



City of Cambridge

Consent Agenda #5
Calendar Item #6
IN CITY COUNCIL

~~January 29, 2001~~
February 5, 2001

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN

ORDERED: That the William James House, 95 Irving Street, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on January 4, 2001. The premises so designated are defined as parcel 81 of assessor's map 146 and recorded in book 13783, page 105 of the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds.

This designation is justified by the important associations of the William James House with the pre-eminent philosopher William James (1842-1910), who built the house in 1889 for himself and resided there for the rest of his life, producing the major works of his career while resident at 95 Irving Street; as the home of James' family for three generations and one of a number of distinguished houses in the Shady Hill neighborhood, the William James House is further associated with the broad architectural, cultural, and social history of the City, which has long been a center of life and work for some of the country's leading intellectuals; the house also possesses architectural significance as a well-preserved Shingle Style house by noted Boston architect William Ralph Emerson, and for its contributions to the Shady Hill neighborhood, an intact late 19th-century residential enclave of architecturally-important residences.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of 95 Irving Street, that would in either case be visible from a public way, without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the landmark designation report, and by Section VII, Standards and Criteria, of the landmark designation report, and by the applicable sections of Article 2.78.

In City Council February 5, 2001.
Adopted by a yea and nay vote:-
Yeas 9; Nays 0; Absent 0.
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council 2/5, 2009

60B Wm James Lundquist

	YEA	NAY	ABSENT	PRESENT
Ms. Kathleen L. Born	✓			
Mr. James Braude	✓			
Ms. Henrietta Davis	✓			
Ms. Marjorie C. Decker	✓			
Vice Mayor David P. Maher	✓			
Mr. Kenneth E. Reeves	✓			
Mr. Michael A. Sullivan	✓			
Mr. Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	✓			
Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio	✓			

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

(617) 349-4260

FAX (617) 349-4269

tty/TDD (617) 492-0235

D. MARGARET DRURY
CITY CLERK

DONNA P. LOPEZ
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

January 25, 2001

Ms. Robin Jill Ruge
80 Upland Road
Unit B
Cambridge, MA 02140

Dear Ms. Ruge:

On Monday, January 22, 2001, the Historical Commission's proposal to designate the William James house as a Landmark was on the City Council agenda. The City Council tabled the item until February 5, 2001 to give you, as property owner, an opportunity to communicate your opinion on this proposal to the City Council, if you so desire.

Please note that the City Council may act upon this proposal on or after February 5, 2001. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

DMD/mc



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P.O. Box 380794
Cambridge, MA 02238-0794

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

DMD/mc



Cambridge Historical Commission

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139. Telephone: 617/349-4683
Fax: 617/349-3116 TTY: 617/349-6112 E-mail: histcomm@ci.cambridge.ma.us
URL: <http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~Historic>



William B. King, *Chair*, Allison M. Crump, *Vice Chair*, Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
M. Wyllis Bibbins, Suzanne R. Green, Helen F. Moulton, Robert G. Neiley, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Bruce A. Irving, Jennifer Jones, Frank Shirley, *Alternates*

Date: January 17, 2001
To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager
From: Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director *CHS*
Re: William James House Landmark Study Report

Attached please find 60 copies of the Final Study Report for designating the William James House, 95 Irving Street, as a protected landmark. The Cambridge Historical Commission unanimously voted on January 4 to recommend the designation of the William James House to the City Council.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

William James House
95 Irving Street
Landmark Designation Study Report*
L-59

Prepared by Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner
 Cambridge Historical Commission
 December 11, 2000

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Executive Summary

The William James House at 95 Irving Street was built in 1889 for the pre-eminent American philosopher and psychologist, William James, who lived there from 1889 to his death in 1910. James wrote all of the major works of his mature career there and it remained in his family for three generations. More generally, the house contributes significantly to an understanding of the city's long architectural, cultural and social history as a center of life and work for some of the country's leading intellectuals.

Architecturally, the William James House is individually significant as a well-preserved example of the Shingle Style of architecture, a work of the noted architect William Ralph Emerson, and an example of the collaboration between a skilled architect and an important client heavily engaged in the design process. The house is also significant as part of a late 19th-century neighborhood of considerable architectural and historical importance.

*This report is prepared for the specific purpose of evaluating the William James House for landmark designation under Cambridge City Ordinance, 2.78, Article III; the material contained herein is solely intended to establish the significance of the William James House within the meaning of the applicable city ordinance.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address, Parcel Number and Zoning

The William James House is located at 95 Irving Street opposite the intersection of Farrar and Scott streets. The parcel is identified as lot 81 of map 146. The lot contains 16,824 square feet.

The property is zoned A-2, a single family residential zone that allows the conversion of single-family use to two-family use provided no change in the exterior design of the building takes place. In addition, an accessory apartment may be allowed in the A-2 zone by special permit of the Board of Zoning Appeal, provided a number of conditions are met. These include the following: 1) the building must predate 1940 and must not have been enlarged by more than 250 square feet of gross floor area since that date; 2) the dwelling must contain at least 3500 square feet of gross floor area; 3) the lot must contain at least 3000 square feet per dwelling unit; 4) the accessory apartment must not occupy more than 35% of the gross floor area of the principal dwelling; 5) the accessory apartment cannot increase the floor area beyond the allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for the zone and cannot increase an existing FAR violation.

Historically, the FAR of the William James House was approximately .36. This calculation, which is based on historic atlases, includes three habitable stories of space; it does not include all possible floor area in other areas, such as the basement or a fourth floor attic, both of which have spaces that meet the current height definition for floor area of 7'2". The floor area including those spaces may meet or possibly exceed the allowable .50 floor area for the zone. The building is also non-conforming as to height, exceeding the 35 foot height limit by 7 feet.

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The building is owned by Robin Jill Ruge, J. Ruge Development LLC, who purchased the property in 1999. Ms. Ruge is undertaking alterations to create two condominium units in the building. The project is currently under construction and is anticipated to be completed and marketed early in 2001.

The building is unoccupied at the time of the report preparation. It was occupied in single-family use with an accessory apartment from the time of its construction until Ms. Ruge purchased the property. It is not clear at what point the accessory apartment was constructed in the house, however, it would seem to have been added, if not illegally, then informally. No special permit was ever sought for the addition of an accessory apartment, although the property's characteristics appear to meet the legal zoning requirements for the addition of such an apartment. Various 20th-century city directories consulted (1944, 1946, 1954, 1968, 1972) show only the record owners of the house residing there; no separate address or telephone was listed in the city directories for any other occupants.

Building permit records indicate that permits were issued in 1959 ("new kitchenette"), 1976 ("Kitchen renovations, bathroom remodel, wood frame tool shed in rear yard 10' x 10'"), 1980 ("Repair - new footing and piers, new joist, framing, trim, install temporary bracing while work is in progress"), and 1984 ("Alter - stairs to the third floor through roof of the existing structure. Screen unfinished porch").

The documentation in an abutters' appeal on the project indicates that a studio apartment existed in the house by the 1980s (Weitzman, et. al. vs. Bersani, March 10, 2000). At that time, it was stated, the apartment had a kitchenette but no bathroom and no separate access; in 1984, a bathroom and separate access were installed. The appeal further stated that the utilities for the house were never separately metered.

The construction now being undertaken calls for the first two full floors to be used as a single unit, the attic, or fourth story, to be used as a second unit and the third floor to be split between both units.

C. Area Description

The William James House stands in a cohesive neighborhood of late 19th and early 20th century residences historically known as Shady Hill and named after an 1806 mansion that stood in the neighborhood until 1956. The area is remarkably homogeneous historically and architecturally and is characterized by wide, tree-lined streets, expansive, architect-designed houses and large lots. In 1986, the neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Shady Hill National Register District.

Two major arterial streets, Beacon Street on the north and Kirkland Street on the east, define the north and east boundaries of the neighborhood, which is demarcated on the south by the Harvard Divinity School campus and on the west by a more densely developed neighborhood of two and three-family houses. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences occupies a 5.5 acre site on the northern edge of the neighborhood; the academy's 1979 headquarters building (Kallman, McKinnell & Knowles) stands in landscaped, publicly-accessible grounds that are the remnant of what has been known as "Norton's Woods" since the 19th century.

The neighborhood was developed from a subdivision plan of 1887-88 prepared by noted landscape architect, Charles Eliot. The plan included a typical Olmsted/Eliot type of curvilinear street pattern, which is evident in the manner in which Irving, Bryant and Scott streets wind through the neighborhood. Deed restrictions in the subdivision required substantial, single-family houses with large set-backs. The first houses were built in 1889 and within 20 years the neighborhood was virtually filled. Most of the houses in the neighborhood are in the Queen Anne, Shingle Style and Colonial Revival styles.

The neighborhood is something of a pass-through for traffic between Cambridge and Somerville but is generally very quiet, with well-maintained properties that have always

commanded the upper echelons of the real estate market. Recent market demands are causing additional increases in property values.

D. Planning Issues

Planning concerns relating to the William James House relate primarily to the current redevelopment of the property. A petition to study the William James House for landmark designation was received on January 28, 2000 from abutters and other citizens concerned about the development of the property. A public meeting was held to evaluate the petition, and the Cambridge Historical Commission voted to accept the petition for study. A confirmatory public hearing on the designation study was held on March 2 before the Cambridge Historical Commission.

The William James House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Shady Hill National Register district (5/19/1986). It was also documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1967.

The current project, which has been reviewed and approved through issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness by the Cambridge Historical Commission (see CHC case 1001, and attached certificates dated April 21, 2000, May 9, 2000 and July 7, 2000, appendix 1), included:

- 1) restoration of gable roofs to the three existing front dormers
- 2) construction of a covered porch with French doors on the south elevation
- 3) construction of a covered porch on the north elevation
- 4) repairs to the front porch
- 5) replacement of selected non-original sash to replicate original sash
- 6) removal of rear additions made in 1984
- 7) construction of a garage/deck addition at the rear (garage subsequently eliminated)
- 8) construction of an elevator headhouse
- 9) construction of a roof window at the rear
- 10) installation of skylights
- 11) construction of a detached 1-car garage (subsequently increased to 2-car)
- 12) landscaping.

On October 5, 2000, the Board of Zoning Appeal issued a variance for accessory building setbacks for construction of the detached garage. At the same time, the Board denied a dimensional requirement variance petition to allow an increase in the floor area for use of the basement. The project as approved by the Zoning Board and Historical Commission is proceeding toward completion.

As the current project has received all the necessary approvals, it is unlikely that any additional construction or alterations will take place in the near future. If the William James House is designated as a landmark, any future proposals for alteration of publicly-visible exterior architectural features would be subject to Historical Commission review and approval.



Cambridge Historical Commission

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139. Telephone: 617.349.4683
Fax: 617.349.3116 TTY: 617.349.6112 E-mail: histcomm@ci.cambridge.ma.us



William B. King, *Chair*, Allison M. Crump, *Vice Chair*, Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
M. Wyllis Bibbins, Suzanne R. Green, Helen F. Moulton, Robert G. Neiley, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Bruce Irving, Jennifer Jones, Frank Shirley, *Alternates*

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Property: 95 Irving Street

Applicant: R. Jill Ruge

Attention: R. Jill Ruge
80B Upland Road
Cambridge, MA 02140

James J. Rafferty, Esq.
Adams & Rafferty
187 Concord Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

The Cambridge Historical Commission hereby certifies, pursuant to the Massachusetts Historic Districts Act (MGL Ch. 40C) and the Cambridge Historical Buildings and Landmarks Ordinance (Cambridge City Code, Ch. 2.78), that the work described below is not incongruous to the historic aspects or architectural character of the building or district:

1. Restore the gabled roofs to the three existing front dormers.
2. Construct new covered porch on the south elevation with an open deck and railings above it at the second-floor level.
3. Construct covered wood porch on the north elevation.
4. Repair front porch and railings to match existing conditions.
5. Install a pair of French doors with sidelights on the south elevation, replacing existing windows in that location.
6. Remove non-original window on the north elevation and replace with double-hung window on third floor and arched

window in the gable end on the fourth floor. The arched window is to be of the same dimensions and similar detailing as the existing arched window in same location on the south elevation.

All improvements shall be carried out as shown on the plans and specifications submitted by the applicant, except as modified above. Approved plans and specifications are incorporated by reference into this certificate.

This certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized herein is commenced within six months after the date of issue. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issue, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, then this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions of time, for periods not exceeding six months each, may be allowed in writing by the Chairman.

Case Number: 1001 Date of Certificate: April ~~18~~²¹, 2000

Attest: A true and correct copy of decision filed with the offices of the City Clerk and the Cambridge Historical Commission on 4/21/00.

