

Goals for Harvard Square Subdistricts – DRAFT – May 19, 2018

The 1986 Development Guidelines, developed for the Harvard Square Overlay District, divided the Overlay District into six subdistricts based on architectural characteristics, historical development patterns, and modern usage trends. This method has proven to be a useful portion of the Development Guidelines and in 2000 the study committee agreed that revised and updated subdistrict descriptions and goals should be included as part of the guidelines for a Harvard Square conservation district and for continued use in administering the Overlay District.

Because Harvard Square is such a diverse environment, defining the context of subdistricts is important both in developing long-range planning goals and in making determinations of appropriateness for alterations to the physical environment. The six subdistricts are:

- A. Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue
- B. Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square
- C. The Gold Coast
- D. Winthrop Square/JFK Street
- E. Brattle Square and Eliot Square
- F. Church and Palmer streets, Story Street, and the Brattle Arcade

Subdistricts do not have precise boundaries, as the characteristics of neighboring subdistricts tend to overlap. In considering some sites, the guidelines for more than one subdistrict should be considered together and weighed according to the individual needs of the site.

A description of the unique qualities of each subdistrict and specific goals for each follows. The description is organized with a historical and physical description, followed by a focused discussion on the treatment of public spaces and private sites. A site map accompanies each description. Specific goals for each subdistrict have been identified to help boards and applicants apply the general goals and guidelines of the larger district to the special needs and circumstances of a particular site. Revisions to this document include updating the discussions of private development sites, summarizing recent discussions for improvements of public spaces, expanding the discussion of site and architectural history, and reinforcing the recommendations for preservation of significant structures.

For a more detailed historical background, reference should also be made to the Cambridge Historical Commission's recent publication, *Building Old Cambridge: Architecture and Development*, which was published in 2016.

Subdistrict A: Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue

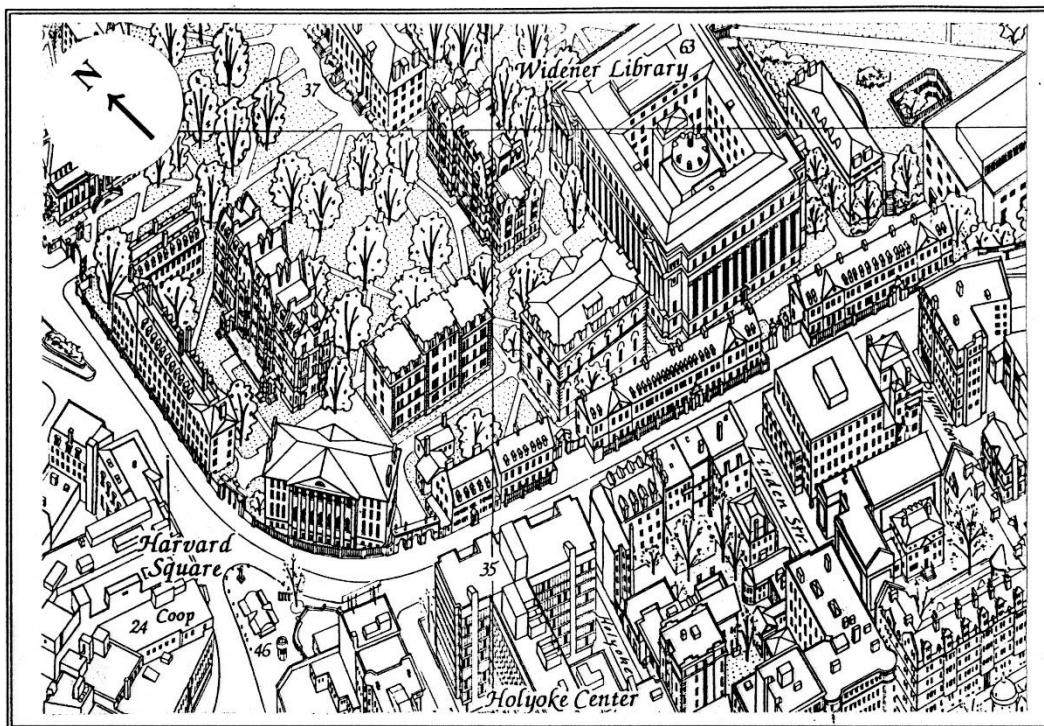


Fig. 12 Map of Subdistrict A

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Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the center of Harvard Square and the south side of Massachusetts Avenue from Church Street to Quincy Square. The area marks the intersection of town and college with Harvard Yard on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue and mixed-use commercial, office, and residential structures on the south side. The strong presence of the kiosk and the MBTA subway station reflect Harvard Square's long history as a transportation hub. In the early years of the Newtowne (later Cambridge) settlement, the area was an open space on the north end of the grid-patterned town, south of the Burial Ground, and adjacent to the highway to Lexington and Concord. By 1790, structures built in this area began to orient themselves toward the Yard. Development in Harvard Square has always been for mixed uses. Residences, college buildings, several meetinghouses, two courthouses, and a market building were constructed around the Square in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Three- to five-story structures built out to the sidewalk predominate the south and west sides of Massachusetts Avenue near Harvard Square. The historic structures facing the south and

west sides of the Square itself include College House (1832-70), the Harvard Cooperative Society (1924), the Abbot Building (1909), the Read Block (1796-1896), and the Cambridge Savings Bank (1923). Certain mid-twentieth-century structures, such as Holyoke Center (1962-66) and the Bank of America Bank (Harvard Trust Company) façade (1956), have attained their own architectural significance. (Although the architectural significance of Holyoke Center is acknowledged, another development of its size in the Square would be disastrous.) East of Holyoke Center, Massachusetts Avenue presents a practically continuous frontage of significant buildings, including William Hilliard's Bookstore (1827), the Porcellian Club (1890), Fairfax Hall (1869-84), the AD Club (1899), and Hampden Hall (1902). Apart from several Harvard clubs and former private dormitories, side streets contain such significant buildings as the former Cambridge Savings Bank on Dunster Street (1897), a former student boarding house at 5-7 Linden Streets (1839-90), and several small shops on Holyoke Street. The latter include a remodeled Stick Style house of 1846 (20), a particularly fine one-story cast stone store at 8-10, a Mid-Century Modern store at 22 (1956), and a one-story taxpayer at 24 (1963). This motley assortment of small buildings poses significant problems for preservation, but supports two restaurants, a clothier, and a hairdresser. Preservation efforts in this subdistrict should focus on the retention of the small retail storefronts that add vitality to the streetscape.

