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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER  
Assistant City Manager for  
Community Development

BETH RUBENSTEIN  
Deputy Director for  
Community Development

**TO:** Robert W. Healy, City Manager

**FROM:** Susan B. Schlesinger, Asst. City Mgr. For Community Development

**RE:** Council Order #24, dated December 22, 1997,  
Public Presentations for Harvard University Knafel Center Project

**DATE:** January 7, 1998

**Project Description:** Harvard University's Faculty of Arts & Sciences has announced their intention to construct a new classroom and office building located on the "Gund Block," the area surrounded by Sumner Road, Cambridge Street, Quincy Street and Kirkland Street (see attached map). The proposed structure would include approximately 80,000 square feet, 25,000 square feet of which will be below grade. The building would house a relocated Government Department, as well as expand the offices of the Center for International Affairs now found in adjacent Coolidge Hall. Other facilities proposed include a conference center for meetings of up to 100 persons, a replacement for the café presently located in Gund Hall, library space and a centralized loading area for Harvard's Gund Block properties. (See attached letter dated October 10, 1997 from Prof. Kenneth Shepsle describing the project.)

Harvard University owns all properties on the Gund Block, with the exception of the Swedenborg Church. Cambridge and Quincy Streets are primarily institutional in character and serve as major arterial streets. The portion of Kirkland Street adjacent to the Gund Block houses significant historic and institutional buildings, serving as a transition to the adjoining residential neighborhood. Sumner Road while housing a mix of residential and institutional uses remains primarily residential in character, acting as an important buffer between Harvard and the neighborhood.

**Project Status:** Harvard has yet to submit any permit applications for the project. GSD staff have developed a series of pre-schematic plans for the project. Harvard plans to hire an architect early in 1998. The University held a public meeting about the project on October 27 and has agreed to hold additional meetings to inform the neighborhood and to receive comments from the public. The next such meeting is planned for late winter/early spring and will review concept plans produced by the architect.

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January 7, 1998

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**Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District:** Most of the project site, including the houses at 34 and 38 Kirkland Street, 1727 Cambridge Street, and 3, 7, 11-15, and 17 Sumner Road, lies within the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD). The Mid Cambridge NCD Commission's ordinance contains general objectives that direct the Commission to avoid excessive infill, to encourage new construction that complements existing buildings, to encourage preservation of neighborhood buildings, to protect National Register structures, and to enhance the economic vitality of the neighborhood.

A building permit for alterations to structures with non-conforming uses or for new construction, demolition, or relocation of structures cannot be obtained in the Mid Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District without a certificate indicating the NCD Commission's approval. The NCD Commission must issue a certificate within 45 days of receiving an application, unless the applicant agrees to an extension to allow continued review of the project. The Mid Cambridge NCD Commission's deliberations take place at a public hearing, notice of which is advertised to the public two weeks in advance and in writing to all abutting property owners and tenants. Appeals of a decision of the NCD Commission can be made to the Cambridge Historical Commission and must be made within 21 days of filing of the decision with the City Clerk.

**Historic Commission:** Alterations to or construction of Harvard-owned structures in the Mid Cambridge NCD that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are exempt from review by the Mid Cambridge NCD Commission. Properties in this category include 34 and 38 Kirkland Street. Pursuant to a 1986 agreement between the University and the Historical Commission, any alteration of these houses would be subject to the approval of the Historical Commission's Executive Director. In the event of a failure to agree on the part of the director and the university, the proposed alterations would be referred to the Cambridge Historical Commission. The Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission serves as Secretary of the NCD Commission, and his review of the Knafel Center will be undertaken in concert with that body's own review of the project.

**Zoning:** The potential project site straddles sections of the Residence C-1 and Residence C-3 zones that fall within an Institutional Overlay District (see attached map). The C-1 zone allows 35 foot heights, 0.75 floor-area-to-lot-area ratio (FAR) and residential uses by right; there are no as of right institutional uses in the C-1 district. The Institutional Overlay District modifies C-1 zoning by allowing for certain institutional uses. The Overlay District allows as of right educational uses such as classroom space, administrative offices and ancillary facilities. The Overlay District requires a Special Permit for certain functions, such as facilities customarily accessible to the public on a paid fee basis such as an auditorium, theater or similar facility. The C-3 zone allows 120 foot heights, 3.0 FAR and residential and institutional uses by right. The Institutional Overlay District does not modify the C-3 requirements.