By *[Signature]*, Vice Chair.

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.
No appeal has been filed _____. Appeal has been filed _____.
Date _____, City Clerk



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AMENDED CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Property: 95 Irving Street

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Amend previously-issued certificate to include changes to rear (west) elevation, including:

1. Removal of existing rear additions.
2. Construction of new addition, with attached one-car garage and roof deck.
3. Construction of elevator head house.
4. Construction of window set into the roof at the fourth-floor level.
5. Installation of six skylights.
6. Construction of detached one-car garage to the rear of the house.

7. Plantings along rear property line to screen garage.

All work is to be carried out as indicated in the elevation drawings by Miller Boehm Architects titled, "95 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA," and dated May 4, 2000. Any changes to the detailing of the approved work must be reviewed and approved by the Architects Committee of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

All improvements shall be carried out as shown on the plans and specifications submitted by the applicant, except as modified above. Approved plans and specifications are incorporated by reference into this certificate.

This certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized herein is commenced within six months after the date of issue. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issue, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, then this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions of time, for periods not exceeding six months each, may be allowed in writing by the Chairman.

Case Number: 1001 Date of Certificate: May 9, 2000

Attest: A true and correct copy of decision filed with the offices of the City Clerk and the Cambridge Historical Commission on 5/10/00.

By William B. King, Chair.

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.
No appeal has been filed _____. Appeal has been filed _____.
Date _____, City Clerk



Cambridge Historical Commission

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Amend previously-approved certificate to include changes to porches, decks, rear addition, garage, storage shed and landscaping.

All work is to be carried out as indicated on plans and drawings by Miller Boehm Architects titled, "95 Irving Street Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Historical Commission Review Plans," and dated June 29, 2000.

Plans and drawings were reviewed and approved by the Architects Committee of the Historical Commission at a public meeting on June 29, 2000.

All improvements shall be carried out as shown on the plans and specifications submitted by the applicant, except as modified above. Approved plans and specifications are incorporated by reference into this certificate.

This certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized herein is commenced within six months after the date of issue. If the work authorized by this certificate is not commenced within six months after the date of issue, or if such work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after the time the work is commenced, then this certificate shall expire and be of no further effect; provided that, for cause, one or more extensions of time, for periods not exceeding six months each, may be allowed in writing by the Chairman.

Case Number: 1001 Date of Certificate: July 7, 2000

Attest: A true and correct copy of decision filed with the offices of the City Clerk and the Cambridge Historical Commission on 7/12/00.

By William B. Keay, Chair.

Twenty days have elapsed since the filing of this decision.
No appeal has been filed _____. Appeal has been filed _____.
Date _____, City Clerk

II. Description

A. Type and Use

The William James House is a large, late 19th-century single family residence that was adapted with an accessory apartment use and is currently being renovated for two-family use. In use, the house is typical of large, 19th-century houses in Cambridge that were originally constructed for single-family occupancy and in which the zoning code has allowed and, at some times in the city's history, encouraged, the development of accessory apartment use.

The William James House appears to have been occupied solely in single-family use during the entire tenure of its ownership by the extended family of the original owner, William James, from 1889 to 1968. Records in the Cambridge assessors' office are unclear about whether any rooms in the house were rented and suggest that at times, one room in the 14-room house may have been rented. The house was owned by the President and Fellows of Harvard College from 1968 to 1981 and leased until 1979 to Chase Peterson, director of admissions and financial aid; the house was then leased, and ultimately sold in 1981, to William and Katherine Estes. Professor Estes taught in and was also chair of the psychology department. The most recent owner, Ms. Ruge, purchased the property in 1999, for development and as a possible residence for herself.

B. Physical Description

The William James House is a cedar-shingled, gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival house. It is generously-proportioned, with a large 3½-story main house (approximately 50' x 40') and a 2-story ell offset to the rear at the northwest corner. The house sits at the intersection of Farrar and Scott streets, facing northeast. It is sited at the west end of a large (16,199 square foot), level, slightly irregular lot which is planted with mature deciduous and evergreen trees. A driveway runs along the property line on the west side of the lot. A detached garage is being constructed at the rear of the lot on the west side.

The house is simple and symmetrical in design with boxy, rectilinear massing. Despite its simplicity, it incorporates a number of idiosyncratic elements that reveal elements of Queen Anne-style asymmetry as well as the functional requirements of the interior spaces. Window treatments on the façade, for example, vary by floor, with a paired window on the south side of the first floor, a three-part window on the north side, and individual windows on the second floor; likewise, the chimneys are slightly offset from one another. The fenestration on the south side of the house, facing the garden, was also somewhat varied, with a large three-part window at the southwest corner and a basket-arched window in the gable end. (The current plans call for construction of a side porch at the southwest corner, which would include removing the three-part window, installing French doors in its place, and adding a second-story deck with French doors above.)

The façade of the William James House is three bays wide with a center entrance and a flat-roofed projecting porch. The entrance contains a six-panel door with ornamental sidelights and a blind elliptical fan above. The porch, which has clustered Doric columns supporting a simple entablature, is topped by a wooden balustrade with ball finials on the corner posts. A casement window at the second-story center bay opens onto the deck of the porch roof. Three gable-roofed dormers pierce the lower slope of the gambrel roof, while the upper slope of roof is broken by an eyebrow dormer and a pair of chimneys. (The dormers were modified with shed roofs at some point in the house's history; these have been removed and the gable roofs reinstated.)

The side elevations, three bays deep, clearly reveal the size of the house, and fenestration delineates the three main floors. The south elevation, which originally contained a three-part window in the southwest corner lighting James' study, has been modified with the removal of that window and the introduction of French doors to a small porch which is yet to be constructed. A pair of windows in the wall above have been merged through the addition of French doors that will lead to a second-story deck above the planned porch.

The north side contains a small entry midway on the wall; its current appearance replicates the design of the original plans for the house. An oversized window was added on the north wall after 1910 to allow use of the third and fourth floors as a painting studio (the window may possibly have been added in 1933 when building permit records show a floor was reinforced, work that would have been needed when the third and fourth floors were merged at the north end for the studio). The window has since been removed and replaced with a basket-arched window to match the window on the south gable end.

The rear elevation has been the most altered, with what was originally a one-story gable-roofed ell enlarged over time with a screened porch and an exterior stairway to the upper floors; both of these have been removed in the current renovations and replaced with a two-story addition incorporating a second-floor deck. The asymmetry of the design was more evident on this lesser elevation, which originally included an angled bay window set into the corner of the ell and the main house on the ground floor (no longer extant), shed- and gable-roofed dormers on the lower slope of the gambrel roof, and a single chimney on the north side.

There are a variety of window sash throughout the house, including six-over-one, six-over-two, six-over-six, and eight-over-two double hung sash. The current renovation has retained and restored most of the original windows. The three-part windows, which have six-over-one sash, are capped with small, dentilled cornice hoods. Almost all of the windows originally had louvered blinds.

C. Current Photographs

III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

1. Deed History of the Property

William James purchased the land on which he built his house from the Norton family on March 1, 1889 (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, book 1896, page 7). The lot was identified as lot 13 on the subdivision plan filed by the Norton family for development of their estate two weeks previously on February 15, 1889 and contained 12,753 square feet. Like all of the lots in the Norton family development, the purchase was subject to restrictions as to the use and type of structures to be constructed on the property. The parcel was subsequently enlarged with small portions of several other adjoining lots, achieving its present 16,199 square foot size by 1917.

At the death of William James in 1910, the property passed first to William James' widow, Alice H. James (Middlesex County Registry of Probate, file #86184) and, on her death in 1922, in four shares to their children, Henry, William, Alexander and Margaret (Middlesex County Registry of Probate, file #138542). William James purchased his siblings' shares in the property in 1925 (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, book 4845, page 397). William James's sons, William, junior and John S. R., inherited the property from their father in 1961 (Middlesex County Registry of Probate, file #372276); William, junior, conveyed his share to his brother in 1962 (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, book 10168, page 379) and in 1968, John S. R. James sold the property to the President and Fellows of Harvard College (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, book 11500, page 577).

The President and Fellows of Harvard College retained ownership of the house until 1981 when it was purchased by Professor William Estes and his wife Katherine. Professor Estes, a professor and former department chair of psychology, and his wife sold the house in 1999 to Robin Jill Ruge, after the President and Fellows of Harvard College declined to exercise a right of first refusal to purchase the property. Harvard's right of first refusal provision was included in the Estes' purchase of the property from the College in 1981. With regard to Harvard's decision to decline to purchase the property, a letter from Kathy Spiegelman of the Harvard Planning and Real Estate office stated: "it remains Harvard's position that the purchase of very expensive real estate is not an appropriate way for us to meet our academic space needs, nor realistically the housing needs of our faculty."

2. Development History of Parcel and Surroundings

The William James House is part of the neighborhood known as Shady Hill and named after an 1806 mansion of that name which was demolished in 1956. The Shady Hill neighborhood developed out of a 90-acre estate that housed three generations of the Nortons from 1821 to the early 20th century. Charles Eliot Norton, the son of Andrews and Catherine Norton, for whom the estate was purchased as a wedding present, was the

most prominent; as Harvard's first lecturer in fine arts, he was a pedagogue and art historian of enormous influence in American intellectual history. The Norton family determined to develop part of their estate and the Shady Hill neighborhood was subdivided with restrictive covenants in 1889 and laid out with large house lots. The remainder of the estate gradually broke up after the death of Charles Eliot Norton in 1908.

Charles Eliot Norton's prominence and personal influence, the area's proximity to Harvard, and to an established residential neighborhood for Harvard academics on Kirkland Street (known in the 19th century as Professor's Row), combined to ensure that the Norton development would attract an elite group of buyers. From the start, these included prominent Boston professionals and a large contingent of Harvard professors.

The 1889 plan created Irving, Scott, Farrar and Holden streets and imposed strict constraints on the setbacks, type, and cost of houses to be built there. Within 20 years, the neighborhood was filled with substantial Colonial Revival and Queen Anne houses and even now the neighborhood retains much of its original appearance. While predominantly residential with single-family houses, the area contains a few non-residential and multi-family uses. These include the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, whose headquarters building (1979, Kallmann, McKinnell & Knowles) stands at 136 Irving Street in the remaining acres of Norton's Woods, the 1915 Shady Hill Square multi-family development, and the Holden Green married students' housing complex (1928, Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley).

The William James House was the home of the eminent American philosopher and psychologist, William James, from 1889 until his death in 1910. His widow, Alice Howe Gibbens James, lived there until her death in 1922 and it remained in James' family until 1968. James' grandson, William, junior, was a painter who converted the third and fourth floors to a studio.

After 1968, it was the home of Dean Chase Peterson, Harvard's director of admissions and financial aid, and later of Professor William Estes, a professor of psychology and a one-time chair of Harvard's psychology department.

Modifications have been made to the house over time. Building department records contain eight references to work permitted at the house, beginning in 1933, when a floor was reinforced, perhaps for the construction of William James, junior's painting studio. Other work has included: the removal of part of a chimney and installation of a window in 1945 (building permit 43961; another possible date for construction of the painting studio); alterations and installation of a new kitchenette in 1959 (building permit 58893); kitchen remodelling in 1961 (building permit 60909), installation of wood shingles in 1962 (building permit 61505); kitchen and bath renovations and construction of a 10' x 10' tool shed in 1976 (building permit 73864); exterior repairs in 1980 (building permit 77660); construction of exterior stairs and a screened porch in 1984 (building permit 82935); and the present major renovations of 1999 and 2000.

Like many houses in the neighborhood, the William James House had an accessory apartment; as the installation of the apartment was never legalized through issuance of the required special permit, it is not possible to determine when the apartment came into existence. During the 1940s, as war-time housing demands and a war-related population influx stressed Cambridge's housing stock, the zoning code was amended to allow the addition of accessory apartments in the city's largest single-family houses. In addition to increasing housing options, the amendments had the "preservative" quality of enhancing the economic viability of the large old houses by making more efficient use of the living space they provided. It is not known how many of the city's A-1 and A-2 zoned single-family houses contain informally-established accessory apartments, but the number is undoubtedly large.

B. Historic Photographs/Maps

C. Bibliography

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Cambridge Historical Commission, survey files for 95 Irving Street, Shady Hill Estate

Cambridge Historical Commission, biographical files for William Ralph Emerson, the James Family

Cambridge Historical Commission, landmark petition file for case L-59, various correspondence relating to petition to landmark the William James House, various dates

Cambridge Historical Commission, application file for case 1001, various materials for Certificate of Appropriateness to alter 95 Irving Street, various dates

South Middlesex Registry of Deeds, records for 95 Irving Street

3. Other Records

City Directories, entries for William James, 1869-1889

personal communication with Jennifer Champa, Harvard Planning and Real Estate, regarding building jacket file at Harvard for 95 Irving Street, December 19, 2000



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WILLIAM JAMES HOUSE
95 IRVING ST.