Public Spaces

All publicly-accessible open spaces on private and public properties should be preserved. The public space in the center of Harvard Square should be well maintained for the general enjoyment and safety of its pedestrian users. The materials and design of the public spaces in Harvard Square and Brattle Square were constructed in conjunction with the extension of the Red Line, and while they were a significant advance in the early 1980s they are now in part obsolete or deteriorated. The Community Development Department is now leading a planning process to renew the plaza and the kiosk, a designated landmark. Preservation guidelines for the kiosk include restoration of the roof and masonry elements and guidance for adaptive reuse.

When the Harvard Square Conservation District was being planned in the late 1990s a long-range plan, called "Polishing the Trophy," for public and private sidewalk, crosswalk, and lighting improvements throughout the Square had recently been funded by a combination of public and private resources. The study recorded existing conditions and made recommendations for improvements in most of the subdistricts, except Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square

and part of the Gold Coast. The improvements in the Harvard Square/Massachusetts Avenue subdistrict proposed by this study included sidewalk replacement in front of the Read Block and College House, a new crosswalk in front of Holyoke Center, and lighting improvements to Cambridge Savings Bank, Holyoke Center, and the Omphalos statue near the news kiosk. Most of these improvements have been made

Private Sites

Two late 20th century projects were evidence of the development potential of this subdistrict. In 1983 significant two mixed-use buildings of 1884 and 1889, one a brick private dormitory, were replaced by 1274-1290 Massachusetts Avenue. The architects of this building used red brick and granite trim in an attempt to be contextual, to mixed reviews. In 1994 the Cambridge Savings Bank proposed a mid-rise building at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Kennedy Street. After several years of intense controversy the Historical Commission agreed that preservation of the remaining wood frame buildings in the Square was a desirable preservation goal. The rehabilitation of the Read Block included restoration of the 1896 facade, renovation of the forward portions of the original structures, and construction of a new 3-story structure at the rear. The renovated space accommodates both retail and office uses.

Rehabilitation of existing structures should be carefully considered as a first alternative by developers. Historical photographs can often be valuable references during the design of facade restoration or rehabilitation projects. Investigation of the collections of the Historical Commission is a good starting point for this kind of historical research.

Retention of the small-scale retail environment, with narrow storefronts and interesting signs should be encouraged in this subdistrict. Careful attention should be paid to materials, storefront design, and signage in this area. The individually-protected 1907 Art Nouveau storefront at 1304 Massachusetts Avenue by Coolidge and Carlson is an example of exceptional storefront design. The unique lines, transparency, and high-quality materials of this storefront can be used as an example of a creative, contemporary approach to retail design in the district. Not every new storefront design in the Square can or should aim to be this unique, but it demonstrates the timelessness of an exceptional design.

Subdistrict B: Bow Street and Arrow Street/Putnam Square

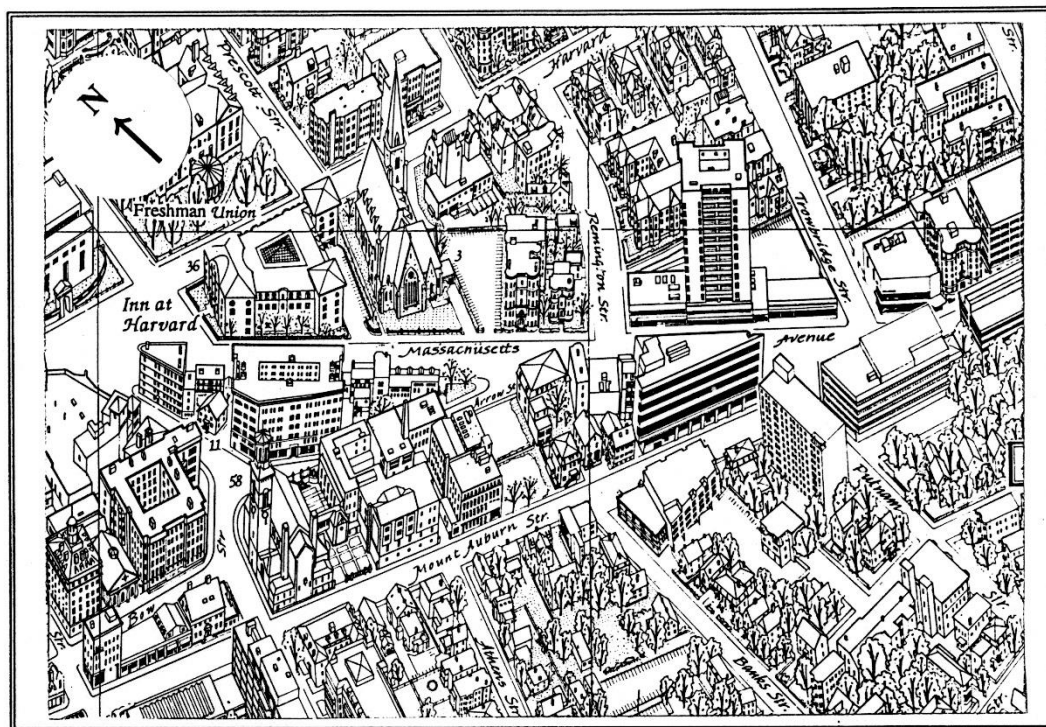


Fig. 13 Map of Subdistrict B

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Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the properties along Bow Street, Arrow Street, and along the converging lines of Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street, including Putnam Square. It is the easternmost edge of the Harvard Square Overlay District. Putnam Square and the eastern portions of Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street are not included within the boundaries of the Harvard Square Conservation District.

Buildings in this area include small residences, light industry, and churches. Though the industries are no longer active, the former Reversible Collar factory at 8-20 Arrow Street and 21-27 Mount Auburn Street is still a dynamic structure in this subdistrict. It was adaptively re-used for retail and office space in the late 1960s and was renovated through the federal tax act program in the mid-1980s. Putnam Square (which is in the Overlay District, but not in the Conservation District, became an office district in the 1970s. The Sundance Residences at 1075 Massachusetts Avenue (2011) required Historical Commission sign-off of a demolition permit for a one-story retail block and Planning Board approval of a Special Permit.

The highest structures in this subdistrict are the campanile of St. Paul's Catholic Church, the stone spire of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, and the residential building at 1105 Massachusetts Avenue. The locations of these towers correspond with the triangular boundaries of this subdistrict. The careful siting of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street allowed for the spire to be seen from several different viewpoints, thus making it a prominent landmark in historic and contemporary photographs until the construction of the former Inn at Harvard in 1990. Preservation of important sightlines should be considered here and elsewhere in the district.

