of the sign code and has done so on numerous occasions.

Below-grade commercial spaces. Below-grade spaces can accommodate intensive non-retail activities that support the commercial vitality of the commercial core in the Harvard Square and Brattle Square subdistricts.

Preservation of storefronts. It cannot be presumed that the strong demand for storefront locations will continue. Retail enterprises face severe challenges nationwide, and it is possible that the retail sector in Harvard Square will contract. Many buildings in the District were designed or adapted for ground floor retail, and for reasons of historic preservation and conservation of the resource that they represent repurposed storefronts should be altered in a way that preserves their architectural fabric and that is reversible.

Goal #2 now reads as follows:

Sustain the vitality of the 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**

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commercial spaces, where appropriate. If retail use is no longer viable, encourage architectural solutions that preserve storefront fabric and utility.

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c. Residential development (Goal #7)

Harvard Square support number of residents in existing buildings. The vitality of the neighborhood would be enhanced by additional residential development in buildings that are appropriate in scale, density and appearance.

Goal #7 now reads as follows:

Residential Development. Enhance the all-hours neighborhood quality of Harvard Square by supporting existing residential uses and encouraging additional residential units in mixed-use buildings

d. Adequate bicycle parking; enhance pedestrian safety (Goal #9)

Provide adequate bicycle parking. Increasing numbers of commuters and shoppers access Harvard Square by bicycle. Cambridge zoning now requires new development to provide generous bicycle parking; the Conservation District should support this goal.

Enhance pedestrian safety. Cambridge has adopted Vision Zero to eliminate pedestrian fatalities. Public sector improvements, including redesign of sidewalks, crosswalks and public plazas, should enhance pedestrian safety while preserving traditional urban materials and street furniture.

Goal #9 now reads:

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.

e. Energy conservation (Goal #10).

Conservation of energy is an important social goal. New buildings should be environmentally sustainable in conformance with City goals and policies. Energy conservation upgrades to existing buildings should be approached in a manner that respects historic architectural features.

Goal #10 now reads:

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.

f. Architectural lighting. Currently architectural lighting is regulated only through the appearance of the fixtures; the quality and intensity of the light, changing light effects over time, and the architectural features to be illuminated are not regulated.

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.

Architectural lighting is widely considered to be a positive feature of some urban structures and environments, but with current technology can become objectionable through excessive brightness, motion, or inappropriate highlighting or architectural features. The proposed Goal #11 Is intended to support a recommended amendment to Ch. 2.78 Art. III of the City Code.

The revised Goals Statement now appears as follows:¹

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

¹ Additions since 10/17/2018 (highlighted). See Appendix 1 for a redlined version showing all changes.

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.