**BZA Special Permit:** If the project requires a Special Permit through the Institutional Overlay District, Harvard will need to submit an application to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The BZA must hold a public hearing within 65 days from the date of filing of the application for a Special Permit and must issue a decision within 100 days from the date of filing. An application for a Special Permit entails a formal public hearing before the BZA, advertised to the public two

January 7, 1998

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weeks in advance, with abutters notified in writing. The public would have an opportunity to make comments to the BZA, both in person at the hearing and in writing. An appeal of a BZA decision must be filed within 20 days following the issuance of the decision. Either Superior Court or Land Court consider an appeal. Resolution of an appeal takes from several months to three years.

If the project requires a BZA Special Permit, the Planning Board has the option to make a recommendation to the BZA about the proposed permit. An application for a BZA Special Permit does not require either a presentation to the Planning Board or that the Board receive public comment on the matter. However, the Planning Board may choose to conduct a more substantive review, if the project poses significant planning issues.

***Variances:*** All options for the project presented to date include an expansion of Coolidge Hall, which lies largely in the C-3 zone and is non-conforming to the existing zoning due to floor area and setback requirements. Thus, any substantial expansion of Coolidge Hall is likely to require a variance from the BZA for altering a non-conforming building. A variance entails a formal public hearing before the BZA advertised to the public two weeks in advance, with abutters notified in writing. The public would have an opportunity to make comments to the BZA, both in person at the hearing and in writing. The role of the Planning Board in granting such a variance is analogous to that for a Special Permit granted by the BZA. Other circumstances that might trigger an application for a variance include, among others, a proposal to exceed the 0.75 FAR allowed in the C-1 zone, the C-3 FAR of 3.0, the C-3 height limit of 120 feet, the C-1 height limit of 35 feet or any setback requirement, or proposing a disallowed use.

***Other Permits:*** Other permits could be needed, depending on the exact nature of the final proposal. The Inspectional Services Department issues building, electrical, plumbing and heating permits. Water and sewer permits are issued by the Public Works Department. Any new or relocated curb cut will require approval by the City Council. If the project triggers any Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) threshold, Harvard will need to file an Environmental Notification Form with the MEPA Unit of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

cc: Charles Sullivan, Cambridge Historical Commission

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Kenneth A. Shepsle, Chair  
Professor of Government



Littauer Center M-20, North Yard  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

October 10, 1997

Dear Neighbors,

I am writing to invite you to attend an open meeting of the Harvard Planning Committee for the Center for Government and International Studies to discuss planning for the proposed academic building. This meeting has been scheduled to take place **Monday October 27, at Piper Auditorium, Gund Hall at the Graduate School of Design, 48 Quincy Street from 7 to 9 P.M.**

Since the outset of the planning process, Harvard has been interested in involving the community in discussions about the project. With that objective in mind, Harvard held an open meeting in February to discuss the proposed Center with the neighboring community and to listen to concerns and suggestions. Recognizing that planning for the proposed Center has generated considerable interest among community members, I would like to take this opportunity to provide background for those who were not able to attend earlier meetings, and also to convey current information about our on-going planning activities

**Background:**

A generous gift has enabled Harvard to begin the planning process for a Center for Government and International Studies which was identified as a priority project within the University Campaign. The proposed Center will address the growing need to bring the Government Department and the International Centers of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences together in order to better respond to the interdisciplinary nature of their studies, as well as to address severe space shortages for the department in their current location. The general site for the Center is the block bounded by Cambridge, Quincy and Kirkland Streets, and Sumner Road.

**The Academic Rationale:**

The academic rationale in conceiving the Center is to promote intellectual affiliations through formal and informal interactions among faculty. It will provide space for graduate students in close proximity to their faculty advisers and to students in related fields, thus deepening the mentoring and collegial relationships so essential to graduate education. Undergraduate students will benefit from more frequent interaction with faculty and graduate students. After extensively analyzing other locations, the Gund Hall block was determined to offer the greatest opportunity to reunite the Government Department in a single location and strengthen the relationship between the regional centers, research, and undergraduate education.

**Recent Planning Activities:**

An internal planning committee, which I chair, was formed in March to define the Center's programmatic requirements. Over the summer, two Graduate School of Design faculty members of the planning committee studied several possibilities for meeting space needs on the site. A project architect will be hired early in 1998 to study schematic design options and develop the