The subdistrict contains two significant former private dormitories associated thematically with the Gold Coast, the flatiron building at 1218 Massachusetts Avenue (1891) and Brentford Hall at 1137 (1899). The massive Longfellow Court apartments (1916) at 1200, which originally had 89 units, is characteristic of the large apartment houses that followed completion of the subway in 1912. The small houses and stores that remain along the avenue vary in importance; the most significant are the wood row at 1156-66 (1858) and the brick row at 1130-34 (1869).

Bow Street contains another structure associated with a private dormitory, the former Quincy Square Garage (1906). The Cambridge Historical Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness for a two story addition in 2001, when it was converted to offices. At 5 Bow the former Bicycle Exchange building of 1901 was converted to an office building and clinic in 1993. Across the street, the Café Pamplona occupies an 1829 structure that was built as a store on Brattle Street and moved to this location in 1868. A Mansard roofed former student boarding house at 9 Bow (1885) is now a Harvard office building. The former residence and garage at 1131 Massachusetts Avenue (1893) on the corner of Remington Street was replaced with a replica that the Cambridge Historical Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness in 2007. The wildly heterogeneous nature of these blocks contributes to the rich urban fabric of the subdistrict.

The transition from Massachusetts Avenue to the smaller scale of the residential Riverside neighborhood is evident along Mount Auburn Street. This transition of mass, scale, and use complicated discussions for the development of the Zero Arrow Street site in the 1980s and '90s. The Harvard Square Advisory Committee worked with the developer, Gunwyn Company, through several designs and over a number of years to try to address the special needs of this site.

The remaining wood frame houses on the north side of Mt. Auburn (one of which was moved from the Gunwyn site) and along Mt. Auburn Street are significant survivors.

Public Spaces

The largest public space in this subdistrict is Quincy Square, which was redesigned and landscaped in 1997. The project's purpose was to enhance the area for pedestrians while maintaining vehicular access to all of the streets. The prominent location of the park also provided the designers the opportunity to create an attractive gateway to Harvard Square and Harvard Yard. This project was a particularly-successful collaboration between a landscape architect (The Halvorson Company) and an artist (David Phillips). The Quincy Square Design Review Committee reviewed the design during a long, and often contentious, community process. The design included plantings of trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers, and grasses along with stone walls, boulders and sculptures. Sidewalk improvements on the surrounding streets were also part of the total design concept.

Putnam Square, a very busy traffic intersection, did not contain many amenities for the pedestrian until 1998. The small island with a memorial plaque that is located in the middle of Putnam Square benefited from a new landscaping plan that uses grasses and other landscaping elements to make it a much more pleasant place.

The tip of land at the corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue was landscaped by the city in 1991 after an unsuccessful attempt by the abutting restaurant to privatize the use of the land.

Private Sites

The major development sites identified in the 1986 guidelines have since been developed. The former Inn at Harvard filled in the former Gulf gasoline station site and Zero Arrow Street was completed in 2004. The historically and architecturally significant 1906 garage concrete garage building at 1230 Massachusetts Avenue has been redeveloped with two new stories above a restored original facade.

The Old Cambridge Baptist Church spire and St. Paul's Catholic Church bell tower are important visual landmarks that should be respected by any new development. The development potential at St. Paul's Church was largely eliminated in the late 1980s, with the construction of a new choir school building.

Development or adaptive re-use proposals should recognize and be sensitive to the fact that a transition from commercial to residential uses occurs in this subdistrict.

A transition of building materials and scale is also evident at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Bow Street. The rare grouping of six small-scale frame and brick buildings at that intersection represents a 140-year span of residential and commercial building construction in Harvard Square. The earliest buildings in the cluster, 12 Bow Street (1829) and 1208 Massachusetts Avenue (1842) are examples of residential buildings that were later converted to commercial uses.

Denser development should be confined to Putnam Square. The quiet, residential character along Mount Auburn Street should be maintained, and the wood-frame structures there should be preserved.

Restoration and/or renovation potential exists in this subdistrict. Prime candidates include the Hong Kong restaurant at 1234-1238 Massachusetts Avenue, Longfellow Court at 1200 Massachusetts Avenue, and the frame and brick rows at 1156-1166 and 1168-1174 Massachusetts Avenue.

Subdistrict C: The Gold Coast

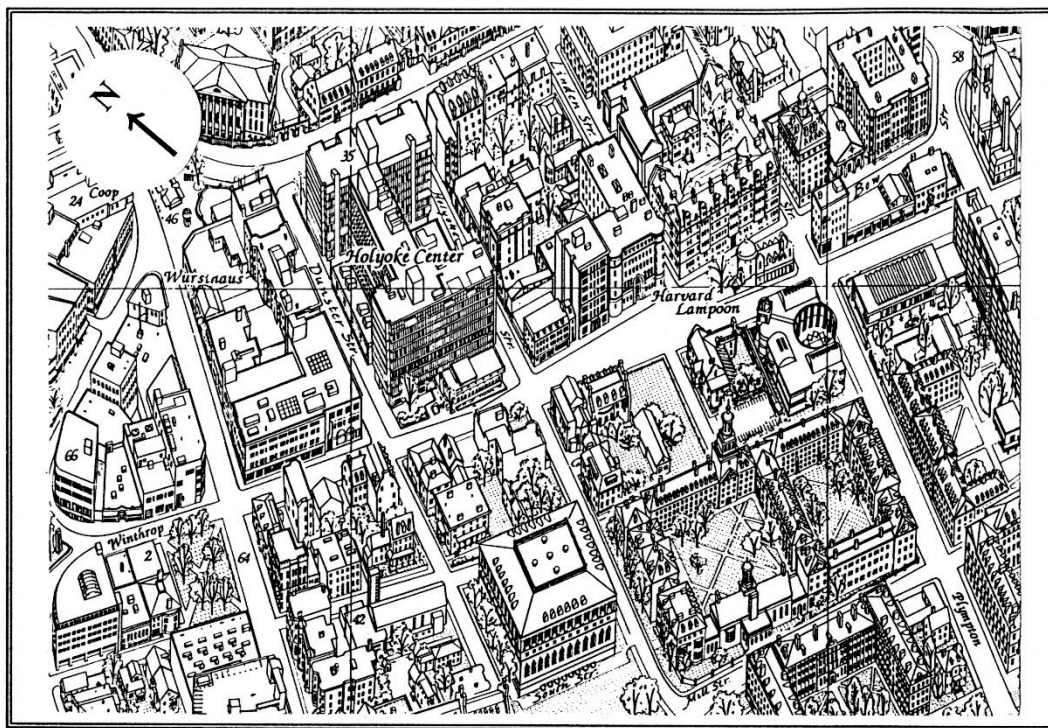


Fig. 14 Map of Subdistrict C

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Historical and Physical Description

The core of this subdistrict is Mt. Auburn Street from DeWolfe Street to Winthrop Park, although elements of the Gold Coast can be found on the side streets and as far away as Massachusetts Avenue. The name of the area reflects the affluent students for whom many private luxury dormitories and undergraduate clubs were constructed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The quality of the buildings' designs and materials matched the means of the private investors and their wealthy occupants, making the Gold Coast an area as rich in architectural merit as it was in assets.