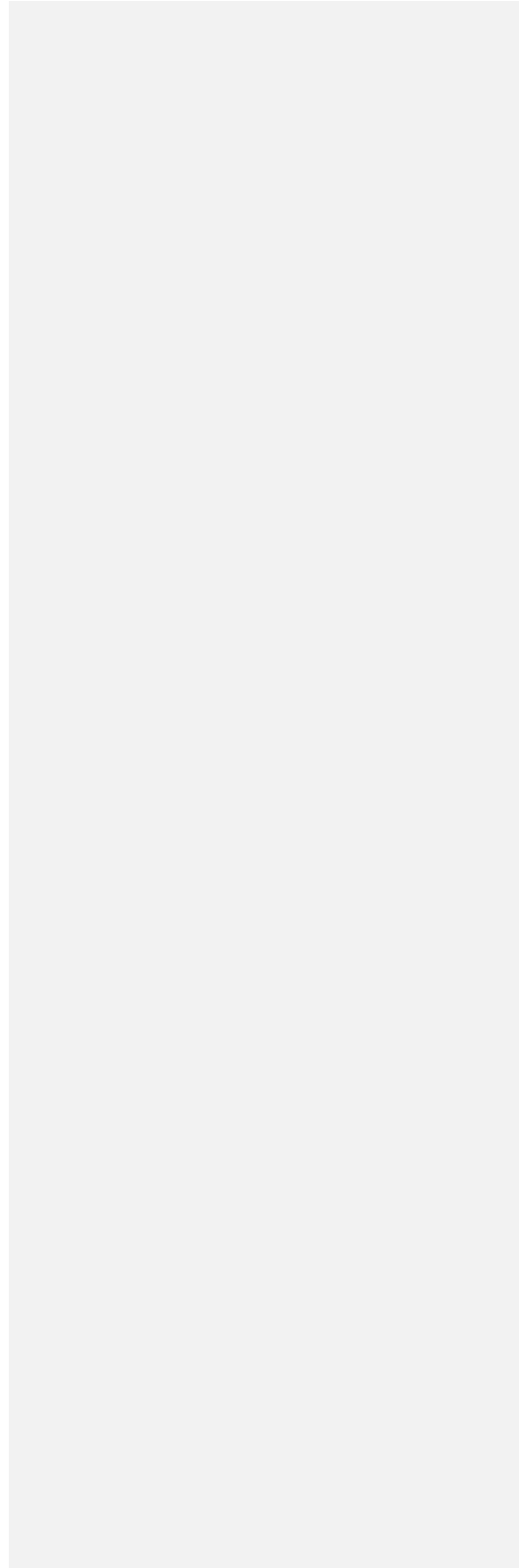
The foregoing goals also recite the standards for preservation and change within the District. In addition to the factors specified in Section 2.78.220, and subject to any specific provisions of this Order, in exercising its authority with respect to the District and in considering applications for certificates 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—included 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.

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IV. Amended Guidelines for Demolition, Construction, and Alterations

Guidelines for demolition, construction and alterations were reviewed for consistency with the amended goals. Recommended amendments to the current (2000) guidelines for demolition, new construction and alterations are shown below in red:

The following guidelines for demolition, construction, and alterations expand upon the language of the Ordinance to provide additional guidance for administration of the Harvard Square Conservation District.

A. Demolition

Although the City's demolition delay ordinance ~~will does~~ not apply in a Harvard Square Conservation District, demolition ~~will be is~~ similarly defined as "the act of pulling down, destroying, removing or razing a structure or commencing the work of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same".² ~~The Cambridge Inspectional Services Commissioner has interpreted "substantial destruction" as including removal of a roof or one or more sides of a building, gutting the interior to the point where exterior features are impacted, or removal of more than 25% of a structure.~~ Work of this sort will be reviewed under the following demolition guidelines, while the removal of building components, including signs and storefronts, will be reviewed as alterations.

The purpose of reviewing demolition within the Conservation District will be to preserve significant buildings and the diversity of building ages, styles, and forms that help to define the historical character of the Square. Other benefits will include the opportunity to review the significance of individual buildings in the context of specific development proposals, to consider creative reuse possibilities, and to encourage the care and maintenance of the building stock.

The Cambridge Historical Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to an applicant seeking to demolish a structure in the Conservation District if the project, including both the demolished and the replacement buildings, is determined to be "appropriate for or compatible with the preservation or protection of the . . . district."³ Approval of demolition will be dependent on a finding by the Cambridge Historical Commission that a) the demolition of the structure will not adversely impact the district, subdistrict, or abutting properties in the sense described in secondary goal #1, and b) the replacement project meets the purposes of the Conservation District with respect to secondary goals ~~#3-2~~ through ~~#9~~10, where these are applicable.

The history of Harvard Square suggests some specific criteria that may be applied to demolition proposals. Buildings that are over fifty years old, that are contributing structures in the Harvard Square National Register District, or that are part of the Square's dwindling inventory of wood-frame structures, are generally valued for their contribution to the character of the Square, and it

² City Code, section 2.78.080.F. Demolition is categorized in Chapter 40C as an "alteration;" moving a building categorized as "construction."

³ Chapter 40C, Section 10a. This language is incorporated by reference in the Neighborhood Conservation District and Landmark Ordinance, Ch. 2.78.170.

may be presumed that preservation will be strongly preferred to demolition (secondary goal #4).⁴ However, all such applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and the Cambridge Historical Commission will not necessarily protect all such structures from demolition.