FROM JAMES JAMES ALBUM



Henry Rand Collection CHC 3712/5A

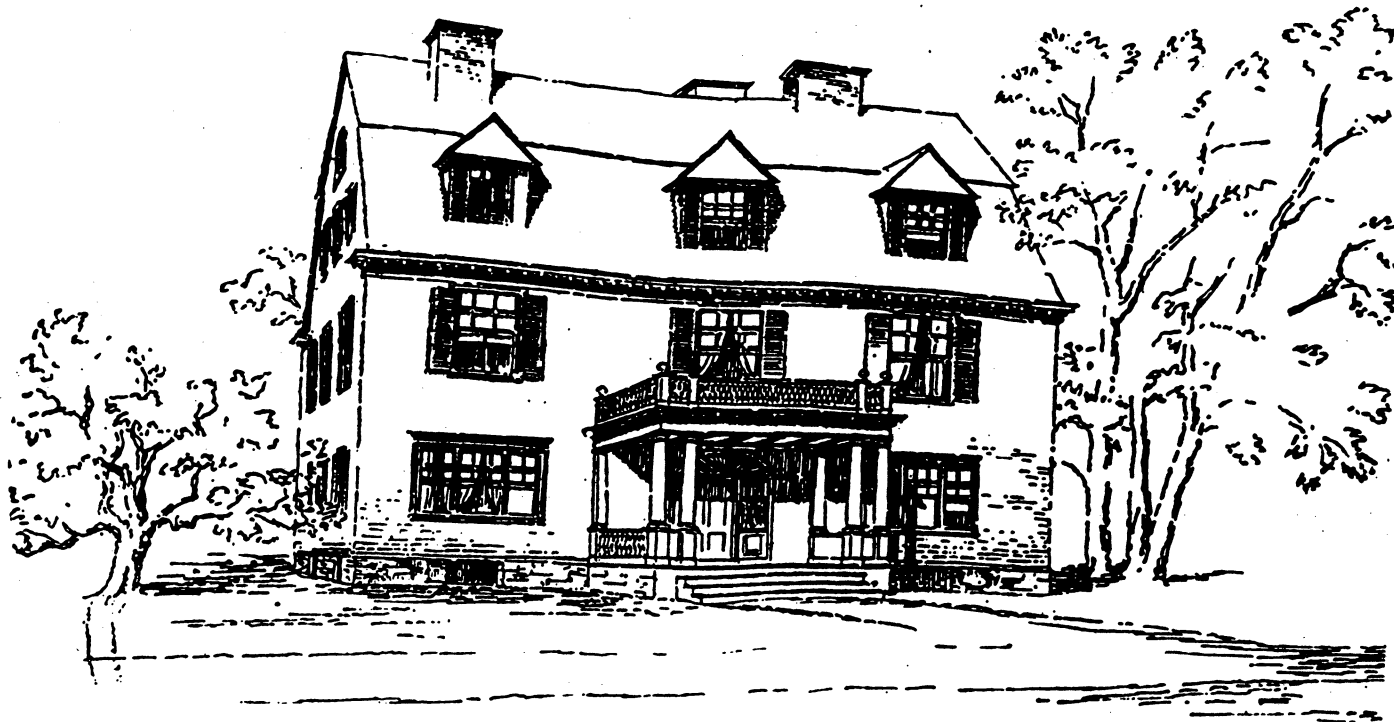
Subject: 957mm 07/24/19

Kirkland Street Mrs. Frank H. Rand's
balcony

Date: 1890-1891 Vol. 2A No. 260

Source: Public Library,
Southwest Harbor, Maine.

Do not copy without permission



W. R. Emerson, Archt.

HOUSE FOR PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES ON IRVING STREET.

Cambridge Tribune
July 27, 1889

IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

The historical significance of the William James House focuses wholly on the immense importance of William James (1842-1910) as a philosopher of international stature, one of the 19th-century's foremost intellects, and a pioneer in the fields of psychology and educational theory.

William James had the house at 95 Irving Street constructed for himself and his family in 1889 and lived there until his death 21 years later. His major work, The Principles of Psychology (1890), was written over a 12-year period preceding the construction of his house. All of his later work was written while James resided on Irving Street and it is this work that established his lasting influence in the fields of philosophy, psychology and educational theory. Among the works James published while resident on Irving Street are The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (1897), Talks to Teachers on Psychology; And to Students on Some of Life's Ideals (1899), The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking (1907), A Pluralistic Universe (1909), The Meaning of Truth (1909), and Some Problems in Philosophy (1911).

The Encyclopedia Britannica identifies James as "a leader of the philosophical movement of Pragmatism and of the psychological movement of functionalism." Of his "Significance and influence", it states:

In psychology, James's work is of course dated, but it is dated as is Galileo's in physics or Charles Darwin's in biology because it is the originative matrix of the great variety of new developments that are the current vogue. In philosophy, his positive work is still prophetic. The world he argued for was soon reflected in the new physics . . . a world of events connected with one another by kinds of next-to-next relations, a world various, manifold, changeful, originating by chance, perpetuated by habits (that the scientists call laws), and transformed by breaks, spontaneities, and freedoms. In human nature, James believed, these visible traits of the world are equally manifest. The real specific event is the individual, whose intervention in history gives it in each case a new and unexpected turn.

Trained as a medical doctor (Harvard, 1869), although he never practiced, James enjoyed a long career at Harvard (1872 to 1907) teaching in a variety of subjects: anatomy, physiology, philosophy and psychology. He held numerous honorary degrees from universities around the world. Equally distinguished as a teacher and a writer, James moved easily within a wide circle of distinguished colleagues and acquaintances, both in the U.S. and abroad. His obituary in the Atlantic Monthly (December, 1910) concluded, "William James was a manly and a radiant being. Loving and loved, he made all men think, and helped many a doubting soul to feel a man's glow of hope and courage, each for his own work. This was a noble task."

James's personal struggles to establish identity and life purpose formed an important basis for his writings. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "James lived his philosophy. It entered into the texture and rhythms of his rich and varied literary style. It determined his attitude toward scientifically-accepted therapies, . . . and repugnant ideals, such as militarism. It made him an anti-imperialist, a defender of the small, the variant, the unprecedented, the weak, wherever and whenever they appeared."

Before being invited to teach at Harvard, James tried a variety of careers, studied painting with William Morris Hunt and travelled on natural history expeditions to the Amazon and Brazil with the naturalist, Louis Agassiz. He later lectured at Stanford University as a visiting professor in 1906 and witnessed the San Francisco earthquake.

William James was the oldest son of Henry James, an important exponent of various spiritual movements, primarily Swedenborgianism, and a brother of the eminent novelist, Henry James. The family of the elder Henry lived in Cambridge from 1866 until the death of Alice James, the diarist and sister of Henry and James, in 1892, residing at 20 Quincy Street (demolished 1930). William James lived in Cambridge for more than 50 years, interrupted only by extended European visits that he made regularly throughout his life. After his marriage in 1878, William James rented houses at a variety of Old Cambridge addresses, including 11 Quincy Street (1882), 15 Appian Way (1884), and 18 Garden Street (1887) before building his own house. The James's also acquired a country house at Chocorua, New Hampshire in 1886.

The house at 95 Irving Street stood within a few blocks of James's father's house and the science classroom buildings of Harvard College. It was also on the edge of the Old Cambridge neighborhood where James had lived for more than 20 years. His eagerness to build his home in the Shady Hill neighborhood can be inferred from the rapidity with which James proceeded with building plans for 95 Irving Street: the building permit for the house (#1575) was issued on February 18, only three days after the Norton subdivision plan was filed at the Registry of Deeds and two weeks before James actually purchased the house lot. The family moved in before the construction was fully completed.

James' obituary makes clear the importance of his home:

From the beginning of their married life in Cambridge, Mr. and Mrs. James showed a hospitality which made them a marvel to their friends. In season and out, all were made welcome. . . . What his home was to others, to him it was more, a thousand-fold. Every one who watched him saw clearly that he owed a distinct portion of his steady growth in tranquillity and power of accomplishment to the home influences – intellectual, physical, and moral – that formed the main background of his life.

B. Architectural Significance

The William James House is architecturally significant as the work of William Ralph Emerson (1833-1918), a Boston architect of the first rank who is best known for his

Shingle Style designs, a number of which a number survive across New England but especially on the Maine coast. Emerson, a distant cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson, trained in the office of Boston architect Jonathan Preston, was a charter member of the Boston Society of Architects, and practiced architecture from 1862 to 1909.

Emerson designed nine houses in Cambridge, although one was never constructed (H. M. Saville House, Concord Avenue) and one has been demolished (F. R. Richards House, 3 Channing Place, 1895-1935). Still standing are: John Allyn House, 11 Berkeley Street, 1886; Lucy Dexter House, 76 Sparks Street, 1886-87; Robert Davis House, 110 Irving Street, 1889; Roland Thaxter House, 7 Scott Street, 1891; Mrs. F. R. Richards House, 182 Brattle Street, 1895; J. Gray House, 12 Walker Street, 1901. Three of Emerson's designs are in the Shady Hill neighborhood: 95 and 110 Irving Street and 7 Scott Street.

Emerson's residential designs are often shingled with classically-derived Colonial Revival details, as Emerson was an early and fervent proponent of preserving New England's 18th-century vernacular architecture. Emerson was one of a number of architects whose designs were codified by Vincent J. Scully, Jr., in The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright (1955), a seminal work which defined the style as a distinct design movement. Roger Reed, author of A Delight to All Who Know It: The Maine Summer Cottages of William R. Emerson (1990), describes him:

Emerson was best known for his innovative work in the Shingle Style, which derived from vernacular architecture of the Colonial period. The most common motif that Emerson employed on his houses was a large gambrel roof which, when covered with shingles, blended with the shingled walls in a way that avoided the rigid distinctions between walls and roof that was inevitable with a hip or gable roof. Similarly, the wings on Shingle Style houses were designed to appear as if they grew out the main block of a building in an organic fashion. The inspiration for this was, of course, vernacular farm houses which were typically enlarged over a period of time.

Of Emerson's Cambridge houses, 11 Berkeley Street, 110 Irving Street, and 76 Sparks Street might be called the most representative of his designs. All incorporate a more elaborate roof plan and massing than 95 Irving Street, and a rangy, additive appearance that characterizes many of Emerson's designs in other towns such as Milton, Massachusetts, where Emerson's own house also still stands. The William James House is somewhat exceptional in its very simple massing, but evidence suggests that William James had considerable input and that the house's design primarily reflects James' thinking and requirements, with the architect employed mainly in a technical capacity.

A set of plans and elevations for the house found in the house by the Estes (phone message of 11/7/81) and cited in a letter from J. S. R. James to Eleanor Pearson of the Historical Commission staff (October 3, 1967) shows many of the major features as built, but others that vary. Changes in such details as the front door design, dormers (shed not gabled), gable end windows, and chimney placement probably reflect James' design ideas. Despite this input, the house design shares recognizable similarities with other

Emerson houses in Cambridge, notably 7 Scott Street and 12 Walker Street, both of which have been altered, but which have simple, rectilinear footprints.

In the simplicity of its form, the William James House anticipates the Colonial Revival style of architecture, which by the end of the 1890s had swept away the organic quirks and asymmetries of the Shingle Style in favor of a more rigid symmetry of plan. The house at 95 Irving Street provides unusual evidence of the design collaboration between an architect and client, a process made all the more exceptional by the stature of the collaborators, James and Emerson.

The interior of the house is outside the scope of authority for landmark designation but the principal rooms of the first and second floor have been preserved. Several significant spaces, most notably William James's library on the first floor, have also been retained in the current renovations.

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Article III, Chapter 2.78.180 a.

The enabling ordinance for landmarks states:

The Historical Commission by majority vote may recommend for designation as a landmark any property within the City being or containing a place, structure, feature or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of its period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures . . .

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

The William James House meets criterion (1) of the enabling ordinance for its important associations with an historic person, William James, and with the broad architectural, cultural, and social history of the City and the Commonwealth, and meets criterion (2) for its architectural significance, in terms of its period, style and associations with a famous architect, William Ralph Emerson, both by itself and in the context of the Shady Hill neighborhood.