The Gold Coast coalesced here in the 1880s and thrived until Harvard began requiring students to live in college housing in 1914. Many of the private dormitories were converted to apartments in the 1920s, but Claverly (1892), Randolph (1897), and Westmorly (1898) halls, plus the East Apthorp house (1760) and one building built by the university, Russell Hall (1931), now comprise Harvard's Adams House. Similar buildings, such as Ridgely Hall (1904, 65 Mt.

Auburn), Apley Court (1897, 16 Holyoke Street), and Drayton Hall (1901, 48 Kennedy Street), have long since been converted to apartments but retain their original character.

Undergraduate clubs are another striking feature of the Gold coast. The centerpiece is the Harvard Lampoon (1909), but the Fly (1896, 2 Holyoke Place), Phoenix-S.K. Club (1915, 72 Mt. Auburn Street); Iroquois Club (74 Mt. Auburn); Spee Club (1931, 76 Mt. Auburn); and D.U. Club (45 Dunster Street) are notable for their architecture and siting, usually close to the street with walled gardens. Somewhat detached are the Fox Club (44 Kennedy Street) and the former Pi Eta Club (1908, 89 Winthrop Street) on Winthrop Square. The design of the Harvard Hillel Center (1993, 56 Mt. Auburn Street) respects the scale and materials of the Gold Coast clubs.

Because the Gold Coast evolved next to the early village it incorporates several buildings that illustrate the diversity of social and economic activity there. The Stickney-Winn house at 43-45 Mt. Auburn Street (1846) is associated with the development of the William Winthrop farm; a 1928 addition by Harvard's Speakers Club incorporated it into the Gold Coast. The four-story Hycent Purcell tenement at 30 Plympton (1889) was probably built for working families. Houses at 78 Mt. Auburn (1839, converted to a club 1914) and 46 Dunster (1822, converted to a club in 1878) far predate the Gold Coast. The Garage (Mt. Auburn between Dunster and Kennedy streets) is a transportation-related structure that illustrates the adaptability of historic masonry construction. The core is a former street railway stable built in 1860 that became a service garage and battery-charging station for electric automobiles in 1900. It was incorporated into the Harvard Square Garage in 1924, and the combined structures received an additional top floor during a conversion to shops in 1972. On the Gold Coast but not closely associated with it, the former Manter Hall School (1927, 73 Mt. Auburn Street) displays a stripped version of the Georgian Revival style that became popular for commercial construction in the 1920s. The low-rise strip at 45-49 Mt. Auburn Street (1926) offers little of architectural significance, although it was the original site of the Club 47, a folk music venue in the 1960s. The Harvard Library Services building (2003, 90 Mount Auburn Street) was a compromise design after the Historical Commission rejected an Expressionist project by Viennese architect Hans Hollein as incongruous "because of its aggressive indifference to its surroundings." St. Paul's Church (1915-24), which anchors the east end of the subdistrict, replaced its significant 1889 school in 1989 with a new building that includes a European-styled courtyard accommodating both cars and pedestrians.

Parallel to Mt. Auburn, Winthrop Street and Holyoke Place display elements of the early village as well as buildings associated with the Gold Coast. Wood frame houses at 41 Winthrop (ca. 1846), 53 Dunster (1841), and 96 and 98 Winthrop Street (1846 and 1806, respectively), along with those slightly further afield at 69 and 71-77 Dunster Street (1829 and 1894) and 17 South Street (1824) are critically important survivors of an era before university expansion erased much of the 19th century village. Harvard club buildings here, including the Owl Club (1905, 30 Holyoke Street) and the Alpha Sigma Phi Club (1900, 54 Dunster Street) are somewhat larger, but not out of scale with their surroundings. Tenements at 65-67 and 69 Winthrop (1887 and 1894) served working class families. The University Lutheran Church at 66 Winthrop Street (1950) is not out of scale with the neighborhood and provides some open space to mitigate the looming Malkin Center (1929, not in district).

The architectural character of this subdistrict is still dominated by these dormitories and clubs. For the most part, commercial establishments remain oriented toward Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn Street.

Public Spaces

Since the establishment of the Conservation District the city has created a new public space, Halbertstam Square, at the intersection of Bow and Mt. Auburn Street. As recommended in 2000, alterations to the landscape and transportation plan respected the historic street pattern. Street trees, an important element in this dense subdistrict, have been only sparsely planted because of the longstanding animosity of the Lampoon toward the City. Winthrop Square Park was significantly expanded and restored to its ca. 1870 layout in the 1980s and is now one of the most heavily used open spaces in the city.

Private courtyards in the Gold Coast subdistrict, though not open to the public, provide a welcome relief to the otherwise dense area. Property owners should be encouraged to preserve these spaces and upgrade the paving and landscaping materials therein. Exemptions to parking requirements could be offered, where necessary, to ensure the preservation of these urban green spaces. Another important open space in this subdistrict is the open lot at 68 Mount Auburn Street, owned by Harvard University. The lawn provides the only expanse of green along this stretch of Mount Auburn Street.

The Polishing the Trophy study recommended new brick crosswalks on Mount Auburn Street at the intersections of Dunster Street and Holyoke Street and new street lighting on Mount

Auburn, Dunster, and Holyoke streets. Brick crosswalks are no longer installed by the city, but Mt. Auburn between Kennedy and Dunster has been narrowed to widen the sidewalk on the north side and new lighting installed.

Private Sites

Because they are assessed as commercial enterprises, many Harvard clubs donated preservation easements to the City in the 1980s, granting review of exterior alterations to the Historical Commission. Some clubs have rented space to commercial enterprises, but adapting their buildings to meet accessibility requirements is challenging. Pressure on club membership by University policies adopted in 2017 may result in some properties being offered for sale. In most if not all cases, the significance of their architecture and their associated open spaces should be recognized when evaluating proposals for alterations.