B. Construction

Creative design solutions to development and renovation requirements will be encouraged to ensure that the unique resources and character of Harvard Square are protected.⁵ ~~Coordination with the Harvard Square Advisory Committee's large project review will be essential.~~

1. New Construction/Additions to Existing Buildings

Harvard Square is a kaleidoscopic urban environment. The Cambridge Historical Commission will recognize the continuing evolution of architectural design and the necessity of keeping the Square fresh, vibrant, and economically viable. Contemporary design expression will be encouraged in new construction (secondary goal #3).⁶

~~Proponents of projects requiring special permits on sites with little apparent impact on historic resources will be encouraged to initiate their public review process with the Harvard Square Advisory Committee. To the extent feasible, the Cambridge Historical Commission will seek to hold joint meetings with the Advisory Committee on projects that fall within both jurisdictions.~~

The existence of parallel reviews by the Historical Commission and the Advisory Committee is seen as a productive application of both zoning and historic preservation disciplines in a complex urban environment; in the event of conflict, however, conservation district protection, which requires Cambridge Historical Commission approval of building permits, will prevail. Because the specific circumstances of every development project cannot be predicted, it is not possible to specify an exact regulatory protocol governing the sharing of reviews between the Historical Commission and the Advisory Committee. The inherent logic of the project review process will guide the proponent.

The Cambridge Historical Commission will begin its review of a new construction project or addition with an analysis of the historic significance and architectural value of the premises and its immediate surroundings. New construction that accommodates older structures on or adjacent to the site will be encouraged. Construction that incorporates significant major portions of older structures may be acceptable; however, use of isolated historic architectural elements will be discouraged. Demolition involving retention of facades to allow replacement of historic structures

⁴ "Build on and sustain the diversity of the existing building form, scale and material. Preserve and encourage flowers, green yards and courtyards and small, free-standing and wood-frame buildings where that character prevails. Encourage streetwall buildings where that character has been set."

⁵ Secondary goals #2, #3, #6, #9, #10.

⁶ "Support creative, contemporary design for new construction that complements and contributes to its immediate neighbors and the character of Harvard Square. Recognize and respect creativity of design during the review process and mitigate the functional impacts of development on adjacent areas."

with new construction (mis-named "facadectomies") will be discouraged unless the supporting historic fabric is found to be unsalvageable.

In reviewing new construction or additions to existing buildings, the Commission "shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the structure both in relation to the land area upon which the structure is situated and to structures in the vicinity."⁷ Review of new buildings will be guided by considerations such as the appropriateness of the structure's height, scale, mass, proportions, orientation, and lot coverage; the vertical and horizontal emphasis, rhythm of openings, transparency, texture, and materials of the publicly-visible facades; sunlight and shadow effects; relationship to public open space; and landscaping.

Review of new buildings and additions will be further guided by the subdistrict goals ~~in Chapter VI~~ regarding the relationship of a proposed building to the site and to other buildings and structures in the vicinity.

Under the City Code, the Historical Commission acting as a neighborhood conservation district commission "may in appropriate cases impose dimensional and setback requirements in addition to those required by the applicable provision of the zoning ordinance."⁸ Implementing such a measure could result in a reduction of the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowed by zoning. The appropriate circumstances for imposing dimensional and set-back reductions could include a wide disparity of scale and density between the proposed project and its surroundings, or a situation in which the proposed project would destroy or diminish the historical resources of the site.

2. Alterations to Existing Buildings

Alterations to exterior architectural features visible from a public way will be subject to binding review by the Cambridge Historical Commission, guided by secondary goals #1, #2, ~~and #4,~~ [and 11](#). Storefronts will be treated more flexibly than building facades or upper stories. The goals of the district favor retention and repair, rather than replacement, of original or significant exterior fabric.