The house at 95 Irving Street was built in 1889 for the pre-eminent American philosopher and psychologist, William James, who lived there from 1889 to his death in 1910. James wrote all of the major works of his mature career there and it remained in his family for three generations. Even after 100 years, James's stature as a prominent philosopher and the great influence of his work on intellectual history remain undiminished. More generally, the house contributes significantly to an understanding of the city's long architectural, cultural and social history as a center of life and work for some of the country's leading intellectuals.

Architecturally, the William James House is individually significant as a well-preserved example of the Shingle Style of architecture, a work of the noted architect William Ralph Emerson, and an example of the collaboration between a skilled architect and an important client heavily engaged in the design process. The house is also significant as part of a late 19th-century neighborhood of considerable architectural and historical importance.

VI. Recommendations

A. Article III, Chapter 2.78.140

The purpose of landmark designation is contained in the enabling ordinance, which is to:

preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of . . . site and structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; [and] to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such . . . structures . . .

B. Preservation Options

Preservation of the William James House has been the subject of an effort on the part of interested academics and individuals in the fields of philosophy and psychology to prevent alterations to the interior and exterior features of the house and, in recognition of James's importance, to retain the property, either in museum or Harvard university ownership, as William James knew it. The only means of achieving that goal would have been at the time of the property's sale by the Estes and if they, or an intermediary buyer, had been willing to place restrictive easements against the alteration of the exterior and significant interiors.

The possibility of the current owner donating a preservation easement on portions of the exterior and interior of the house remains open, but as the project to create two condominium units in the house nears completion, it is unlikely that any further work on the house will be undertaken in the near future. Long-term preservation of significant interior features cannot be accomplished at this time through the city's landmark designation process.

Preservation easements may be donated to the Historical Commission or another qualified historic preservation organization under Chapter 184 of the Massachusetts General Laws. An easement is a "non-possessory right to control what happens to buildings or land owned by others." It is voluntarily conveyed by the property owner to an entity, such as the Historical Commission, which holds the right and enforces the terms. To be effective, the easement must protect the publicly visible features of the property from alteration without the Commission's prior review. It may also be drafted to allow specific development opportunities to take place or to protect significant interior features.

Donation of an easement encourages private investment in significant buildings with no corresponding expenditure of public funds. Under Internal Revenue Service regulations, the value of an easement on a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places may be taken as a charitable deduction on personal income taxes. The value of an

easement is calculated by taking the difference between “before” and “after” appraisals of the property. However, the rules for charitable contribution deductions for preservation easements are very technical. Any property owner considering the donation of an easement should consult a qualified tax consultant relative to the specific circumstances.

Preservation easements protect significant property in a similar manner to landmarking, that is, through review and approval of the Historical Commission and issuance of a certificate of appropriateness or hardship for any proposed repairs or alterations that affect protected portions of the property. Unlike landmarking, a preservation easement may have certain financial benefits for an owner and can address the protection of significant interior features.

The property is located in an area which would qualify either as a local historic district under Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws or as a neighborhood conservation district under city ordinance. Either of these options, if pursued, would likely require that publicly-visible alterations be approved by a preservation commission prior to being made. Landmark designation has the benefit of assuring that that protection will take place immediately upon City Council action to designate, with no delays for the further study that district designation would require.

Designation of the William James House as a landmark would establish a process wherein “the Historical Commission . . . shall review all construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color,” of the landmark. Chapter 2.78.210 states, “No building permit for alteration of an exterior architectural feature of a landmark . . . and no demolition permit for demolition or removal of a landmark . . . shall be issued by the City or any department thereof until the certificate required by this article has been issued by the Historical Commission . . .”

A certificate of appropriateness, hardship or non-applicability is issued by the Historical Commission depending on the nature of the alteration or construction proposed for the landmark. Applications for certificates of appropriateness or hardship are reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, with 14 days notice provided to affected parties by legal notice and first class mail. The staff issues certificates of non-applicability administratively. The intent of the review process is to prevent “developments incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance or the distinctive character of the landmark” (2.78.220) The designation report may be drafted to allow specific development opportunities to take place.

C. Staff Recommendation

It is the staff recommendation that the Historical Commission recommend the William James House to the City Council for designation as a landmark. It is the further recommendation that donation of an easement be pursued with the owner and that consideration should be given to protecting significant aspects of the original interior, particularly the principal rooms, including William James’ study, of the first two floors.

VII. Standards and Criteria

A. Introduction

Under Article III, the Historical Commission is charged with reviewing any construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features (other than color) of a landmark. This report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics that led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, the exterior architectural features described in this report should be preserved and/or enhanced in any proposed alteration or construction that affects those features of the landmark. The standards following in paragraphs B and C of this section provide specific guidelines for the treatment of the landmark described in this report.

B. General Standards and Criteria

Subject to review and approval of exterior architectural features under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. Significant historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark, which have taken place over time, are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions shall not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinct character of the landmark, neighborhood, and environment.
8. New additions should be done in a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark should be unimpaired.

C. Suggested Review Guidelines

1. Site

- a. Retain the open, landscaped character of the south side yard; disallow construction of any permanent structures that would diminish or destroy the appearance of the south side yard as a landscaped amenity of the house
- b. Remove an inappropriate solid, six-foot board fence that currently runs along Irving Street enclosing the south side yard; replace with a fence allowing at least partial

views into the yard from the street and in a design compatible with the period and style of the house

c. Retain, or replace in kind, a carriage-step block of white marble that is installed in the street curb directly in front of the front entrance and directly aligned with the front entrance

2. Current Conditions

a. Front (east) elevation: Maintain as shown in James family album photograph on file at Houghton Library (see attached)

b. South elevation: The two principal elevations, from a public visibility standpoint, are the façade and the south elevation. As it is currently being constructed, the south elevation includes the addition of a side porch, French doors, and a second-story deck which diminish the original character of the house as it existed during William James's occupancy. The porch occupies the location of the principal window lighting the library on the ground floor, a three-part sash like that which appears on the north corner of the first floor of the façade. Given the significance of the library to the history of the house and its associations with William James, consideration should be given to reinstating the south elevation to be consistent with its appearance during William James's occupancy and as shown in a photograph of 1890-91 from the Henry Rand Collection, Southwest Harbor, Maine (see attached)

c. Rear (west) elevation: As the least visible elevation of the house, the west elevation can more readily accommodate modifications from the original appearance of the house. Consideration should be given to retaining the original library window opening. The original footprint of the ell should be maintained insofar as possible.

d. North elevation: Consideration should be given to retaining all fenestration and entrances as they appear in plans approved as part of the certificates issued in case 1001.

VIII. Proposed Order

ORDERED:

That the William James House, 95 Irving Street, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on _____ . The premises so designated are defined as parcel 81 of assessor's map 146 and recorded in book 13783, page 105 of the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds.

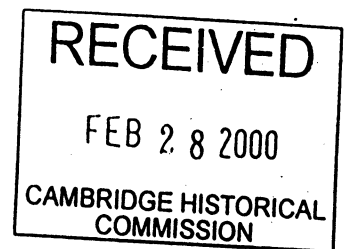
This designation is justified by the important associations of the William James House with the pre-eminent philosopher William James (1842-1910), who built the house in 1889 for himself and resided there for the rest of his life, producing the major works of his career while resident at 95 Irving Street; as the home of James' family for three generations and one of a number of distinguished houses in the Shady Hill neighborhood, the William James House is further associated with the broad architectural, cultural, and social history of the City, which has long been a center of life and work for some of the country's leading intellectuals; the house also possesses architectural significance as a well-preserved Shingle Style house by noted Boston architect William Ralph Emerson, and for its contributions to the Shady Hill neighborhood, an intact late 19th-century residential enclave of architecturally-important residences.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of 95 Irving Street, that would in either case be visible from a public way, without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the landmark designation report, and by Section VII, Standards and Criteria, of the landmark designation report, and by the applicable sections of Article 2.78.

Appendix 1

William James House
95 Irving Street
L-59

Letters submitted in support of landmark study and designation



37 Walker Street
Cambridge, Ma 02138

February 20, 2000

The Cambridge Historical Commission
681 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Ma 02139

Dear Commissioners:

Although I cannot attend the meeting on March 4, as a Clinical Psychologist, Cambridge resident, and interested citizen, I want to testify on behalf of the landmark status of the William James House, as well as express my dismay at the changes to the property that are underway.

The house and garden at 95 Irving were the home and workshop of the father of American psychology, pioneer in physiological psychology, and founder-leader of the philosophical movement American Pragmatism. As the historian who attended the commission's site visit on February 16 noted, here is where William James, inspired he said by the expansive vista south from his attic study, produced The Varieties of Religious Experience.

The internal alterations entailed by the conversion project affect the heart of the house that was key to James' creative process, including punched-out walls in the downstairs library and a total reconfiguration of that attic, eliminating the original study! External changes are also extensive and substantive, especially to the back of the house, including additions, a two-car garage (or is it two?), a deck, a large multi-paned window, and a parapet. These would create a visual hodgepodge and encroach on the space so that a passerby on Francis Ave would see "Any House USA," the integrity and original feeling of the house in its context completely altered.

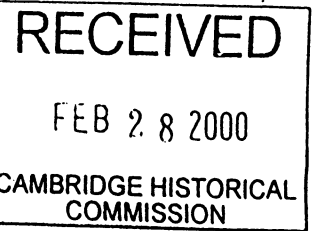
I very much hope that you will grant this nationally important historic site the landmark protection it not only deserves but badly needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela A. Raskin Ph.D." in a cursive style.

Pamela A. Raskin, Ph.D.

P.S. Since I live in another part of the city, I write not as a resident of the Irving-Francis neighborhood, but out of general concern for the preservation of the William James house.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Daniel L. Schacter
Professor of Psychology
Chair

230 William James Hall
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-3800

February 24, 2000

William B. King
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge landmark.

I was distressed to learn that the blue historic marker – which your Commission has issued for very few Cambridge houses – carries no protection. This comes as a great surprise to those of us who assumed that the sign meant that the house was protected.

I was even more distressed when it was brought to my attention that your Executive Director (Mr. Sullivan) is opposed to granting landmark status to the William James house – even though his staff found that it meets the Commission's criterion for designation, and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted. In view of these considerations, it is difficult to understand why the house is not designated as a historical landmark.

While I am not competent to judge the architectural distinction of the house, because the William James house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and because the city's criteria for listing are based on these standards, the house would appear to meet the architectural distinction criterion.

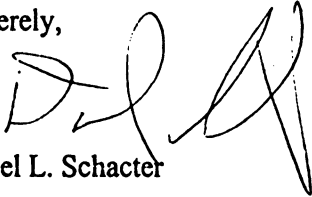
As a Professor of Psychology, I can, however, attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: It is a place and a structure that is importantly associated with an historic person, and with the broad social and cultural history of the City and the Commonwealth. The house is importantly associated with William James, the founder of psychology in the United States and one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history.

The fact that Harvard University chose to name the structure that houses its social science departments after William James, including the Department of Psychology that I chair – the largest and tallest building on the campus – is a clear indication of his monumental importance.

I have been told that at the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge cannot attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, it is crucial to appreciate that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in American science and culture who is still revered by scholars today. The City of Cambridge should recognize James' special place in American intellectual history by taking steps to preserve the historical integrity of his former home.

The William James house at 95 Irving Street deserves to be a designated landmark. I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2nd.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Schacter

DLS/ih

cc: Member of the Cambridge Historical Commission:

Allison Crump

M. Wyllis Bibbons

Suzanne Green

Helen F. Moulton

Robert G. Neiley

Jo M. Dolet

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission

Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner, Cambridge Historical Commission

President Neil L. Rudenstine

Dean Jeremy Knowles

WOLF

8 Francis Avenue
Cambridge
Massachusetts
02138
617-492-2167

RECEIVED

FEB 29 2000

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

February 27, 2000

William B. King, Chair
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

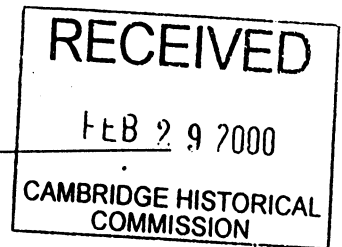
Dear Mr. King:

We are writing to urge the Cambridge Historical Commission to accept the petition to grant landmark status to the William James house at 95 Irving Street. Many others have written eloquently about the details of the current situation and we will not repeat their compelling arguments with which we concur. Rather, we want to emphasize the very special history of this house and its surroundings.

William James was the most renowned of a group of intellectuals who lived in the Irving/Francis Street neighborhood since before the turn of the last century. Though James was the most famous and his house the most distinguished of their residences, the neighborhood boasted such men as Howard Mumford Jones who was born in 1892 and lived at 10 Francis until the 1970s in a house that abutted that of William James. His *Varieties of American Experience* was the complement to James *Varieties of Religious Experience* and he was one of America's great man of letters.