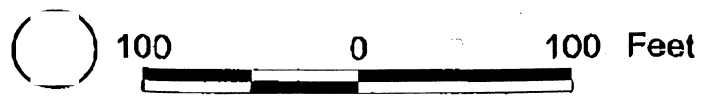
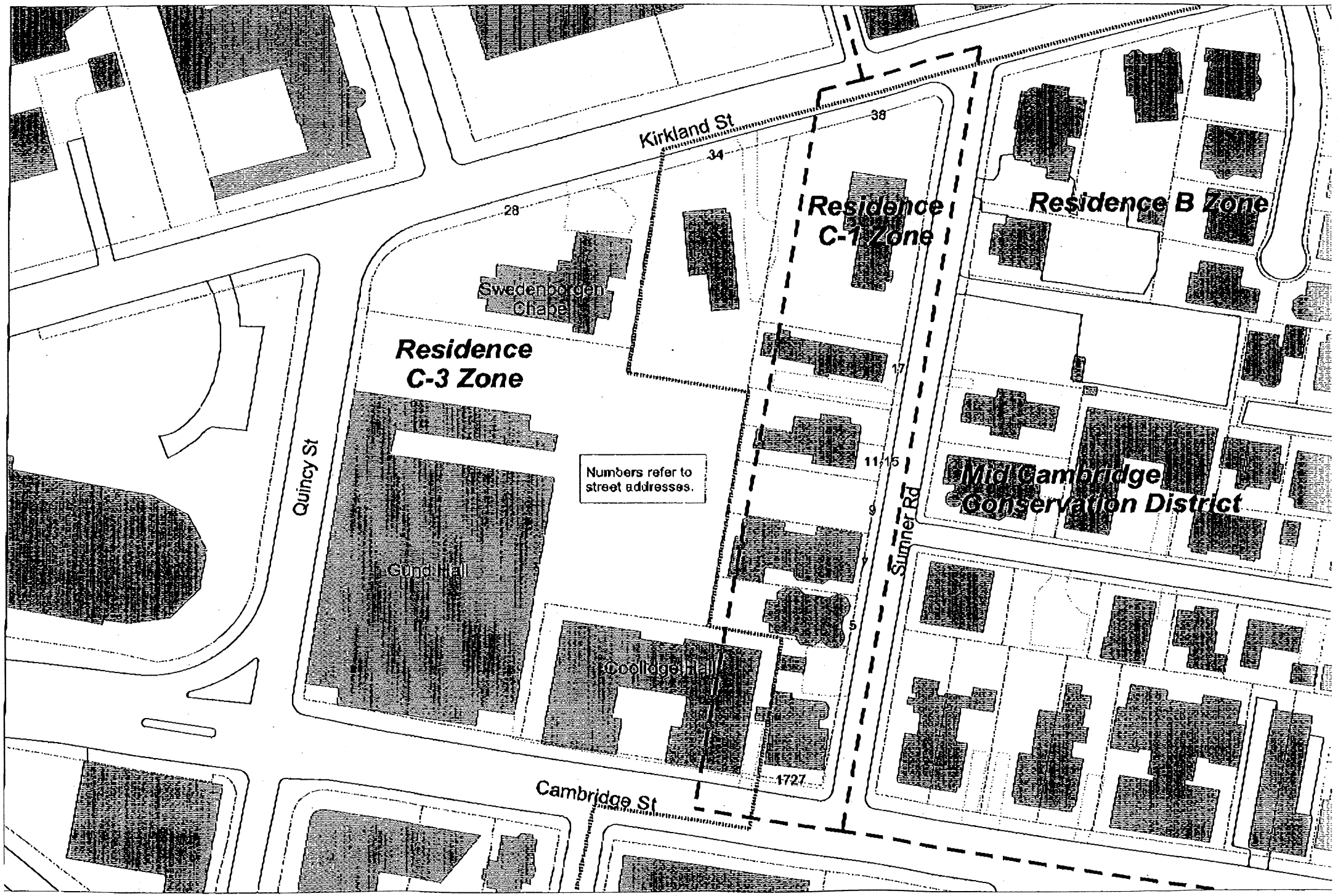
final plan. Prior to requesting proposals from architectural firms, the University would like to meet again with neighbors in order to share information regarding the program for the building and discuss preliminary options.

I hope that you are able to attend the meeting on October 27. If it is inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, I encourage you to speak with Mary Power, Director of Community Relations at 495-4955 who is interested in answering any questions you might have and in discussing your thoughts regarding the proposed center. You may also wish to visit a web site which posts information regarding planning activities for the Center for Government and International Studies at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~planning/cgis/>. I look forward to your participation in future discussions about the Center for Government and International Studies and hope to see you at the Planning Committee meeting.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Shepsle  
George Dickson Professor of Government  
Chair, Department of Government  
Chair, Planning Committee for the Center  
for Government and International Studies



--- Zoning Dist. Boundary  
 - - - - - Mid-Cambridge Cons. Dist.

Gund Block - Site Proposed by Harvard for Knafel Center  
 Map by Cambridge Community Development Dept.