While irreversible changes ~~will be~~ subject to review and approval of the Cambridge Historical Commission, certain other visible exterior alterations ~~will be~~ reviewed by the staff or exempted from review entirely. Chapter 2.78, Article III identifies seven other categories of construction and alterations that may be exempted from review.⁹ ~~From that list, the Study Committee recommends that~~ The following features ~~be are categorically~~ exempt from review and ~~do~~ not trigger an application process:

- Storm doors and storm windows (subject to specific design guidelines).
- Signs that conform to the Cambridge sign code as amended in the Harvard Square Historic Overlay District.

⁷ Ch. 2.78.220.A.

⁸ Ch. 2.78.220.A.

⁹ Ch. 2.78.190.B. Exterior color is categorically excluded from review in neighborhood conservation districts.

The Historical Commission ~~will adopt~~has adopted procedures delegating review and approval of some reversible alterations which have the potential to adversely affect historic fabric to the staff. ~~Applications for projects that do not meet these criteria will be considered by the Commission at a public hearing.~~ A Certificate of Nonapplicability will be issued by the staff if Conservation District guidelines are followed. These categories will include:

- Ordinary repairs or maintenance using similar materials and construction details to those existing.
- Reconstruction replicating the exterior design of a building, structure, or exterior architectural feature damaged or destroyed by fire, storm, or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence.¹⁰
- Roof repairs and HVAC equipment not visible from a public way.
- Window replacement in conformity with guidelines to be adopted by the Commission after public hearing.

Applications for alterations outside of these categories are considered by the Commission at a public hearing.

a. Interior Work and Alterations Not Visible from a Public Way

Interior arrangements and alterations to architectural features not visible from any public way are exempt from review in ~~a~~-neighborhood conservation districts and a Certificate of Nonapplicability for such work will be issued by Commission staff without delay.

b. Storefronts

Storefronts are a source of Harvard Square's continuing vitality, and the Cambridge Historical Commission ~~will seek~~s to encourage creativity in this regard (secondary goal #2).¹¹ Most storefronts ~~will be~~are regarded as impermanent and the Historical Commission ~~will look~~s favorably on creative alterations that meet the particular needs of the retailer or office tenant, as long as the original structure and finishes are maintained or recovered (where they still exist). Alterations to upper stories ~~will be~~are regarded as having the potential for significant and permanent adverse effects and will be reviewed accordingly. Reversible changes to storefronts will not be discouraged if they do not obscure or damage the structure or any original architectural features. Opaque glass will not be allowed in display windows unless specifically permitted.

¹⁰ Such replacement work will still be subject to review of the staff and issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

¹¹ "Help sustain the vitality of the commercial environment by supporting creative, contemporary design for storefront alterations and additions, while preserving architecturally significant or original building fabric and character."

The Cambridge Historical Commission ~~will~~^{has} adopted procedures delegating review and approval of two categories of storefront alterations to the staff. Applications for storefront alterations that do not meet these criteria ~~will be~~^{are} considered by the Commission at a public hearing. A Certificate of Nonapplicability will be issued by the staff for:

- Alterations that do not alter, enclose, or extend further than the decorative or structural framework of the building or retail space originally intended to surround a storefront. The framework consists of such elements as piers, columns, cornerboards, quoins, cornices and similar structural or decorative features.
- Storefront alterations that do not obscure, remove, relocate, or replace historic or original exterior architectural features. Exterior architectural features may include, but are not limited to, such features as brackets, window and door casings, fascia, hoods, bays, and window sash.

~~Recent storefront alterations that comply with the proposed guidelines are at College House (1420-1442 Massachusetts Avenue); Origins at 8 Brattle Street; and Tess at 20 Brattle Street. In all three cases, structural members or decorative finishes of the original first floor facades were uncovered or restored, and new storefronts were inserted within them. In the case of College House, this involved both restoring and replicating the original granite piers and lintels of 1832 and inserting a plate glass storefront system that recalls a traditional storefront with a horizontal wooden sill applied to the glass (Fig. 5). At Origins, a ca. 1930 storefront was removed and the original marble-clad pier and fascia restored; the new storefront was installed within this frame (Fig. 6). Finally, at Tess several generations of storefronts were removed, the brick piers of the original facade were restored, and a new fascia recalling the destroyed original was installed. Within this reconstructed framework is a radically original glass storefront that respects the original architecture of the building but makes a strong and exciting statement (Fig. 7). All three alterations would have merited Certificates of Appropriateness, issued by the Commission staff from a conservation district review.~~