There are several potential development sites in the subdistrict. The commercial buildings at 45½-49 Mount Auburn Street seem to have the greatest potential for redevelopment. Vacant sites include a privately-owned parking lot on Holyoke Place next to (and apparently controlled by) the Fly Club; vacant lots at 35 and 45 Winthrop Street at the corner of Holyoke, and a parking lot and open space surrounding 17 South Street, all owned by the University. The Harvard community garden lot at the corner of Holyoke Place also accommodates a nondescript electrical switch house (1926). Development proposals for these sites should reflect the traditional scale and materials of their surroundings.

Subdistrict D: Winthrop Square/JFK Street

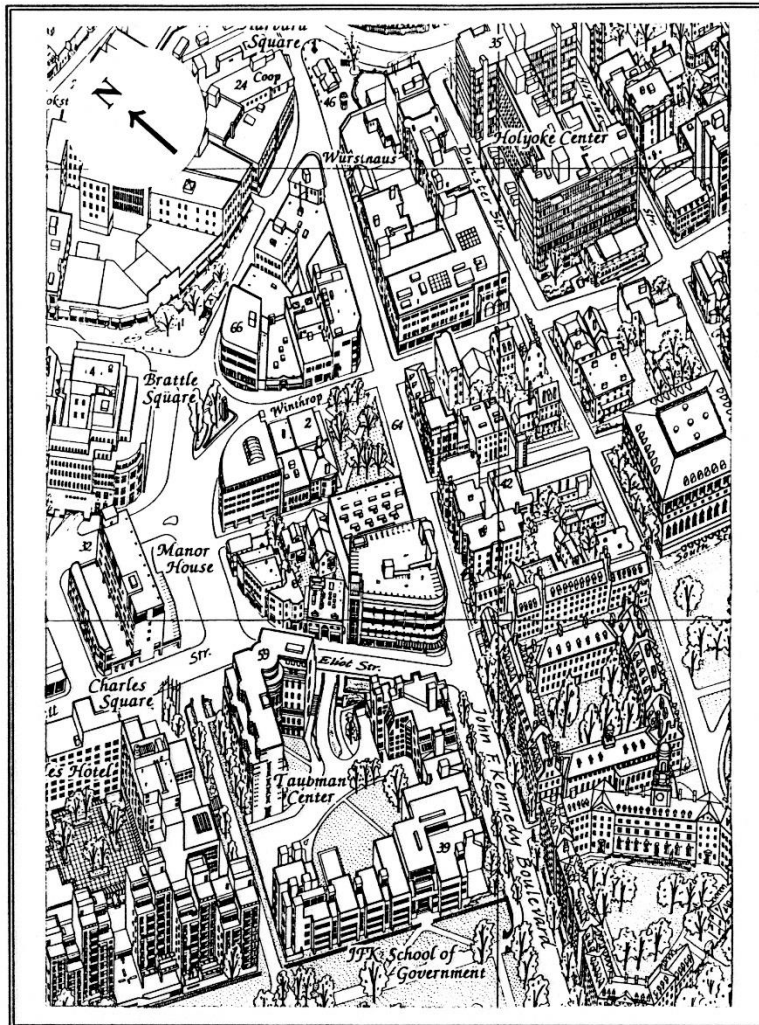


Fig. 15 Map of Subdistrict D

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Historical and Physical Description

John F. Kennedy Street (formerly Boylston Street) is the primary entry into Harvard Square from Memorial Drive and Boston. The subdistrict includes the properties along JFK Street from Eliot and South streets to Massachusetts Avenue. This subdistrict includes an eclectic mix of architecture that spans 200 years of Cambridge history. At the center is Winthrop Square, a house lot of the original settlement that was never built upon and became a public market place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The buildings around Winthrop Square and on the northern section of JFK Street represent a mixture of frame and masonry construction. Most have been converted to commercial use if they were not built for that purpose.

The built environment along JFK Street near the river has undergone a dramatic transformation in the twentieth century. Harvard's Kirkland House and Eliot House, were constructed in 1913 and 1930, respectively, and replaced some light industries and a generating station of the Boston Elevated Railway. The Kennedy School of Government, constructed in the 1970s and 1980s, replaced the shops and yards of the Cambridge subway and dominates the west side of JFK Street. The John Hicks house (1760) is now attached to Kirkland House, which like all the Harvard River Houses is protected by an agreement between the Cambridge Historical Commission and Harvard University.

The Harvard Square Conservation District begins on the north sides of Eliot and South streets. On the east side the first block is anchored by the former Sigma Alpha Epsilon clubhouse (1929). Two double three-deckers at 52-54 and 56 Kennedy (1884 and 1903, respectively) have contained ground floor and lower-level shops for many years. To improve their visibility a former owner covered them with aluminum siding in alternating bands of gray and maroon (the school colors of M.I.T.) in 1970. While the Conservation District cannot regulate color, it is hoped that the owners of these iconic buildings will maintain their quirky identity. The Galeria Mall (1974) and the Harvard Square Garage (1984) across Kennedy Street offer less to the street experience. The Galeria is soon to be expanded vertically under the terms of a Certificate of Appropriateness issued in 2014.

On the next block of Kennedy Street, the Fox Club at 44 Kennedy (1906), Drayton Hall at 46 (1901), and a brick and limestone building at 50 Kennedy (1892) were all built to house or entertain Harvard undergraduates. Only 50 Kennedy contains street-level retail activity.

The block of Kennedy Street between Mt. Auburn and Harvard Square offer the densest retail environment in the vicinity. Buildings on the west side were purpose-built for retail, with offices above in two cases. On the corner of Mt. Auburn, 29-41 was originally built in 1971 and expanded upward in 1979; although it is the work of a distinguished architect, its bland modernism is only functional. At the other end of the block, the iconic and dignified Abbot Building (1909) anchors the corner. The former Corcoran's Department Store (1948 façade) between them will soon be replaced with a taller mixed-use structure,

The east side of this block is much more varied. The Garage (1923) became a retail mall in 1972 with minimal exterior alterations; the building always had storefronts on Kennedy Street. Next door, 30 Kennedy is literally a hybrid; constructed in 1962, when the city expected to

widen Kennedy Street, it presents a false front to passersby; the real façade, built on the then-required setback, is buried about ten feet inside the structure. Read Hall (1886) was built as a private dormitory with four Syrian-arched storefronts; the restoration of three of them in recent years was a victory for the Conservation District. At the corner, the restored Read Block still offers the optimal retail environment it was designed to provide in 1896.

