

Harvard Square Advisory Committee

August 10, 1990

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To the Honorable, The City Council

CAMBRIDGE MA.

Subject: Park at the corner of Arrow Street and Massachusetts Avenue

I would very much appreciate the City Council's support in moving forward the appropriation of funds from the Harvard Square Improvement Fund to improve this neglected open space. In September of 1989, the Harvard Square Advisory Committee unanimously approved the design of this space as designed by the Community Development Department. We reviewed this proposal on the basis of the Harvard Square Development Guidelines, which stipulate that public and private open spaces should meet the standards established by the urban design and landscaping scheme in the heart of the Square. As you know, the MBTA constructed these improvements as part of the Harvard Square Station project following extensive review and negotiations with the many affected parties in the Cambridge community.

The park at Arrow Street is a small space, but it is not a simple one. The Massachusetts Avenue edge is higher than the Arrow Street edge, which requires that steps be constructed to accommodate the longstanding informal path through the site. In addition, the landscaping design must be conceived to take into account this change in grade. Around the park's periphery, new sidewalks meeting the Harvard Square standard need to be constructed. Finally, the visually prominent location of this space allows for a much-needed addition of trees and shrubs to give this section of Massachusetts Avenue a more pleasant image. All of these programmatic elements have been incorporated into the proposed design, with a view not only towards the initial appearance, but also towards long-term maintenance considerations.

I urge the City Council not to require the Community Development Department to reduce the quality of work on this park. We should expect the City to meet the same standards that we have required of the dozen private projects which have been reviewed under the provisions of the Guidelines over the last four years. The budget will be on the order of \$40,000; it is important to note that about three-quarters of the budget will go into construction of stairs, brick walks on concrete, granite curbing, steel handrails, the replacement of an antiquated fire hydrant, and a new yard hydrant for watering. Along with necessary trees and shrubs, these are all essential costs required to make this park be a good addition to the urban landscape of Harvard Square. In summary, this project fits extremely well with the goals of the Overlay District and the Harvard Square Improvement Fund, which the City Council established for just such upgrading of the Square's open space system.

Respectfully,



Phoebe M. Bruck
Chair, the Harvard Square Advisory Committee



% Cambridge Community Development Department

57 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

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Comm. from Phoebe M. Bruck, Chair,
Harvard Square Advisory Committee,
relative to the park at the corner of
Arrow Street and Mass. Avenue.

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Placed in file

In City Council,

Sept. 10, 1990