~~A contrasting example of an approveable storefront alteration exists at the Abbot Building, where Wordsworth Books has a specialized branch selling children's books (Fig. 8). The business occupies a storefront that was not original to the building. The alterations involved a metal sign band across the stone cornice above the storefront and bright colors on the window trim. In the Conservation District, color changes will not be reviewed. The sign band is above the storefront and obscures the original fabric of the building; however, the sign is only pinned to the masonry and stands about six inches from it. This would have required review, but might have been viewed favorably as a reversible change.~~

A few storefronts in the Square retain their original design or have a subsequent design that is significant in terms of architectural or historical significance. The following storefronts and/or the buildings in which they are located ~~will be~~^{are} specifically designated in the Order as requiring Commission rather than staff approval of alterations:

- 1304 Massachusetts Avenue (Gnomon Copy) (Fig. 9)
- 1316 Massachusetts Avenue (Leavitt & Pierce)

- 1320-22 Massachusetts Avenue (J. August)
- 30-30A Plympton Street (Bow Street Flowers)

Alterations to these storefronts, including installation or alteration of signs, ~~will~~ require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission.¹² Additional significant storefronts may be identified in the future, and the Cambridge Historical Commission may recommend to the City Council that they be added to the protected list.

It cannot be presumed that the strong demand for storefront locations will continue. Retail enterprises face severe challenges nationwide, and it is possible that the retail sector in Harvard Square will contract. Many buildings in the District were designed or adapted for ground floor retail, and for reasons of historic preservation and conservation of the resource that they represent repurposed storefronts should be altered in a way that preserves their architectural fabric and that is reversible.

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c. Windows

Windows are critical to maintaining the characteristic appearance of significant buildings. Replacement of wood windows with inappropriate modern units can destroy the traditional appearance of a building. The Commission ~~will~~ has established design guidelines for window alterations governing materials, muntin patterns, panning, and reflectivity.

~~In almost all cases,~~ Modern replacement windows are available that match the originals in appearance while offering significant energy efficiency. The Commission will, in most cases, allow window replacement ~~routinely~~ as long as design guidelines are met. Applications to replace windows that are ornamental in design or that contain significant original sash will require review by the Commission.

Review and approval of certain window alterations may be delegated to the staff. For example, applications for window alterations that do not change the size of the opening, configuration of the muntins, material, or transparency will receive a Certificate of Nonapplicability in the same manner as the exempted storefront alterations.

d. Masonry

Harvard Square contains many outstanding examples of brick masonry construction. Because the appearance of masonry can be irreversibly altered by improper pointing or cleaning, Cambridge Historical Commission approval will be necessary for these operations. Review will include approval of specifications for cleaning, cutting joints, mortar composition, and joint profiles. Replacement masonry units will be reviewed for color, size, and finish. Painting of masonry surfaces without a Certificate of Appropriateness will be prohibited.

e. Signs

¹² See Appendix for a description and additional photographs of these storefronts.

Signs in Harvard Square should contribute to the commercial vitality of the area. Uniformity of signs and conformance to conjectural "historic" designs will not be encouraged. However, signs should not obscure any original architectural features of the structure on which they are located. Signs should be fastened to structures in the least destructive way possible.¹³

~~The Study Committee recommends that the Harvard Square Overlay District should be amended to transfer jurisdiction over signs which do not conform to the sign code applicable elsewhere in the City to the Cambridge Historical Commission (see discussion of Zoning Amendments). Limitations on the number of projecting or free-standing signs on a lot; limitations on the size of individual wall, freestanding, or projecting signs; and limitations on the height of signs above the sidewalk, and placement of signs, would be deleted from the zoning ordinance with respect to the Harvard Square Overlay District and made subject to Cambridge Historical Commission review.~~

~~Under Chapter 2.78, Article III, The Cambridge Historical Commission will have~~has binding jurisdiction over size, materials, dimensions, illumination, and appearance of new or altered signs.¹⁴ However, signs that conform to the provisions of the zoning code regarding the total area of signs on each building and the height at which signs can be placed ~~will be~~are exempted from review. Decorative banners and temporary signs ~~will be~~are prohibited unless specifically approved "subject to such conditions as to duration of use, dimension, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the commission may reasonably specify."¹⁵

f. Architectural lighting.