Public Spaces

Winthrop Square has been renovated about 1990. A ten-foot wide strip of Kennedy Street was returned to turf and grass, the pathways through the park were returned to an earlier configuration, and a new granite post-and-rail fence was installed along the perimeter. A public artwork, designed by Carlos Dorrien, stands at the center of the park.

As suggested by a 1986 study, passenger vehicles have been excluded from the block of Winthrop Street between JFK Street and Eliot Square.

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study include repair of sidewalks along much of JFK Street, new brick crosswalks at the intersections of Mount Auburn Street and Eliot Street, and new street lights along the length of JFK Street. Except for the brick crosswalks, all of this has been accomplished.

Private Sites

The mixed-use redevelopment of Winthrop Square is a model of restoration, adaptive reuse, and sensitive infill construction. The relocation of the Chapman Heirs' House to face Winthrop Square and the renovation of the Pi Eta Club (Grendel's) at 91 Winthrop Street secures the setting of this important open space. Potential development sites in this subdistrict include the Banker properties at 12-14 Eliot Street, which were proposed for redevelopment in the late 1980s. The mixed-use structure at 16-18 Eliot Street, built as a placeholder after a fire in 1983, has been approved for additional height. The small houses at 8 Eliot Street (1794 and 1840) and on Winthrop Street are underdeveloped, but are largely protected as individual landmarks or through preservation restrictions. The 18th century wall that runs behind the properties on Winthrop, Eliot, and South Streets is a critically-important artifact of early development in Harvard Square and should be protected and exposed to public view in any future development.

Storefront and signage designs vary widely along JFK Street. While the bold remodeling of the triple-deckers at 52-56 JFK Street with two-color striped siding is valued by many as a product of its era and for its eccentricity, similar treatment of other wood-frame buildings in the

Square is not encouraged. The house at 98 Winthrop Street (1806) is an important historical structure. The Historical Commission has been careful to protect and maintain the original structure through several alterations during its conversion to a restaurant and dispensary.

Aggressive signage can be noted throughout the subdistrict, from the eclectic collection seen on the JFK Street triple-deckers to the integral signage program developed for The Garage. New proposals for signage should follow the general design guidelines for the district, but it would not be out of character for signs in this subdistrict to be more dynamic than in the quieter subdistricts of the Square such as the Gold Coast.

Subdistrict E: Brattle Square and Eliot Square

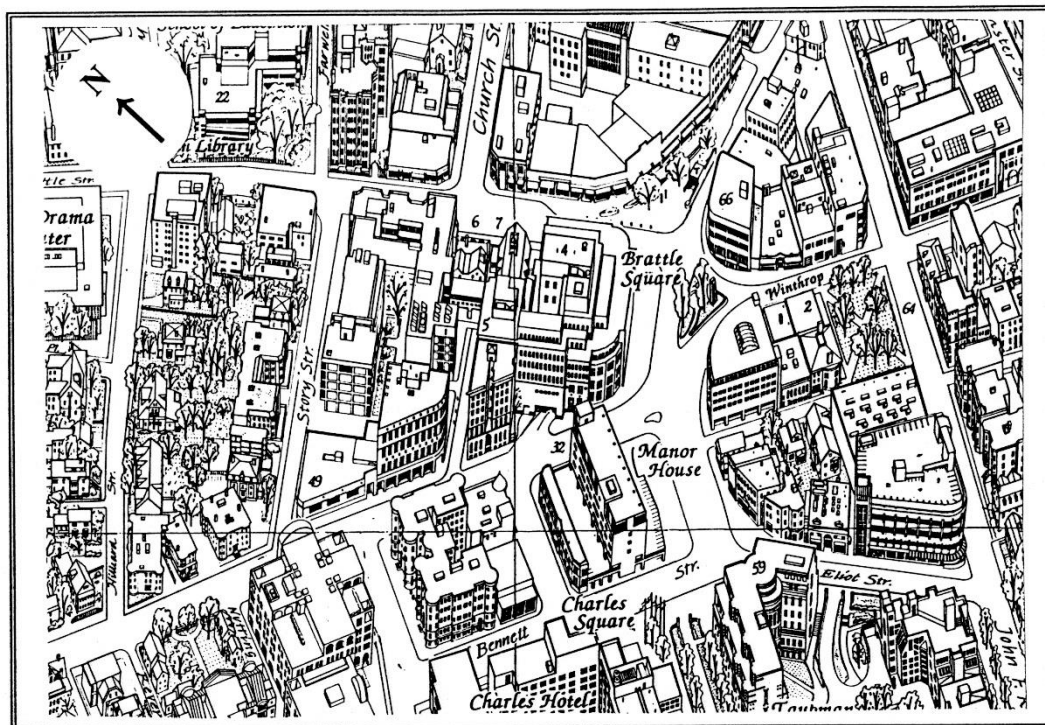


Fig. 16 Map of Subdistrict E

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Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes the properties along Brattle Street from Harvard Square to Church Street, Mt. Auburn from Kennedy Street to Story Street, Story Street itself, Eliot Street, and the west end of Winthrop Street.

Brattle Street existed from the earliest days of settlement as the main road west from the village. The first block followed the Town Creek, which ran through Harvard Yard, across Harvard Square and around the base of the hill on which Newtowne was founded. Brattle remained a country road until after the opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793, when commercial activity began to spill over from Harvard Square. In 1804, Mount Auburn Street was extended west, through the former estate of William Brattle. By 1840, it seemed that a neighborhood of homes would be built near the Brattle mansion (42 Brattle Street), but the character of Brattle Square changed when the Brattle House, a 106-room hotel, was constructed there in 1849. Brattle Square, Palmer Street, and Church Street became the favored locations for stables, blacksmiths, carriage shops, and saloons. The hotel soon failed, and the building became the University Press printing plant.

After World War I, the Harvard Square shopping district expanded to include Brattle Square, where a new post office was built in 1919, and the Sage family built a Georgian-style market on the corner of Church Street in 1926. George Dow and Harry Stearns assembled most of the remaining frontage on the north side of Brattle Street between Palmer and Church streets, which was occupied by a collection of storefronts and one substantial building at 11-25 Brattle Street. By 1941, the Dows had removed the upper stories of 17-25 Brattle Street and refaced and rebuilt the entire row with a cast-stone Moderne facade.