# Location of Proposed Knafel Center

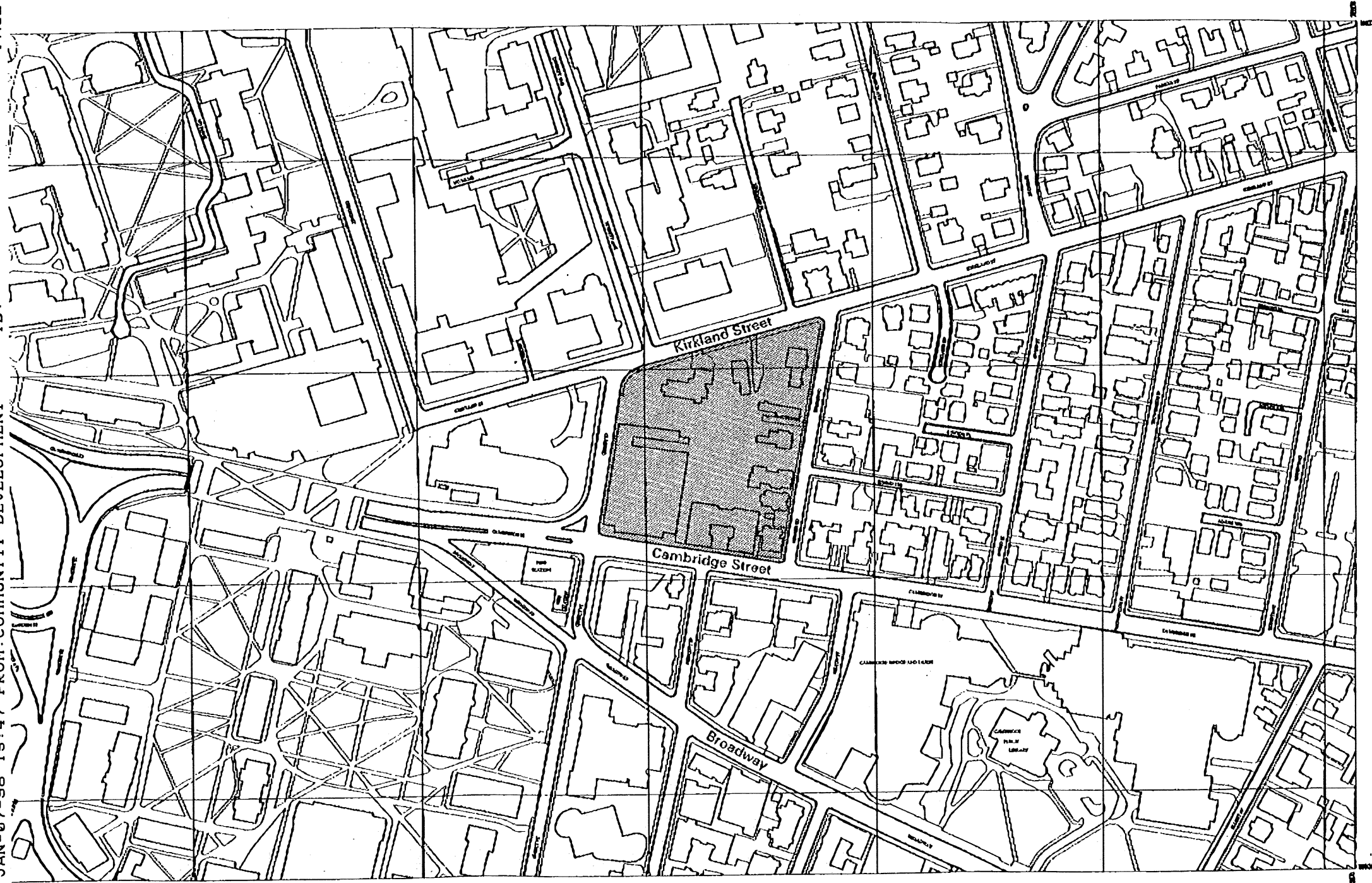
Cambridge Community Development

January 1998

JAN-07-98 15:47 FROM: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PAGE

ID:





**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
**INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

RECEIVED  
-5 AM 11:19  
OF THE CITY MANAGER

January 2, 1998

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Bob Bersani, Inspectional Services

Subject: Council Order #024, dated 12/22/97 RE: Prepare a Memo to the City Council on Issues Surrounding Harvard University's New Building in the Kirkland, Sumner, Prescott, and Broadway Block.

As the Inspectional Services Department has not received any permit applications nor been provided any information by Harvard concerning possible development plans in this area, it is difficult to provide specific comments on this Council Order.