Across from Jones and within sight of the James house lived John Livingston Lowes (1867-1945) at 7 Francis Avenue. He was also James' contemporary and his work on Chaucer and Coleridge was ground-breaking. A few houses down the street, also within view of the James house at 22 Francis lived Henry A. Murray, who along with James was one of Harvard's great psychologists. His *Explorations in Personality* was a classic and he became famous for his development of the thematic apperception test. It is he for whom Harvard's Henry A. Murray Center has been named.

Across the street from the James house, was the home of poet e. e. cummings. And in our house, which abuts the James house, lived Professor Woodward, perhaps Harvard's most popular music professor who built the glee club and who delighted in hosting intellectuals from abroad, including London's Leonard Woolf who was a guest at Harvard one semester in the 1940s.



The list goes on to this day: Henry Louis Gates Jr., the African American scholar, has lovingly restored Murray's house while Justin Kaplan (the distinguished humanist) and John Kenneth Galbraith (world renowned economist) have maintained their historic houses just as they continue the great intellectual tradition established by James and his contemporaries.

We cite these names among so many others that we could mention simply to make a point. The history of this tiny neighborhood, for many years called "Professors Row," has been home to great American intellectuals. That history deserves to be recognized. And there is no better way to do so than to make sure that at least the most important domicile of the most famous of these great thinkers is preserved. Most of us on these two streets (Francis and Irving) have cherished their history by leaving the exteriors of our houses as they were when the scholars lived in them. We regard ourselves as caretakers as well as owners of these properties.

When Chase Peterson sold the James house to Harvard in 1978, we were among the fortunate neighbors who noticed that the Petersons were having a lawn sale to dispose of some of the items they were not taking with them. Among our most cherished possessions are four books signed by members of the James family and a leather screen that belonged to William James that we have had restored at the Williamstown Art Conservation Lab. We are pleased that even though these items are no longer in the William James house, that James' spirit lives nearby in ours.

We urge you to do your part in celebrating this glorious history of our community by keeping the house intact as an important historic landmark.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennie Palmer Wolf".

Dennie Palmer Wolf

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Wolf".

Thomas Wolf

cc: CHC Vice Chair Alison Crump
CHC Members M. Wyllis Bibbins, Suzanne Green,
Helen F. Moulton, Robert G. Neiley, Jo M. Solet
CHC Executive Director Charles M. Sullivan

RECEIVED
FEB 29 2000
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

PHILIP S. HOLZMAN, PH.D.
Esther and Sidney R. Rabb
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-3878, Fax (617) 496-8328
Email psh@wjh.harvard.edu



DIRECTOR, LABORATORY
OF PSYCHOLOGY
McLEAN HOSPITAL
115 Mill Street
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 855-2416, Fax 855-2778

February 27, 2000

Cambridge Historical Commission
Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd floor
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

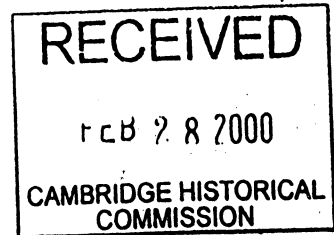
We are deeply concerned residents of Cambridge who are writing to you about what we consider to be unrestrained renovations to 95 Irving Street. We reside at 7 Francis Avenue, which is close to 95 Irving Street. We are upset not only about the changes that have already been made to the interior of this magnificent historical house, but also about the proposed changes to the exterior, which will unalterably damage the architectural esthetics.

As you know, William James built this house in 1889, when he was a member of the Harvard University faculty. He engaged the distinguished American architect William Emerson to draw up the plans, and the house is a splendid example of New England architecture at the close of the 19th century. It, therefore, has an architectural significance as well as historical one. William James was perhaps the most influential of American psychologists and philosophers, and his influence continues to this day. He wrote his most important books while living and working in this house. In his private correspondence he describes how the ambiance of his library, (now, alas, gutted) inspired him to pen some of his most important insights. James was a product of Cambridge. He attended the Lawrence Scientific School and the Harvard Medical School. He taught at Harvard until his death and bridged the disciplines of psychology and philosophy. No psychologist is more universally known cited and revered than is William James.

We strongly urge you and the other members of the Cambridge Historical Commission to grant Landmark Status to 95 Irving Street. If the Commission fails to take this action, it would be a misfortune for all of us. It would also be being particularly ironic at this time, when the Commission, whose mission is to protect historic properties within Cambridge, is presenting an award for preservation that protects historic buildings within one of three neighborhoods that includes 95 Irving Street.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Holzman
Hannah Holzman



William J. Goode
12 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 0213

February 23, 2000

William B. King,
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark.

The James house was for decades the most distinguished house, especially inside, of all the Cambridge houses. It bore a blue marker outside to denote its historical importance---or so we thought who passed by it, or went inside as visitors and friends. Now we learn that the marker protects nothing at all, and we hear that the developer was given oral permission to plunge ahead with the work of destruction. We are very disappointed, and think a great opportunity is being lost.

I was especially distressed to learn that your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, who is supposed to care about protecting historical property, gave the developer permission to go ahead with her plans to dismantle much of this historic building. Instead of bringing her destructive plans to the attention of the Commission, he held private meetings with her and encouraged her to proceed.

It is very strange behavior from a person who has been given custody of the public trust to preserve historical property.

I now learn that Mr. Sullivan is also opposed to granting Landmark status to the William James house -- even though his staff found that it meets the Commissions criteria for designation and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted.

I do not understand this irresponsible behavior, but it does seem self-evident that the William James house meets both criteria for landmark status -its architectural distinction and because it was the home of William James. Either one of these criteria is enough for the house to be given landmark status. With both, I do not see how the Commission can deny landmark status to the William James house.

While I am not competent to judge the architectural distinction of the house, I understand that because the William James house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and because the city's criteria for listing are based on their standards, it would seem self-evident that the house clearly meets the criteria for architectural distinction.

Since I served as a professor of sociology in three of the most important departments (Columbia University, Stanford, and Harvard) I can, however, attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: James was a historic figure. He looms large in the history of my own field, in psychology, and in American letters generally. (He also wrote better, many of us think, than did his brother Henry.) He was important enough for Harvard to name its entire facility for the social sciences in his honor. William James Hall is the largest and tallest building on the campus -- a clear indication of his monumental importance.

At the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge can not attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, you must understand that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in America. The city of Cambridge should recognize that by taking this step to preserve the historical integrity of his house and not let it be turned into a modernized condominium.

The William James house at 95 Irving Street clearly deserves to be a designated landmark.

I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William J. Goode', written in a cursive style.

William J. Goode

cc: members of the Cambridge Historical Commission:

Allison Crump,

M Wyllis Bibbons,

Suzanne Green,

Helen F. Moulton,

Robert G. Neiley,

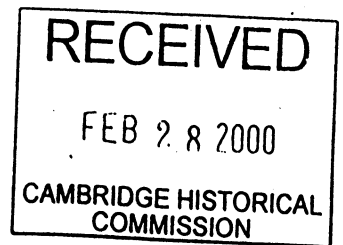
Jo M. Solet.

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director,

Cambridge Historical Commission

Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner,

Cambridge Historical Commission



Wendy K. Mariner
John T. Nagurney
10 Francis Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

February 25, 2000

William B. King, Chair
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. King:

We are writing to urge the Cambridge Historical Commission to accept the petition to grant landmark status to the William James house at 95 Irving Street.

1. The William James house is indisputably qualified for and entitled to landmark status. It meets not just one, but both criteria for designation. Members of the Commission undoubtedly have received letters describing the significance of the house and its illustrious occupant, William James. We trust that there is no need to repeat that evidence here. Few other properties that have already been approved as landmarks have either the historical or architectural importance of the William James house.

It would be noticeably odd if Cambridge refused to grant landmark status to the house that has already qualified for a place in the National Register under the very same criteria.

Failure to approve the petition could create an uncomfortable precedent that could preclude the Commission from landmarking other buildings that do not rise the level of significance of the William James house.

Indeed, in view of the overwhelming evidence supporting the petition, including the Commission's own staff report, the Commission would be justified in expediting its process by accepting the petition and recommending landmark status immediately.

2. The house has always been known as the William James House, and not as 95 Irving Street. After the James family sold the house in 1968, all subsequent owners had preserved the history, appearance, and function of the house--until now. The most recent former owners, William Estes, Professor and former Chair of the Psychology Department at Harvard University, and his wife Kay, proudly shared its legacy. They opened the house to the neighborhood annually for parties and described the history of the house and the James family to anyone who would listen; and everyone listened eagerly. Bill Estes brought students into the famous library for seminars and history lessons, as well as camaraderie.

Appreciation of the house has not been limited to neighbors, friends, and students. Many people--from Cambridge and all over the country--come to the neighborhood to savor a quiet walk and the opportunity to ponder the past. The house is the jewel in the crown of a unique Cambridge neighborhood that welcomes everyone to enjoy its repose.

Everyone we know, including Bill and Kay Estes, believed that the house was legally protected as an historical landmark by the Historical Commission and under strict rules as to what could and could not be done with it. We pointed to the blue marker as evidence that it would be preserved, as it has been since 1889. The marker gave everyone the (apparently false) sense of security that the house could not be altered or reconfigured. Now that the error has been discovered, it is time to correct it by giving legal recognition to the reality of the landmark.

3. Landmark status is the only status that is warranted. Nothing else will do.

In the absence of landmark status, an owner's assurances that all will be well are unenforceable and, therefore, meaningless. Noting that assurances are not legally binding says nothing at all about the owner, of course. It simply recognizes that, without landmarking the house, an owner is under no obligation whatsoever to do even what he says he will do. Moreover, when the house is reconstructed into units and those units are sold to new owners, which could happen as soon as this summer, the new owners are free to do whatever they like with the house within the constraints of zoning requirements. The only mechanism for protecting the house is to grant it landmark status. Alternatives, such as a preservation easement, do not provide adequate protection.

If an owner does intend to comply with Historical Commission requirements, then there is no reason not to landmark the house. Indeed, the current owner has not offered any argument against landmark status. Her stated reason for objecting to the petition is that it would be an additional burden. But how can this be if she intends to comply with Historical Commission requirements?

We can think of only two reasons why a owner would object to landmark status: a developer plans to create units to sell for the highest possible market price, and landmark status might bring a lower price; and a developer wants to change, or preserve the option to change, the house in ways that would not be permitted if the house were landmarked. These are not reasons to deny landmark status. On the contrary, they are reasons to grant landmark status.

It is no answer to say that Cambridge cannot landmark every building. In principle, of course, Cambridge could landmark every important building that meets the criteria. But in reality, the William James house is so clearly significant that granting it landmark status will in no way commit the Commission to landmark the home of every Cambridge professor.

Nor should the Commission give any weight to the claim that the Commission should not spend "scarce" resources to study the house. The study is virtually complete now. Substantial--perhaps sufficient--study has already been done in connection with the establishment of the Shady Hill National Register District to support a landmark recommendation. Moreover, many knowledgeable individuals stand ready to volunteer any additional information the Commission may need to expedite the process.

Nonetheless, even if the Commission accepts the petition, it remains possible to create a preservation easement during the investigation period. It is our opinion, however, that a reasonable easement would not be accepted by the developer, so that this is not a realistic option.

We believe that landmark status is indisputably warranted on the merits and we have confidence that the Commission will act on the merits. If the Commission were to deny landmark status, it would surely shock not only the neighborhood, but also the citizens of Cambridge and the rest of the country.

4. Time is of the essence.

The pace of demolition work on the house appears to have speeded up since the first meeting of the Historical Commission on February 6, 2000. Immediately after the site visit on February 17, we observed workers opening the roof, presumably to raise the roof to create an adequate height for living space in the attic (fourth) floor and to punch out space for decks overlooking the neighborhood. (William James did not need room-size ceilings to write; the unfinished attic eyrie afforded him the rustic privacy not found in ordinary-sized rooms.)


Our concern about the ongoing demolition and alterations is heightened by our review of the building permit application for work on the house. The size and nature of the demolition and additions are substantially more extensive than the description in the building permit application. It appears that the permit should not have been issued in the first place because the work requires zoning relief. The developer has changed plans more than once, apparently after being advised that her plans required zoning relief. Rather than seek such relief, which would require notification of the neighborhood, changes were submitted that were claimed not to require zoning relief. We understand that there may have been more revisions since the Commission's site visit. The neighborhood has requested that the building permit be revoked because it was issued in error, and we intend to seek an appeal of a denial of our request. Thus, the developer cannot guarantee to the Commission that her current plans, whatever they may be, are either lawfully permitted or will be implemented as planned.