Brattle Street begins with the iconic Abbot Building (1909) on the south side and the Brattle Building at 1-8 Brattle, George Dow's first venture in the square, opposite. The Abbot Building established the Georgian Revival style in Harvard Square, and the Brattle Building (1913) was the first to be built after the Harvard Square Business Men's Association recommended that it be adopted for new commercial construction, as subsequently seen at the Cambridge Savings Bank and the Harvard Cooperative Society (both 1924; see Harvard Square, above).

After these two buildings the south side of Brattle Street lapses into a layered eclecticism. The former Corcoran's Department Store (originally a stable built about 1875) displays a stripped-Georgian red brick facade applied in 1947, and beyond it at 18-24 Brattle an older industrial building displays a Georgian facade applied in 1924 by the same architects that designed the Abbot, Brattle, and Savings Bank buildings. Next door the Dickson Brothers Hardware building continues the theme, occupying a mid-19th-century building with a Georgian facade added in 1910. All of these are significant representatives of this period of the commercial development of Harvard Square, but the adjoining New Hadley Building at 28-36 Brattle Street – which replaced a 1930 Georgian Revival building in 1974 - was built at a time when the zoning code encouraged split-level retail on the ground floors. This configuration has been only barely sustainable for commercial purposes and need not be preserved in its present form.

The Moderne buildings on the north side of Brattle Street reflect the next period of commercial development in Harvard Square and convey another strong facet of Harvard Square's overall architectural identity. George Dow (1878-1965) and Harry Stearns (1874-1930) formed a real estate trust in about 1913 to develop the Georgian Revival building at 1-8 Brattle Street, and in so doing helped establish an architectural identity for Harvard Square. Twenty years later,

Dow as trustee of the Dow-Stearns Trust initiated another effort that used contemporary architecture to recreate Brattle Square as a new commercial center.

George Dow and a partner, Harry Stearns, owned a motley collection of stores along Brattle between Palmer and Church streets. Stearns died in 1930, and in the midst of the Depression Dow set out to develop Brattle Square as a suburban shopping center with modern buildings, plentiful parking, and an attractive array of retailers. Richard (Tony) Dow graduated from Harvard in 1935 and went to work for his father. They first removed the unproductive upper stories of 17–25 Brattle Street and gave the entire row an up-to-date Moderne facade in cast stone. They assembled a mix of retailers that would appeal to Old Cambridge housewives and made overtures for a Filene's department store that opened instead in Belmont in 1956 (*Building Old Cambridge*, p. 148).

The Art Moderne style that Dow chose for his new venture was primarily executed by Cambridge architect William L. Galvin, who also designed several other buildings in the same style that have since been demolished. The buildings at 17-45½ Brattle represent an important period in commercial architecture in Cambridge. The scale and rhythm of the storefronts make an excellent reference to inform any new retail construction. Alterations, additions, or possible new construction on the site must respect the context and scale of the buildings and their surroundings.

Eliot Square, the intersection of Mt. Auburn and Eliot streets, was once the site of a large municipal building that was razed in 1936. Twenty years later, the Harvard Motor Inn was built over the public parking lot on that site; it represents a creative use of the site, but is not otherwise particularly distinguished. Similarly, the site of the University Press, which was demolished in 1896, was not fully reoccupied until One Brattle Square was completed in 1991. The One Brattle Square building was designed with multiple street-level entrances to the retail stores, but most of those entrances have been closed off by the retailers. Future re-developments should respect the historical tradition of narrow storefronts and multiple entrances along a large facade.

To the south and southwest, the Kennedy School of Government and Charles Square occupy the former MBTA subway and trolley yards; they are not in the Conservation District, and are fully built-out. The north side of Eliot Street contains several significant wood frame commercial buildings, including 8 Eliot (1839), 10-14 Eliot (1869), and 14A Eliot (1900), that are one of the largest groupings of wood-frame buildings remaining in the neighborhood. These buildings are also important for the context they provide for the historic retaining wall between

Winthrop and Eliot streets. Demolition should not be allowed; renovations should be accompanied by siding restoration. Mt. Auburn Street west of Eliot Square has been almost fully built out in recent years, and the remaining older buildings restored. The Craigie (1897) is protected by non-profit ownership as affordable housing, and Waverly Hall (1902) and the Conductor's Building (1912) were completely renovated in 2015-18. Further changes to these buildings should respect their historic character.

Public Spaces

In the 1980s the curve of Brattle Street was narrowed to form a T intersection and to create the plaza and sidewalks in front of the Brines Block. The historic street pattern is still discernable by the strong visual effect of the curve of the buildings of the Brines Block. This curve should be maintained in future. The terraced public space created during expansion of the Red Line in 1979-83 is a vibrant part of the Square, providing space for street performances and a buffer for pedestrians.

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study include new brick sidewalks at the intersection of Eliot and Bennett streets, and at either end of Story Street, and street lighting improvements throughout the subdistrict. These improvements and more have been accomplished.

Private Sites

In 1997, the study committee analyzed two potential development sites in this subdistrict: the Harvard Motor Inn and the Brines Block (17-45½ Brattle Street). The committee reviewed schematic drawings that depicted the maximum build-out potential allowed under current zoning, which remains unchanged in 2018. Suggestions for the composition of the design guidelines grew out of that discussion. The 1986 goals for this subdistrict outlined ways to maximize the pedestrian experience in the square:

In general, all of these projects should be built to the property line, respecting the vitality of the sidewalk and plaza spaces. Improved mid-block connections, such as at Mifflin Place, would be welcome as complementary to the subdistrict's public open spaces in the area.