The area of concern is likely the block bounded by Cambridge, Quincy, and Kirkland Streets and Sumner Rd. The block contains the School of Design, a church, and several residential use structures along Sumner Rd. Most of the block (about 70%) is in the C-3 residential use zone with the area fronting on Sumner Rd. in the C-1 residence zone. In addition to complying with the zoning provisions specified for those zones, if construction were to be contemplated in the C-1 zone portion of the block, the institutional use provisions of the Zoning Ordinance would have to be complied with.

Depending on the extent of construction or use proposed, relief from the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance may be necessary. This would, of course, require a public hearing before the appropriate Board(s). Also, depending on the impact on potentially historic structures or demolition plans, the Historical Commission could be involved.

Very truly yours,

R. R. Bersani

cc  
Susan Schlesinger  
Charles Sullivan

# HARVARD UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2 GARDEN STREET  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138  
TEL: (617) 495-4955  
FAX: (617) 495-9703

RECEIVED  
98 JAN -8 PM 12:15  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

January 8, 1998

Mr. Robert W. Healy  
City Manager  
City of Cambridge  
Cambridge City Hall  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy,

*Bob*

In response to the recent City Council order regarding the City boards and commissions to which Harvard's proposed Center for Government and International Studies project will need to be presented, I would like to provide the following information.

## Background

Harvard University is in the early stages of planning for the new Center for Government and International Studies to be situated on the block bounded by Quincy Street, Kirkland Street, Sumner Road, and Cambridge Street. The Center was identified as a priority project in the University's Capital Campaign and was presented to the City and neighborhood associations in a series of meetings throughout 1994 in connection with the University's Capital Campaign. Within the past year a donation to the University has enabled Harvard to begin the planning process for the new Center. However, at this point, no specific plans have been developed nor has an architect been selected.

The Center for Government and International Studies is the proposed new home of the Department of Government and various research centers affiliated with Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. To the extent that the project has been conceptualized, the Center will include a renovated Coolidge Hall (1737 Cambridge St.), 1727 Cambridge Street, a proposed new building, and an underground connector between the new building and Coolidge Hall. The new building is currently projected to contain approximately 75,000 square feet, with 20,000 square feet of the building below-ground. Together the new and existing structures will form an integrated complex accommodating a range of academic and administrative uses, including faculty offices, classrooms, library and computer facilities, the Harvard-MIT Data Center, and a cafe.

## Public Approvals Requirements

Specific permit and public approval requirements will be determined once an architect has been chosen and schematics have been prepared. While we cannot at this point provide specific information about all the public approvals that will be required by the project, I have asked Harvard Planning and Real Estate to make some general assumptions about possible review by public boards and commissions based on the proposed site.

- **Board of Zoning Appeal:** The Center is planned on a lot which is located in two zoning districts, Residence C-3 and C-1, (see Map 1). The project proposes to connect the new building to Coolidge Hall, a non-conforming structure. If the project goes ahead with this connector, Board of Zoning

Appeal (BZA) approval will be required under Cambridge Zoning Ordinance Article 8.22.2.c. The BZA process involves a public hearing and notification of the general public by advertising as well as certified mail notification to abutting property owners.

- **Mid-Cambridge Conservation District:** A portion of the lot falls within the Mid-Cambridge Conservation District (MCCD) (see Map 2). The MCCD Commission is authorized to issue binding recommendations concerning new construction and additions over 750 square feet visible from a public way. The MCCD Commission also makes binding recommendations on the relocation or demolition of more than 33% of the floor area of any building within District boundaries, including 34 and 38 Kirkland Street. The Commission reviews cases in public meetings which are advertised in advance.
- **Cambridge Historical Commission:** Both 34 and 38 Kirkland Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and therefore any exterior alterations to those buildings will be subject to review by the Executive Director on behalf of the Cambridge Historical Commission per the 1986 agreement between the Commission and Harvard University. Any proposed demolition of less than 33% of the floor area of a building or of a building outside the MCCD boundaries would require Historical Commission review.
- **Massachusetts Historical Commission:** If the project requires any approvals or permits from the State, such as Massachusetts Architectural Access Board variances, sewer connection permits, etc., review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission will be required.

The City Council has also requested information about the proposed timeline and possible ways for neighbors to voice their protest, concerns, or support. Harvard is committed to a dialogue with our neighbors about this and other University projects. To date we have held two public meetings in the neighborhood to discuss preliminary planning for the proposed Center. We have presented preliminary studies to the Joint Neighborhood Committee, and also attended meetings of the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, the Mid-Cambridge Conservation District Commission, and the Cambridge Historical Commission to discuss preliminary planning activities for the project. The faculty planning committee for this project has also created a web page (at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~planning/cgis/>) with current status reports and an e-mail address for comments.