William B. King, Chair

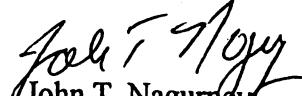
Page Four

We respectfully urge the Commission to accept and approve the petition to designate the William James house as an historical landmark. If we can assist the Commission in any way, we are at your disposal.

Sincerely,



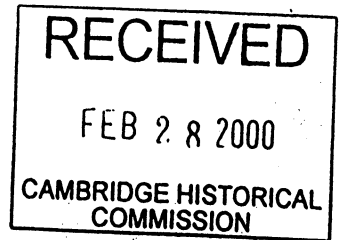
Wendy K. Mariner



John T. Nagurney

cc: Allison M. Crump, Vice Chair
M. Wyllis Bibbins
Suzanne R. Green
Helen F. Moulton
Robert G. Neiley
Jo M. Solet
Jennifer Jones
Anthony C. Platt

Lenore J. Weitzman
14 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138



February 23, 2000

William B. King
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark.

It seems self-evident that the William James house meets the criteria for landmark status -it is architecturally distinguished and it was the home of an American literary giant, William James. Either one of these criteria is enough for the house to be given landmark status. With both, I do not see how the Commission can deny landmark status to the William James house.

The architectural merit is clear from the fact that the house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Because the city's criteria for listing are based on their standards, it would seem self-evident that the house clearly meets the architectural distinction criteria.

As a Professor of Sociology I can attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: it is a place and a structure that is importantly associated with an historic person and with the broad social and cultural history of the City and the Commonwealth. The house is importantly associated with William James, the founder of psychology in the United States and one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history.

William James was important enough for Harvard to name its entire facility for the social sciences in his honor. William James Hall is the largest and tallest building on the campus -- a clear indication of his monumental importance.

I was distressed to learn that the blue historic marker-- which your Commission has issued for very few Cambridge houses -- carries no protection whatsoever. It is clearly misleading to the those of us who assumed it meant the house was protected.

I was even more distressed to learn that your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan has been meeting privately with the developer who bought the house, has given her informal permission to dismantle the property, and is publicly opposing the granting of Landmark status to the William James house -- even though his staff found that it meets the Commissions criteria for designation and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted.

At the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge can not attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, you must understand that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in America. The city of Cambridge should recognize that by taking this step to preserve the historical integrity of his house and not let it be turned into a modernized condominium.

In summary, the William James house at 95 Irving Street clearly deserves to be a designated landmark.

I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2.

Sincerely,



Lenore J. Weitzman

cc: members of the Cambridge Historical Commission and
Allison Crump, Vice Chair
M Wyllis Bibbons,
Suzanne Green,
Helen F. Moulton,
Robert G. Neiley,
Jo M. Solet.
Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director,
Cambridge Historical Commission
Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner,
Cambridge Historical Commission

Date sent: Thu, 02 Mar 2000 14:30:08 -0500
Subject: William James House
From: "jane kamine" <eeandus@mediaone.net>
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us
Copies to: davidh@bwh.harvard.edu



To: Cambridge Historical Commission
Re: William James House Landmark Designation

We favor the initiation and approval of this property as an historic landmark. The fact that it has not been a designated and protected landmark comes as a surprise to many who know of James' importance. There were and are many influential figures in Cambridge, but long-time residents Longfellow and James share worldwide significance. These are sites which distinguish Cambridge and they deserve to be visited, celebrated and preserved.

Jane Kamine
David Holtzman
5 Scott Street
Cambridge, 02138

Forwarded by: "Kathleen L. Rawlins" <krawlins@CI.Cambridge.MA.US>
Forwarded to: sburks
Date forwarded: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:33:36 -0500
From: AFBernays@aol.com
Date sent: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:11:19 EST
Subject: (no subject)
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us



As abutters of the William James House on Irving Street, we object to the proposed "renovations" now under consideration and urge you to designate this important house a landmark house. To fail to do this suggests a serious lack of concern for Cambridge intellectual and architectural history.

Sincerely,

Justin Kaplan and Anne Bernays
16 Francis Ave.
Cambridge, Ma 02138

Forwarded by: "Kathleen L. Rawlins" <krawlins@CI.Cambridge.MA.US>
Forwarded to: sburks
Date forwarded: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:02:43 -0500
From: Jknames@aol.com
Date sent: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 11:17:39 EST
Subject: William James House
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us



As a professional literary historian and biographer as well as an abutter, I recognize the crucial importance of the William James House. As others have pointed out, this is not just another eminent professor's house. William James is a major figure in American intellectual and literary history, a member of a family (the Jameses) that remains a national treasure. If any house in Cambridge deserves landmarking it is surely 95 Irving Street. As I write this to you I can see, from my study window, the rapid desecration of the William James House. IBut it is not too late to call a halt.

Respectfully yours,

Justin Kaplan
16 Francis Avenue

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

120 HAVILAND HALL # 7400
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-7400
(510) 642-4341
(510) 643-6126 (FAX)

January 31, 2000

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I am writing to request that the Cambridge Historical Commission consider designating the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark. He lived there the last 21 years of his life, from 1889-1910, and completed ALL of his major works in psychology and philosophy there, including Principles of Psychology (1890), Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), Pragmatism (1907), The Meaning of Truth (1909) and A Pluralistic Universe (1909).

After partly designing the house himself, and pestering the architect, William Ralph Emerson, for months with suggested changes, William James and family moved into 95 Irving Street in the fall of 1889, with carpenters and painters still finishing up. The house "was a gracious residence with a large entrance hall, a welcoming parlor, and its most prized feature, a grand library--more than twenty-two feet wide and twenty-seven feet long--with floor-to-ceiling bookcases, a wide fireplace, and a generous desk....Its southern exposure made the room unusually bright and cheerful; from its many windows, one could look out on the lawn, the garden, and the woods through which Irving Street had been cut. The library connected with the parlor, allowing James to jump from his desk and join visitors" (Simon, 1998, p. 228). In a letter to Henry James on December 15, 1889, William says "At home I am in Elysium. I didn't know that material comfort could do a man such inward good." It is here in his library on the first floor, and standing at a desk in the attic that he completed works in psychology and philosophy that made him recognized as the outstanding psychologist in the United States, and one of the country's most eminent philosophers.

By chance, I had the unnerving experience of attending a real-estate Halloween fundraising party in this house on October 28, 1999. The motif was black and orange balloons, fake cobwebs and spiders on the walls, and a "blues brothers" band in the library, with real estate agents in Halloween costumes dancing up a storm in a house with the downstairs largely emptied, the kitchen gutted, and upstairs rooms boarded off.

On one hand, it was a thrill sitting for hours in the former library, thinking of the array of people who had visited James there. On the other hand, it was disconcerting to hear that the house had been sold to a developer, and hearing of plans to divide the house into two units with modifications which might be made.

It can be argued that William James was one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history, and a significant figure in the history of Western philosophy and psychology. He is seen as the single most eminent founder of psychology in the United States, and an important figure in the history of Western philosophy, with a current resurgence of interest in pragmatism.

The Modern Library had a panel of intellectuals who nominated a list of the "100 Best Nonfiction Books of the 20th Century" (in English), with William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* as second on the list. Other ratings were 1. *The Education of Henry Adams* by Henry Adams, 2. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James, 3. *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, 4. *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, 5. *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, 6. *Selected Essays, 1917-1932* by T. S. Eliot, 7. *The Double Helix* by James D. Watson, and so on up to 100. It is, I am sure, unwise to make too much of such a list, but the general point is that James is in the most distinguished intellectual company, and that 95 Irving Street is where much of this work was done.

In preparing for the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh which were published as *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James wrote to his brother Henry on February 20, 1899, that "I must work unremittingly all that year for my second Gifford course, and one's own library is the place for that.... When I get into my bare attic room, fifty-two feet long and nothing in it but a table, a standing desk, and an arm chair, paper, inkstand and the books I bring up; flooded with warm white winter sunshine, I get a feeling of seclusion and power which I am sure that nothing on the Continent of Europe could give me." In search of a cure for his heart problems in Germany, James ended up writing some of the lectures in Europe, and finishing them at his home back in the United States. His library on the first floor, with photos enclosed, and his working place in the attic are important creative sites in American, Cambridge, and even Western History which justify considering the house as a designated landmark.

I realize that Cambridge can not preserve the house of every distinguished intellectual who lived here, or the whole town would grind to a halt. It can be argued, however, that William James was not just a run-of-the-mill distinguished Harvard professor, but an important figure in American cultural and intellectual history, even in the history of Western philosophy and psychology. The country, and the city of Cambridge, have an obligation to do better by a central cultural figure than letting his house be turned into a modernized condominium. At the very least, William James' s house at 95 Irving Street deserves serious consideration as a designated landmark.

Sincerely,

William M. Runyan

William McKinley Runyan
 Professor, School of Social Welfare
 Affiliated Professor, Psychology Department
 University of California at Berkeley.

P.S. This year I am a Visiting Scholar in the Human Development and Psychology Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, with past books on Life Histories and Psychobiography, and Psychology and Historical Interpretation, working on a book about the biographical side of the history of psychology.

**Current address: 872 Mass. Ave., Apt 1003
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-4777**



Figure 4 Henry and William James (ca. 1902/*p*fMS AM 1092 box 2).

speaking, had been chosen for him by his father. Alice was a 27-year-old school-teacher who shared his interests in European culture, literary tastes, and a liberal world view. The marriage also seems to have initiated a lengthy period of serious psychosomatic illness in James's only sister Alice, a condition from which she never recovered.

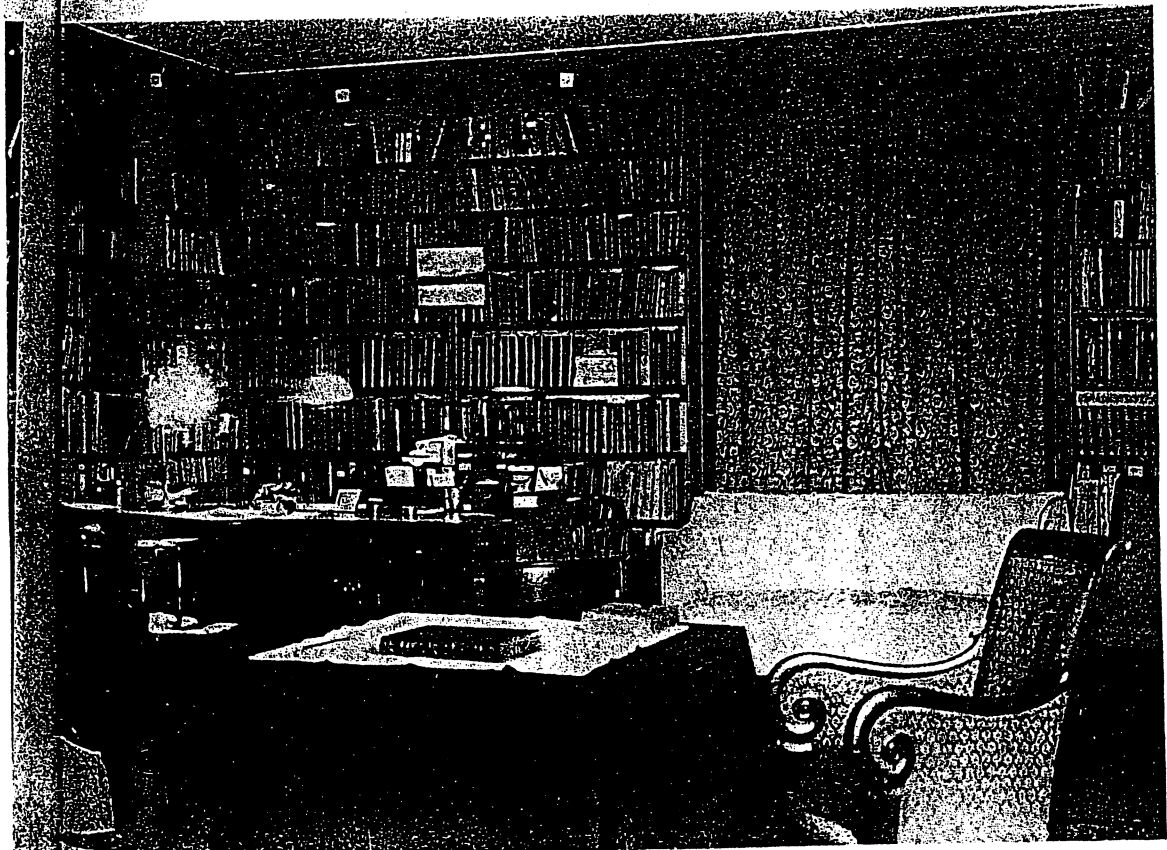
In 1879, William's first son, Henry James (1879–1947), who was named after his paternal grandfather and uncle, was born. It was also during that same year that James began to offer regular courses in philosophy. Less than a year later, in 1880, he received a professorial appointment in philosophy at Harvard. Promotions to full professorship in philosophy and the sub-discipline of psychology followed in 1885 and 1889, respectively. The 1880s also brought many dramatic changes in the family constellation. In 1882 alone, James's mother died from pneumonia; in June his second son, William James (1882–1916), was born; and in December his father died "tranquil and painlessly" at the age of 71. A third son, Herman James, "a beautiful, Jewish-looking, sturdy and lively boy" was born in January of 1884. However, Herman became ill with whooping cough and died from pneumonia in June of the next



Figure 5 The James residence at 95 Irving Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts in winter (*p*fMS AM 1092).