Architectural lighting is widely considered to be a positive feature of some urban structures and environments, but with current technology can become objectionable through excessive brightness, motion, or inappropriate highlighting or architectural features.

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C. Public Spaces

Municipal and utility company modifications to sidewalks, streets, and street furniture ~~will be~~are subject to the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Historical Commission. Review will be undertaken with consideration to the appropriateness of such materials and structures as paving and curbing, light standards, traffic and parking structures and signs, and utility structures visible at or above grade from any public way. In practice the Commission has declined to address striping and temporary barriers such as flex posts for bicycle paths.

~~The Cambridge Historical Commission may adopt a master plan for the treatment of publicly accessible private open spaces in Harvard Square and suggest public improvements of sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting. The Commission will encourage privately initiated efforts to improve~~

¹³ Sandwich board signs are subject to permitting by the Department of Public Works when placed on a sidewalk and will not be subject to Historic District review.

¹⁴ Content, color, and graphics used on signs - the commercial message - will be exempt from review in the Historic District.

¹⁵ Chapter 2.78.190.A.7.

~~the public spaces of the Square and will serve as a public forum for discussion of alterations and coordination of privately and publicly funded improvements.~~

Proposals for public art installations, whether private donations or public projects, will be referred to the Cambridge Public Art Commission for a recommendation in accordance with established city policies.¹⁶ For the purposes of conservation district review, three-dimensional artworks will be considered to be structures, and murals will be considered to be signs if they contain an explicit message. In general, such installations must also be found to be appropriate for their setting and for the district as a whole.

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¹⁶ See "City of Cambridge Art Gifts and Donations Policy", adopted May 17, 1999, and Chapter 2.114 of the City Code, "Public Development Arts Projects."

Appendix 1. Amended Statement of Goals, Secondary Goals, and Standards and Guidelines for Review¹⁷

The Goal of the District ~~as a whole~~ and of this Order is to guide change and encourage diversity ~~of the District's buildings and public spaces~~ in order to protect ~~theirs~~ distinctive ~~physical and experiential~~ characteristics ~~of the District's buildings and public spaces~~; and to enhance the livability and vitality of the District for all people. The Historical Commission should seek to preserve and enhance the unique ~~functional-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 ~~any adverse character-diminishing~~ impacts of new development on adjacent properties and areas; and discourage homogeneity by ~~maintaining the present~~ ~~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 local business commercial urban experiences~~, complements nearby neighborhoods, and ~~maintains-respects~~ the history and traditions of its location.

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The following Secondary Goals for the District are intended to provide general guidance ~~to the Historical Commission~~ in a wide variety of situations, and are not intended to be applied to every project ~~that will come before it~~. They are statements of policy, not prescriptive measures that must be applied equally in each situation.

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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 ~~by~~ 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, ~~allow for 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 design 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 ~~free-standing~~ wood frame buildings throughout the District. Maintain a consistent setback or streetwall condition where that

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¹⁷ (Redlined Draft; additions since 10/17/2018 highlighted)

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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 ~~ensure that~~ 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~~ 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 ~~conserving supporting~~ existing residential ~~units-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 that challenge pedestrian access and experience~~ such as loading docks, curb cuts, and trash ~~receptacles areas must be designed to have the least impact on the pedestrian experience~~. Encourage the replacement of surface parking lots with compatible new structures.
10. Environmental Sustainability. Encourage environmentally sustainable development that takes into consideration the ~~inherent 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.

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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.

In addition, 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—included 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.

Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee
December 17, 2018

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