Since the project is still in the early planning stages with only half of the necessary funding for the project having been raised, neither a construction schedule nor a schedule of project approval hearings before the boards and commissions listed above has been prepared. An architect has not yet been selected, but the University expects to bring an architect on board in February. Throughout the planning process we will continue to meet with our neighbors, Cambridge officials, interested citizens, the Joint Neighborhood Committee, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, and the City departments to provide information and updates and receive feedback regarding this project.

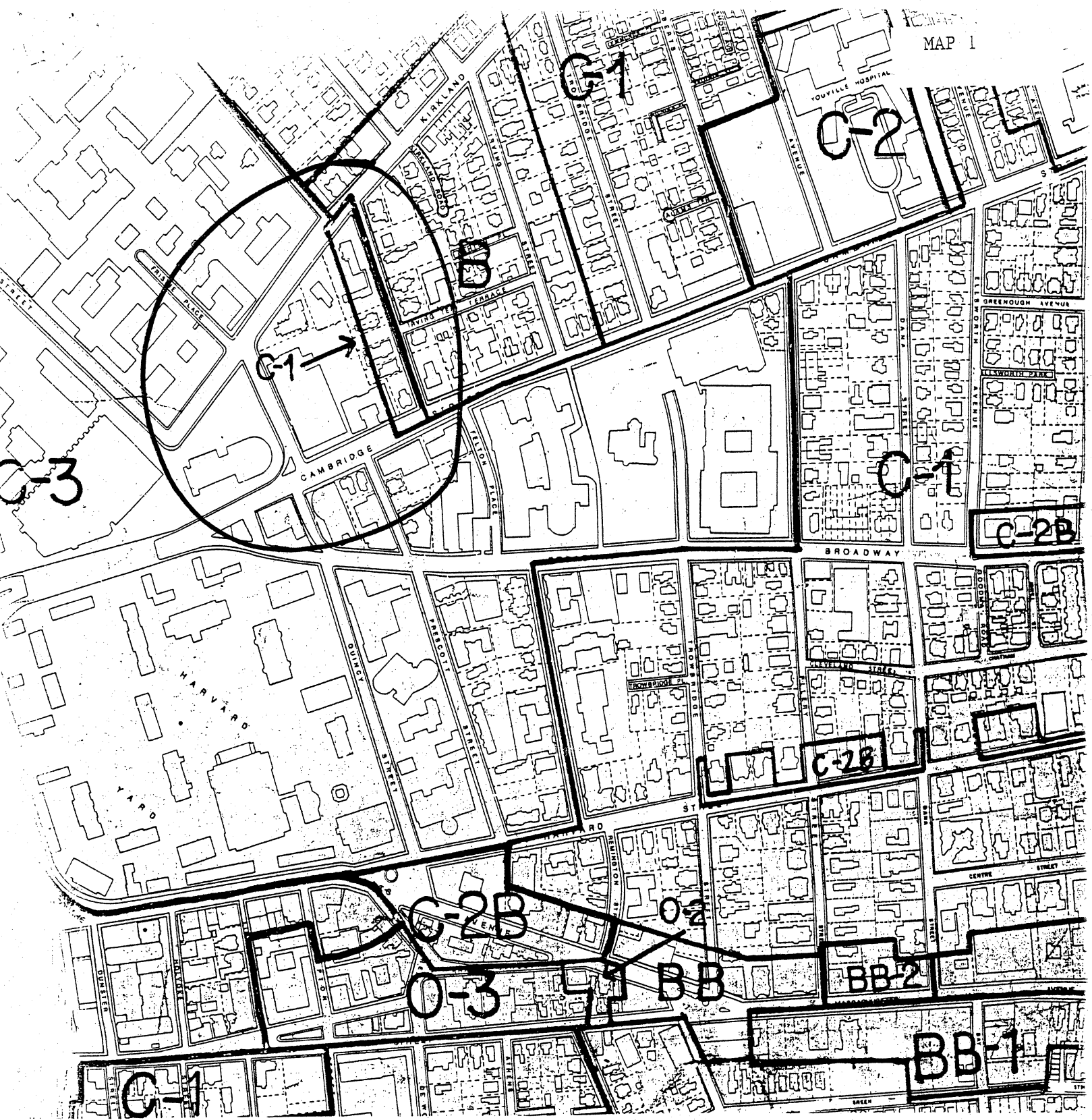
Please feel free to contact me at 495-4955 if I can provide you with more information or address any specific questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Mary Power  
Director of Community Relations

cc: Susan Schlesinger, Assistant City Manager of Community Development  
Charles Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission  
Sally Zimmerman, Acting Secretary, Mid-Cambridge Conservation District  
Robert Bersani, Commissioner, Cambridge Inspectional Services  
John Pitkin, Co Chair, Joint Neighborhood Committee