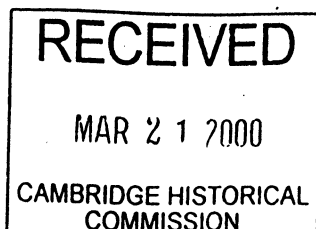
(Right) William James in 1907.
(Below) William James's library and study at 95 Irving Street (1923)



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
EMERSON HALL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138
(617) 495-2191



March 17, 2000

Sarah J. Zimmerman
Preservation Planner
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sarah J. Zimmerman,

I understand that 95 Irving Street, Cambridge (the former house of William James and his family) is under consideration for landmark status.

As a philosopher who has, along with my wife, Ruth Anna Putnam, written and taught about William James I thought it important that the Cambridge Historical Commission understand James's remarkable and innovative contributions to philosophy and American thought. James taught at Harvard first as a professor of psychology and later as a professor of philosophy—his intellectual reach and influence, however, extend far beyond his role(s) at Harvard.

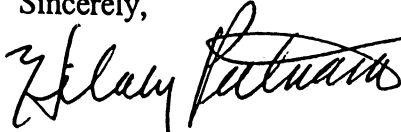
James made seminal contributions (most written from 95 Irving Street) in many areas of philosophy. His writings have been linked with those of Dewey and Peirce, and compared with those of Wittgenstein. Bertrand Russell wrote in 1921 "Their views [the 'new realists'], which are chiefly held in America, are in large measure derived from William James, and before going further it will be well to consider the revolutionary doctrine which he advocated. I believe this doctrine contains important new truth, and what I have to say will be in a considerable measure inspired by it."

A number of my writings, and those of my colleagues across America and around the world, grapple with the extremely complex views of William James. His Pragmatism and his Essay in Radical Empiricism are "required reading" for any serious student of philosophy—or for that matter of American thought.

James's thinking is as valuable and as relevant as ever. As I concluded one of the chapters in my book Pragmatism: "If there is one overriding reason for being concerned with James's thought, it is that he was a genius who was concerned with real hungers, and whose thought, whatever its shortcomings, provides substantial food for thought—and not just for thought, but for life."

One of America's greatest philosophers lived and worked and wrote and taught at 95 Irving Street. It is only fitting that William James's legacy be permanently recognized by designating 95 Irving Street with landmark status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary Putnam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hilary Putnam,
Cogan University Professor

RECEIVED

MAR 16 2000

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

March 16, 2000

Sarah J. Zimmerman
Preservation Planner
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sally Zimmerman,

I am writing to you, and the Cambridge Historical Commission, in support of providing 95 Irving Street, Cambridge, the former home of William James and his family, with landmark designation status (Case L-59). I understand that a study is currently underway. Almost daily I pass by 95 Irving Street. Until very recently I thought (especially given that the library seemed similar to pictures taken in James's day) it was either owned by Harvard University or protected as a local or national landmark (or both). It is difficult to convey the depth of my disappointment in its current transformation.

While living at his house on 95 Irving Street (which he and his family moved into in the fall of 1889) William James wrote or saw through to publication such seminal works as: *The Will to Believe, Pragmatism, A Pluralistic Universe* and most of the papers of the posthumously published *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. These include James's most important philosophical works.

In a 1992 lecture, subsequently published as "The Permanence of William James", Hilary Putnam offered this assessment:

My purpose in adding to this cloud of praise and criticism that swirls around the figure of William James is not simply homage to a predecessor. I believe that James was a powerful thinker, as powerful as any in the last century, and that his way of philosophizing contains possibilities which have been too long neglected, that it points to ways out of philosophical "binds" that continue to afflict us. In short, I believe that it is high time we paid attention to Pragmatism, the movement of which James was arguably the greatest exponent.

James's work in philosophy is today enjoying a national and international renaissance. In 1997 Ruth Anna Putnam edited *The Cambridge Companion to William James* with articles from eighteen scholars in various disciplines. Morris Dickstein as editor of the 1998 book of essays, *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law and Culture* (part of the increasing interest in American Pragmatism spurred by the writings of Richard Rorty) provides contemporary contributions on the role of pragmatism and thinking in law, literature, religion, philosophy, history and social theory. Harvard University Press in 1987 completed a seventeen volume definitive scholarly edition of the works of William James. I understand that scholars have provided you with information noting James's pioneering work in

psychology. (James's Harvard appointment was changed from Professor of Psychology to Professor of Philosophy in 1897.)

James's house at 95 Irving Street was a home for students—whom he often invited to lunch or dinner. His house was a place of ideas shared both through letters and in person. His son, in his two volume *The Letters of William James*, wrote:

If he was returning home to lunch [...] he was apt to have some student with him whom he was bringing home to lunch and to finish the discussion at the family table, or merely for the purpose of establishing more personal relations than were possible in the class-room.

James's Harvard office hours were listed as the hour of his evening meal—in order that he could see students in a more social and relaxed setting. (James's students included: Gertrude Stein, W.E.B. DuBois, and Bernard Berenson.)


His house was an important intellectual center. As his son noted:

In his own house it seemed as if he was always at work [...] Soon after he had taken an essential after-lunch nap, he was pretty sure to be "caught" by callers and visitors. From six o'clock on, he usually had one or two of the children sitting, more or less subdued, in the library, while he himself read or dashed off letters [...] He always had letters and post-cards to write. [...] One evening, all the windows of the deserted Irving Street house would suddenly be wide open to the evening air, and passers on the sidewalk could see James sitting in his shirt-sleeves within the circle of bright light that stood on his library table.

From 95 Irving Street James kept up a correspondence with many of the leading thinkers of his day: Henri Bergson, H.G. Wells, Charles Eliot Norton, Henry Adams, and, of course, Henry James.

I hope I have made the point that 95 Irving Street is an historically significant *place*—a place formerly of thought and interchange of the highest order. To my mind it more than merits recognition with a landmark designation (ideally it would preserve some relationship with Cambridge-based students and faculty). I hope it can be preserved as much as possible, perhaps we may yet be able to restore some of the experience of that incomparable place, even imagining it as in James's day—if only as passers-by?

Sincerely,

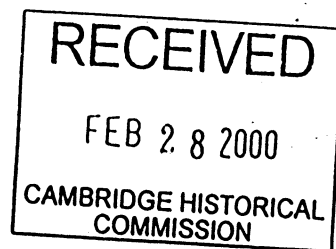


Jonathan Binks
43 Ivaloo Street, No. 5
Somerville, MA 02143

Appendix 1

William James House
95 Irving Street
L-59

Letters submitted in support of landmark study and designation



37 Walker Street
Cambridge, Ma 02138

February 20, 2000

The Cambridge Historical Commission
681 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Ma 02139

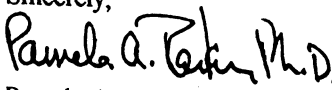
Dear Commissioners:

Although I cannot attend the meeting on March 4, as a Clinical Psychologist, Cambridge resident, and interested citizen, I want to testify on behalf of the landmark status of the William James House, as well as express my dismay at the changes to the property that are underway.

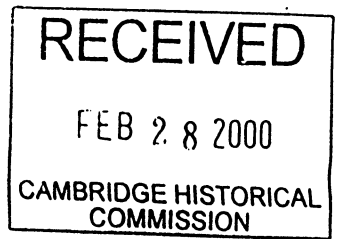
The house and garden at 95 Irving were the home and workshop of the father of American psychology, pioneer in physiological psychology, and founder-leader of the philosophical movement American Pragmatism. As the historian who attended the commission's site visit on February 16 noted, here is where William James, inspired he said by the expansive vista south from his attic study, produced The Varieties of Religious Experience.

The internal alterations entailed by the conversion project affect the heart of the house that was key to James' creative process, including punched-out walls in the downstairs library and a total reconfiguration of that attic, eliminating the original study! External changes are also extensive and substantive, especially to the back of the house, including additions, a two-car garage (or is it two?), a deck, a large multi-paned window, and a parapet. These would create a visual hodgepodge and encroach on the space so that a passerby on Francis Ave would see "Any House USA," the integrity and original feeling of the house in its context completely altered.

I very much hope that you will grant this nationally important historic site the landmark protection it not only deserves but badly needs.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Raskin, Ph.D.

P.S. Since I live in another part of the city, I write not as a resident of the Irving-Francis neighborhood, but out of general concern for the preservation of the William James house.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Daniel L. Schacter
Professor of Psychology
Chair

230 William James Hall
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-3800

February 24, 2000

William B. King
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge landmark.

I was distressed to learn that the blue historic marker – which your Commission has issued for very few Cambridge houses – carries no protection. This comes as a great surprise to those of us who assumed that the sign meant that the house was protected.

I was even more distressed when it was brought to my attention that your Executive Director (Mr. Sullivan) is opposed to granting landmark status to the William James house – even though his staff found that it meets the Commission's criterion for designation, and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted. In view of these considerations, it is difficult to understand why the house is not designated as a historical landmark.

While I am not competent to judge the architectural distinction of the house, because the William James house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and because the city's criteria for listing are based on these standards, the house would appear to meet the architectural distinction criterion.

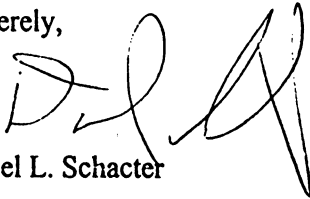
As a Professor of Psychology, I can, however, attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: It is a place and a structure that is importantly associated with an historic person, and with the broad social and cultural history of the City and the Commonwealth. The house is importantly associated with William James, the founder of psychology in the United States and one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history.

The fact that Harvard University chose to name the structure that houses its social science departments after William James, including the Department of Psychology that I chair – the largest and tallest building on the campus – is a clear indication of his monumental importance.

I have been told that at the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge cannot attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, it is crucial to appreciate that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in American science and culture who is still revered by scholars today. The City of Cambridge should recognize James' special place in American intellectual history by taking steps to preserve the historical integrity of his former home.

The William James house at 95 Irving Street deserves to be a designated landmark. I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2nd.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Schacter

DLS/ih

cc: Member of the Cambridge Historical Commission:

Allison Crump

M. Wyllis Bibbons

Suzanne Green

Helen F. Moulton

Robert G. Neiley

Jo M. Dolet

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director, Cambridge Historical Commission

Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner, Cambridge Historical Commission

President Neil L. Rudenstine

Dean Jeremy Knowles

WOLF

8 Francis Avenue
Cambridge
Massachusetts
02138
617-492-2167
//

RECEIVED

FEB 29 2000

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

February 27, 2000

William B. King, Chair
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

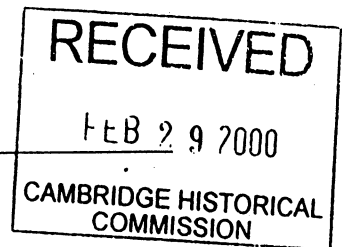
Dear Mr. King:

We are writing to urge the Cambridge Historical Commission to accept the petition to grant landmark status to the William James house at 95 Irving Street. Many others have written eloquently about the details of the current situation and we will not repeat their compelling arguments with which we concur. Rather, we want to emphasize the very special history of this house and its surroundings.

William James was the most renowned of a group of intellectuals who lived in the Irving/Francis Street neighborhood since before the turn of the last century. Though James was the most famous and his house the most distinguished of their residences, the neighborhood boasted such men as Howard Mumford Jones who was born in 1892 and lived at 10 Francis until the 1970s in a house that abutted that of William James. His *Varieties of American Experience* was the complement to James *Varieties of Religious Experience* and he was one of America's great man of letters.

Across from Jones and within sight of the James house lived John Livingston Lowes (1867-1945) at 7 Francis Avenue. He was also James' contemporary and his work on Chaucer and Coleridge was ground-breaking. A few houses down the street, also within view of the James house at 22 Francis lived Henry A. Murray, who along with James was one of Harvard's great psychologists. His *Explorations in Personality* was a classic and he became famous for his development of the thematic apperception test. It is he for whom Harvard's Henry A. Murray Center has been named.

