

Cosgrove, Marybeth

From: Carole Perrault <caroleperrault66@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:13 PM
To: City Council; Lopez, Donna; Burks, Sarah
Subject: LandmarkDesignation: Harvard Square Kiosk

[Donna please include this as a 'communication' for the 10.31 City Council Meeting. Sarah please send it to the CHC Chair and Members before the 11.3 CHC Hearing on the Kiosk. Thank you both.]

October 27, 2016

Dear Cambridge City Councilors: I urge you to encourage the City Manager to support the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) in initiating a Landmark Study on the Harvard Square Kiosk.

Dear Chair and Members of the Cambridge Historical Commission: I urge you to vote to initiate a Landmark Study for the Harvard Square Kiosk, at the upcoming November 3 Hearing of the CHC.

WHY THESE REQUESTS:

1. **GOOD STEWARDSHIP.** The Harvard Square Kiosk merits this attentive study that will look at its construction history, its developmental history, establish boundaries, and provide specific recommendations for its long-term preservation, including the recommendation to designate it as a Protected Landmark in Cambridge. It constitutes good stewardship to initiate such a study.

2. **LANDMARK STUDY'S VALUE.** Attentive and scholarly study will provide a detailed accounting of the Harvard Square Kiosk's character-defining features, define a period of significance and a period of treatment, and provide clear direction on its preservation and protection over the long-term. I have learned, as an architectural conservator by profession, that we often have preconceived notions of how a building's history should inform treatment. It is only when we carefully look at the long history of a structure that we can more fully understand its salient components and identify those worthy of being preserved. A holistic and interdisciplinary approach can inform the treatment of not only the building, but the cultural landscape upon which it sits and is a part of. Additionally, it can inform on how interior circulation might be best designed to reflect significant features of past uses and design and how the history, understood as a continuum of time, can inform the spirit of the treatment for the present and the future, while respecting the past.

3. **A UNIQUE PUBLIC SQUARE.** Its place at the intersection of Harvard University and Cambridge's central commercial zone, the Harvard Square Kiosk's plaza is the supreme public space, the hub, the epicenter, of our city. This plaza as a public space is unique. Seeking cookie-cutter placemaking and props from other places, does not serve the Harvard Square Kiosk's uniqueness well. For example, Times Square as a template for the Kiosk is misguided from many perspectives. There needs to be a linking of the past, through the present, to the future, rather than an erasure of the past by sanitizing it or shifting its identity by using models of distant places that lack commonality of spirit. Focusing on the "uniqueness of our local heritage in its context" benefits our citizens, our university community, and our tourism culture.

4. **IDENTITY AND MEMORY OF PLACE.** Identity of place should be a component of the Landmark Study—the associative, symbolic, cultural, socio-economic, political, aesthetic, educational, and technological history that are integral to the understanding of the Kiosk's significance in not only a local context, but a regional, a national, and a global context. This identity of place needs to be captured and used in celebrating the integrity of the cultural landscape of which it is a part.

5. SCHOLARLY SUPPORT. Professional architectural and cultural heritage historians, scholars, and designers have spoken out that such a study and effort to designate the Harvard Square Kiosk as a Protected Landmark in Cambridge is long overdue and an essential planning tool for any work going forward.

6. POPULIST SUPPORT. Over a 1000 individuals—from near and far—for whom the Harvard Square Kiosk has had some meaning in their lives, have spoken in the circulating online (and paper) petition. You only need to read through the volume of comments that are featured on the [change.org](https://www.change.org) petition to realize the value attributed to the Kiosk, as it occupies its significant tangible place of physicality and intangible place of cultural spirit, at the epicenter of Harvard Square. It is, if you will, the proverbial “witness tree,” to the changing socio-economic and cultural climate in the Square—an emblematic place of passing, being, meeting-up, protesting, and celebrating.

7. CONSERVATION DISTRICT GOALS. A significant reason that a Landmark Study be initiated on the Harvard Square Kiosk is because the goals of the Harvard Square Conservation District are flawed in multiple ways. The selection of goals per case is often riddled by arbitrariness and often puts preservation at a disadvantage. (See my September 12 letter to the City Council regarding Policy Order #18: Protecting Harvard Square.) Specific recommendations should be identified in the Landmark Study that celebrate the preservation of the Harvard Square Kiosk’s salient character-defining features and cultural heritage based on an informed and scholarly study of its history.

SUMMARY. I, too, signed the [change.org](https://www.change.org) petition to Landmark the Harvard Square Kiosk and will close with the online comments I made when signing that petition:

I heartily support Landmarking the Harvard Square Kiosk. This action, and others like it, are about much more than the preservation of bricks and mortar. They are about what we value as a community, who gets to decide what those values are, and how those values are translated to future generations through the traces we leave behind.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sent from Carole's iPhone