Subdistrict F: Church Street, Story Street, and the Brattle Arcade

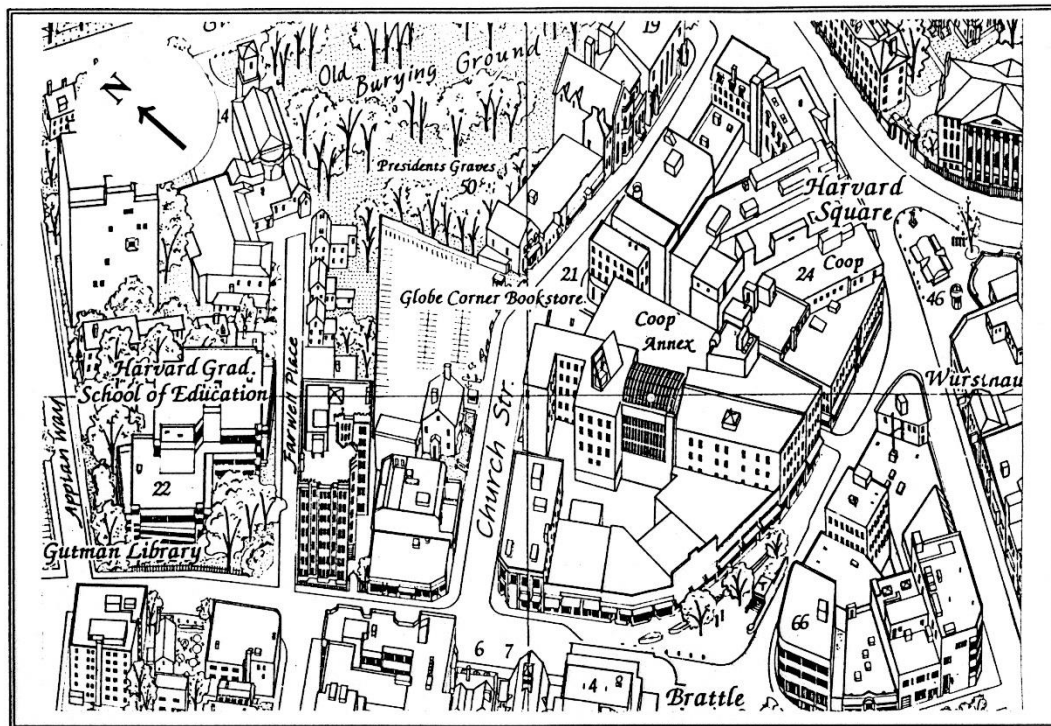


Fig. 17 Map of Subdistrict F

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Historical and Physical Description

This subdistrict includes both sides of Church Street, Brattle Street as far as Farwell Place, Palmer Street, Story Street, and the Brattle Arcade.

Church Street presents several important stories in the evolution of Harvard Square, and an equal number of challenges. It was once a dead-end alley off Massachusetts Avenue. Both Palmer Street and Church Street in the nineteenth century were home to stables, blacksmiths, carriage shops, and saloons. When Church was widened along its south side in 1926 the buildings fronting it were either razed or lost their original facades. This occurred almost simultaneously with the construction of the Harvard Square Theater behind College house, which created a blank wall occupying most of the first block off the avenue. The same project exposed a service alley behind 17-45½ Brattle Street. Across the street, the Church Street Garage replaced a livery stable in 1912, and was itself razed in 1978 to create the present parking lot. The blank wall of the theater, the service alley, and the parking lot present significant challenges, but despite them Church Street has developed a significant retail scene that is more intimate than Harvard Square proper or Brattle Square.

The north side of Church Street from Massachusetts Avenue to the Church Street parking lot and the northern half of Farwell Place are located in the Old Cambridge Historic District, but in practice the Cambridge Historical Commission administers this area in the same fashion as the Harvard Square Conservation District.

The sites and buildings of greatest significance in and adjoining this small subdistrict are the First Church Unitarian, the Old Burying Ground, the Torrey Hancock House/Cambridge School of Architecture building (53 Church Street), and a former police station at 31-33 Church Street (now a Starbucks).

The industrial character of the subdistrict has been successfully translated to retail uses. The former carriage factory at 26 Church Street (1857) has been renovated and is now occupied by office, a shop, and Club Passim. A brick police station constructed at 31 Church Street in 1864 became a carriage factory and is now occupied by a coffee shop and a hair salon. A similar fire station at 27 Church was razed in 1922 and replaced by a service garage, which in turn was repurposed as a restaurant in 1949. Removal of the stucco cladding in 2001 restored the original brick façade but also revealed the granite lintel of Engine 1. A four-story factory at 23 Church was reduced to one story in 1936 and given an Art Moderne façade designed by William L. Galvin. At Brattle Street, retail shops line both sides of the street in structures designed in 1926 (the former Sage Building) and 1949.

Palmer Street once had a similar character to Church Street, but the expansion of the Harvard Coop and the Harvard Trust Company in the 1960s caused the removal of several former workshops. A controversial proposal to close Palmer Street entirely in the 1960s was defeated by community opposition, and the street was paved with granite blocks and brick sidewalks in 1964-67. This urban design improvement added interest to this narrow side street, though more retail storefronts would help enliven it.

Until the mid-1960s, both sides of Story Street were entirely residential; the buildings were mostly single family houses that had been converted to rooming houses. Over the next 35 years several development projects almost completely transformed the block bounded by Story, Brattle and Mt. Auburn streets, creating a new pedestrian passageway, the Brattle Arcade. Except for the William Brattle house (1727) and the Brattle Theater (1889) and one three-decker on Mifflin Place, the block has been entirely redeveloped. The Arcade, which was unplanned at the

beginning, evolved into a network of passageways between Brattle and Mt. Auburn streets; replicating these passageways became a planning goal for future Harvard Square developments. Future project reviews in this area should maintain and enhance the pedestrian experience.

The west side of Story Street contains several wood-frame residential buildings. It is important that these buildings be maintained because the street is a transition point from the mixed-use character of Harvard Square to the primarily-residential nature of the Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District. The siting of 127 Mount Auburn Street (17 Story Street, an important mansion of 1846), should be respected.

Brattle Street west of Brattle Square is an eclectic mix of architecture, ranging from the Brattle House and theater to the split-level retail and office buildings at 44 and 46 Brattle Street. Small shops predominate on the north side of the street as far as 51 Brattle, and are unlikely to extend further. The Blacksmith House (1808) and the 1946 Brattle Arms apartment house bookend the district on the west.

Public Spaces

The recommendations made by the Polishing the Trophy study for this area include sidewalk replacement on Church, Palmer, and Brattle streets, new brick crosswalks at the intersection of Church and Brattle streets, and new street lighting along Church, Palmer, and Brattle streets. The sidewalks along the south side of Church Street were successfully widened about 2010; sidewalks in the north side are still too narrow for a successful pedestrian experience.

Private Sites

The Church Street parking lot, which is owned by Harvard University, is clearly a potential development site. The Torrey Hancock House and the attached former Cambridge School of Architecture, which is also owned by the University, are important in the history of women's professional education. The zoning here is Business A, with a 45-foot height limit. Any new development on the parking lot site should emphasize retail storefronts, and the mass should be broken up to avoid a severe street presence on the expansive site. The architecture of a new development should take cues from the scale, massing, and setbacks of the historic structures on either side of the lot. Special consideration should be given to the development's relationship to the Old Burying Ground and the smaller-scale residences on Farwell Place.