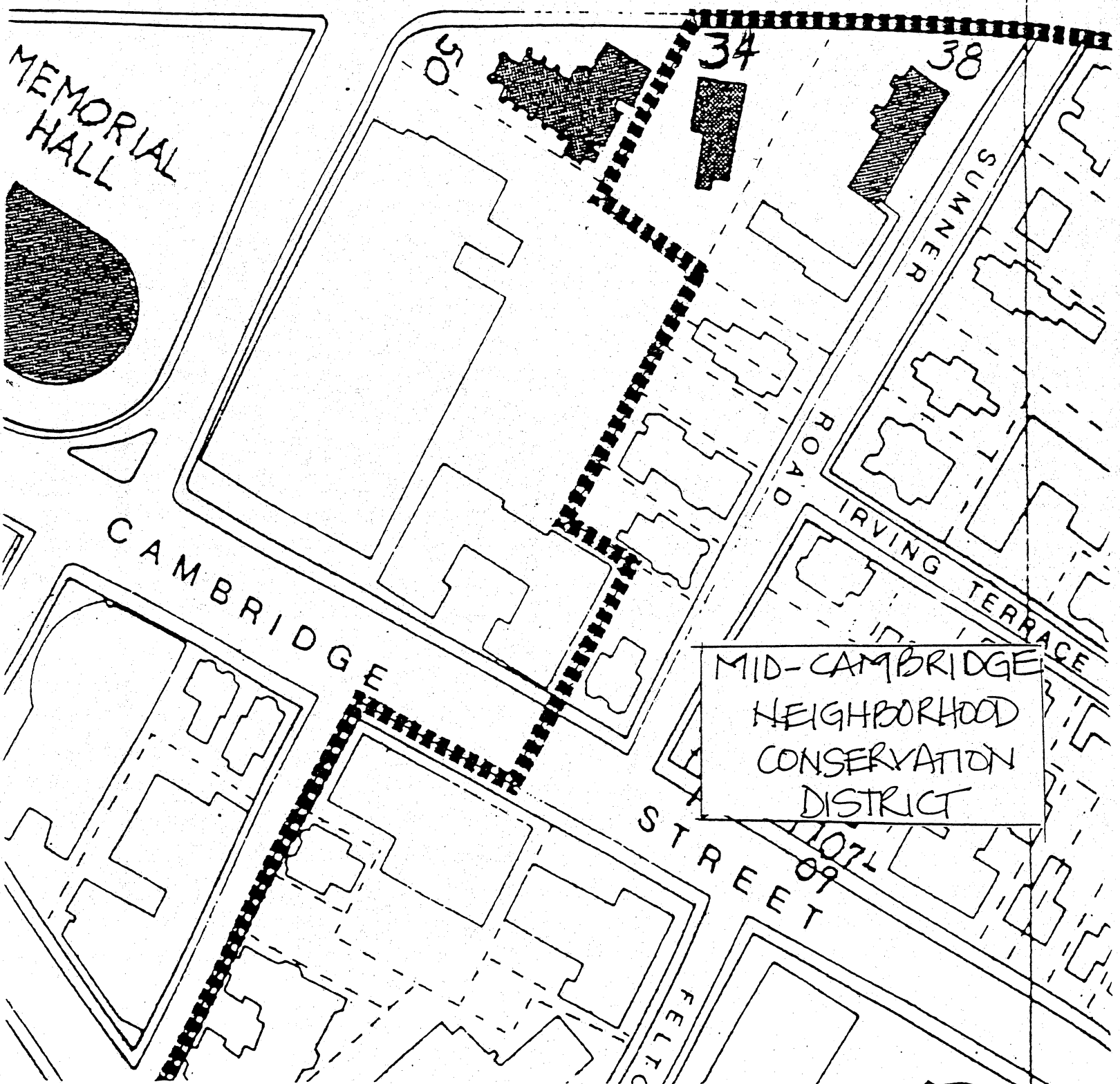
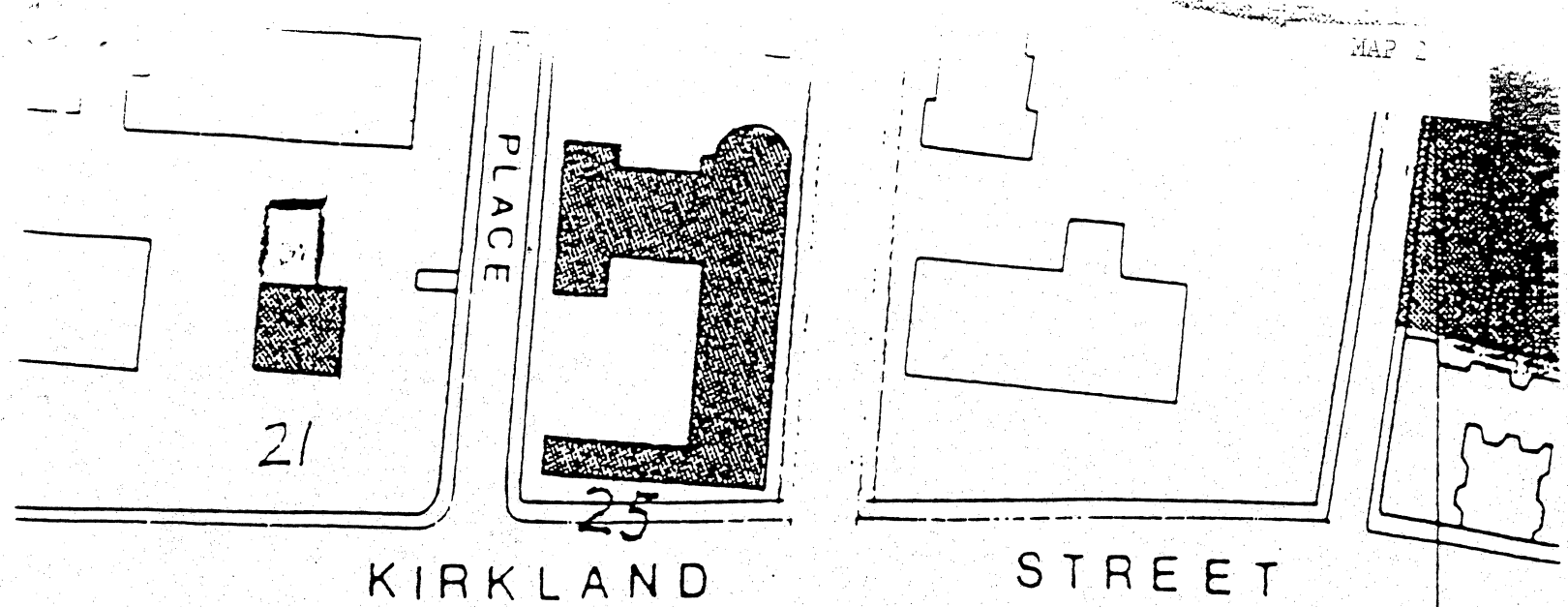


- A-1 - Residence A-1
- A-2 - Residence A-2
- B - Residence B
- C - Residence C
- C-1 - Residence C-1
- C-2 - Residence C-2
- C-2A - Residence C-2A
- C-2B - Residence C-2B
- C-3 - Residence C-3
- C-3A - Residence C-3A
- O-1 - Office-1
- O-2 - Office-2
- O-3 - Office-3
- O-3A - Office-3A
- BA - Business A
- BA-1 - Business A-1
- BA-2 - Business A-2
- BB - Business B
- BB-1 - Business-1
- BB-2 - Business-2
- BC - Business C
- BC-1 - Business C-1
- IA-1 - Industry A-1
- IA-2 - Industry A-2
- IA - Industry A
- IB-1 - Industry B-1
- IB-2 - Industry B-2
- IB - Industry B
- IC - Industry C
- MXD - Mixed Use Dev.
- PUO - PUO Overlay
- CRDO - C-Port Revitalization Dev.
- CIPOO - C-Port Interim Planning Overlay
- SO-1 - Special District-1

# ZONING MAP

As Adopted February 13, 1961  
Amended to July 1, 1992

Cambridge Community Development Department  
*Overlay Districts do not appear on this map.*





CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

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FAX 349-4307



13.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
ROBERT W. HEALY  
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI  
Deputy City Manager

January 12, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Council Order No. 24, dated December 22, 1997, regarding issues surrounding Harvard University's new building (Knafel Center) in the Sumner Road, Cambridge Street, Quincy Street and Kirkland Street block, received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Susan Schlesinger, Inspectional Services Commissioner Robert Bersani and Director of Community Relations for Harvard University Mary Power.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
attachments

Consent Agenda #13

9-5

Relative to Council Order No. 24, dated December 22, 1997, regarding issues surrounding Harvard University's new building (Knafel Center) in the Summer Road, Cambridge Street, Quincy Street and Kirkland Street block.

In City Council January 12, 1998

**PLACED ON FILE**