Across the street from the James house, was the home of poet e. e. cummings. And in our house, which abuts the James house, lived Professor Woodward, perhaps Harvard's most popular music professor who built the glee club and who delighted in hosting intellectuals from abroad, including London's Leonard Woolf who was a guest at Harvard one semester in the 1940s.



The list goes on to this day: Henry Louis Gates Jr., the African American scholar, has lovingly restored Murray's house while Justin Kaplan (the distinguished humanist) and John Kenneth Galbraith (world renowned economist) have maintained their historic houses just as they continue the great intellectual tradition established by James and his contemporaries.

We cite these names among so many others that we could mention simply to make a point. The history of this tiny neighborhood, for many years called "Professors Row," has been home to great American intellectuals. That history deserves to be recognized. And there is no better way to do so than to make sure that at least the most important domicile of the most famous of these great thinkers is preserved. Most of us on these two streets (Francis and Irving) have cherished their history by leaving the exteriors of our houses as they were when the scholars lived in them. We regard ourselves as caretakers as well as owners of these properties.

When Chase Peterson sold the James house to Harvard in 1978, we were among the fortunate neighbors who noticed that the Petersons were having a lawn sale to dispose of some of the items they were not taking with them. Among our most cherished possessions are four books signed by members of the James family and a leather screen that belonged to William James that we have had restored at the Williamstown Art Conservation Lab. We are pleased that even though these items are no longer in the William James house, that James' spirit lives nearby in ours.

We urge you to do your part in celebrating this glorious history of our community by keeping the house intact as an important historic landmark.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennie Palmer Wolf".

Dennie Palmer Wolf

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Wolf".

Thomas Wolf

cc: CHC Vice Chair Alison Crump
CHC Members M. Wyllis Bibbins, Suzanne Green,
Helen F. Moulton, Robert G. Neiley, Jo M. Solet
CHC Executive Director Charles M. Sullivan

RECEIVED
FEB 29 2000
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

PHILIP S. HOLZMAN, PH.D.
Esther and Sidney R. Rabb
Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
33 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-3878, Fax (617) 496-8328
Email psh@wjh.harvard.edu



DIRECTOR, LABORATORY
OF PSYCHOLOGY
McLEAN HOSPITAL
115 Mill Street
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 855-2416, Fax 855-2778

February 27, 2000

Cambridge Historical Commission
Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd floor
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

We are deeply concerned residents of Cambridge who are writing to you about what we consider to be unrestrained renovations to 95 Irving Street. We reside at 7 Francis Avenue, which is close to 95 Irving Street. We are upset not only about the changes that have already been made to the interior of this magnificent historical house, but also about the proposed changes to the exterior, which will unalterably damage the architectural esthetics.

As you know, William James built this house in 1889, when he was a member of the Harvard University faculty. He engaged the distinguished American architect William Emerson to draw up the plans, and the house is a splendid example of New England architecture at the close of the 19th century. It, therefore, has an architectural significance as well as historical one. William James was perhaps the most influential of American psychologists and philosophers, and his influence continues to this day. He wrote his most important books while living and working in this house. In his private correspondence he describes how the ambiance of his library, (now, alas, gutted) inspired him to pen some of his most important insights. James was a product of Cambridge. He attended the Lawrence Scientific School and the Harvard Medical School. He taught at Harvard until his death and bridged the disciplines of psychology and philosophy. No psychologist is more universally known cited and revered than is William James.

We strongly urge you and the other members of the Cambridge Historical Commission to grant Landmark Status to 95 Irving Street. If the Commission fails to take this action, it would be a misfortune for all of us. It would also be being particularly ironic at this time, when the Commission, whose mission is to protect historic properties within Cambridge, is presenting an award for preservation that protects historic buildings within one of three neighborhoods that includes 95 Irving Street.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Holzman
Hannah Holzman

RECEIVED

FEB 28 2000

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

William J. Goode
12 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 0213

February 23, 2000

William B. King,
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark.

The James house was for decades the most distinguished house, especially inside, of all the Cambridge houses. It bore a blue marker outside to denote its historical importance---or so we thought who passed by it, or went inside as visitors and friends. Now we learn that the marker protects nothing at all, and we hear that the developer was given oral permission to plunge ahead with the work of destruction. We are very disappointed, and think a great opportunity is being lost.

I was especially distressed to learn that your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, who is supposed to care about protecting historical property, gave the developer permission to go ahead with her plans to dismantle much of this historic building. Instead of bringing her destructive plans to the attention of the Commission, he held private meetings with her and encouraged her to proceed.

It is very strange behavior from a person who has been given custody of the public trust to preserve historical property.

I now learn that Mr. Sullivan is also opposed to granting Landmark status to the William James house -- even though his staff found that it meets the Commissions criteria for designation and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted.

I do not understand this irreponsible behavior, but it does seem self-evident that the William James house meets both criteria for landmark status -its architectural distinction and because it was the home of William James. Either one of these criteria is enough for the house to be given landmark status. With both, I do not see how the Commission can deny landmark status to the William James house.

While I am not competent to judge the architectural distinction of the house, I understand that because the William James house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and because the city's criteria for listing are based on their standards, it would seem self-evident that the house clearly meets the criteria for architectural distinction.

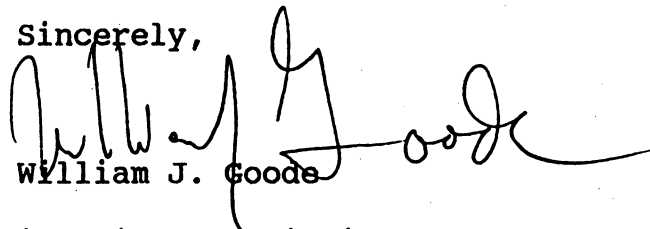
Since I served as a professor of sociology in three of the most important departments (Columbia University, Stanford, and Harvard) I can, however, attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: James was a historic figure. He looms large in the history of my own field, in psychology, and in American letters generally. (He also wrote better, many of us think, than did his brother Henry.) He was important enough for Harvard to name its entire facility for the social sciences in his honor. William James Hall is the largest and tallest building on the campus -- a clear indication of his monumental importance.

At the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge can not attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, you must understand that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in America. The city of Cambridge should recognize that by taking this step to preserve the historical integrity of his house and not let it be turned into a modernized condominium.

The William James house at 95 Irving Street clearly deserves to be a designated landmark.

I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2.

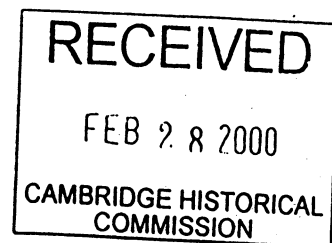
Sincerely,



William J. Goode

cc: members of the Cambridge Historical Commission:

Allison Crump,
M Wyllis Bibbons,
Suzanne Green,
Helen F. Moulton,
Robert G. Neiley,
Jo M. Solet.
Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director,
Cambridge Historical Commission
Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner,
Cambridge Historical Commission



Wendy K. Mariner
John T. Nagurney
10 Francis Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

February 25, 2000

William B. King, Chair
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. King:

We are writing to urge the Cambridge Historical Commission to accept the petition to grant landmark status to the William James house at 95 Irving Street.

1. The William James house is indisputably qualified for and entitled to landmark status. It meets not just one, but both criteria for designation. Members of the Commission undoubtedly have received letters describing the significance of the house and its illustrious occupant, William James. We trust that there is no need to repeat that evidence here. Few other properties that have already been approved as landmarks have either the historical or architectural importance of the William James house.

It would be noticeably odd if Cambridge refused to grant landmark status to the house that has already qualified for a place in the National Register under the very same criteria.

Failure to approve the petition could create an uncomfortable precedent that could preclude the Commission from landmarking other buildings that do not rise the level of significance of the William James house.

Indeed, in view of the overwhelming evidence supporting the petition, including the Commission's own staff report, the Commission would be justified in expediting its process by accepting the petition and recommending landmark status immediately.

2. The house has always been known as the William James House, and not as 95 Irving Street. After the James family sold the house in 1968, all subsequent owners had preserved the history, appearance, and function of the house--until now. The most recent former owners, William Estes, Professor and former Chair of the Psychology Department at Harvard University, and his wife Kay, proudly shared its legacy. They opened the house to the neighborhood annually for parties and described the history of the house and the James family to anyone who would listen; and everyone listened eagerly. Bill Estes brought students into the famous library for seminars and history lessons, as well as camaraderie.

Appreciation of the house has not been limited to neighbors, friends, and students. Many people--from Cambridge and all over the country--come to the neighborhood to savor a quiet walk and the opportunity to ponder the past. The house is the jewel in the crown of a unique Cambridge neighborhood that welcomes everyone to enjoy its repose.

Everyone we know, including Bill and Kay Estes, believed that the house was legally protected as an historical landmark by the Historical Commission and under strict rules as to what could and could not be done with it. We pointed to the blue marker as evidence that it would be preserved, as it has been since 1889. The marker gave everyone the (apparently false) sense of security that the house could not be altered or reconfigured. Now that the error has been discovered, it is time to correct it by giving legal recognition to the reality of the landmark.

3. Landmark status is the only status that is warranted. Nothing else will do.

In the absence of landmark status, an owner's assurances that all will be well are unenforceable and, therefore, meaningless. Noting that assurances are not legally binding says nothing at all about the owner, of course. It simply recognizes that, without landmarking the house, an owner is under no obligation whatsoever to do even what he says he will do. Moreover, when the house is reconstructed into units and those units are sold to new owners, which could happen as soon as this summer, the new owners are free to do whatever they like with the house within the constraints of zoning requirements. The only mechanism for protecting the house is to grant it landmark status. Alternatives, such as a preservation easement, do not provide adequate protection.

If an owner does intend to comply with Historical Commission requirements, then there is no reason not to landmark the house. Indeed, the current owner has not offered any argument against landmark status. Her stated reason for objecting to the petition is that it would be an additional burden. But how can this be if she intends to comply with Historical Commission requirements?

We can think of only two reasons why a owner would object to landmark status: a developer plans to create units to sell for the highest possible market price, and landmark status might bring a lower price; and a developer wants to change, or preserve the option to change, the house in ways that would not be permitted if the house were landmarked. These are not reasons to deny landmark status. On the contrary, they are reasons to grant landmark status.

It is no answer to say that Cambridge cannot landmark every building. In principle, of course, Cambridge could landmark every important building that meets the criteria. But in reality, the William James house is so clearly significant that granting it landmark status will in no way commit the Commission to landmark the home of every Cambridge professor.

Nor should the Commission give any weight to the claim that the Commission should not spend "scarce" resources to study the house. The study is virtually complete now. Substantial--perhaps sufficient--study has already been done in connection with the establishment of the Shady Hill National Register District to support a landmark recommendation. Moreover, many knowledgeable individuals stand ready to volunteer any additional information the Commission may need to expedite the process.

Nonetheless, even if the Commission accepts the petition, it remains possible to create a preservation easement during the investigation period. It is our opinion, however, that a reasonable easement would not be accepted by the developer, so that this is not a realistic option.

We believe that landmark status is indisputably warranted on the merits and we have confidence that the Commission will act on the merits. If the Commission were to deny landmark status, it would surely shock not only the neighborhood, but also the citizens of Cambridge and the rest of the country.

4. Time is of the essence.

The pace of demolition work on the house appears to have speeded up since the first meeting of the Historical Commission on February 6, 2000. Immediately after the site visit on February 17, we observed workers opening the roof, presumably to raise the roof to create an adequate height for living space in the attic (fourth) floor and to punch out space for decks overlooking the neighborhood. (William James did not need room-size ceilings to write; the unfinished attic eyrie afforded him the rustic privacy not found in ordinary-sized rooms.)

Our concern about the ongoing demolition and alterations is heightened by our review of the building permit application for work on the house. The size and nature of the demolition and additions are substantially more extensive than the description in the building permit application. It appears that the permit should not have been issued in the first place because the work requires zoning relief. The developer has changed plans more than once, apparently after being advised that her plans required zoning relief. Rather than seek such relief, which would require notification of the neighborhood, changes were submitted that were claimed not to require zoning relief. We understand that there may have been more revisions since the Commission's site visit. The neighborhood has requested that the building permit be revoked because it was issued in error, and we intend to seek an appeal of a denial of our request. Thus, the developer cannot guarantee to the Commission that her current plans, whatever they may be, are either lawfully permitted or will be implemented as planned.

William B. King, Chair

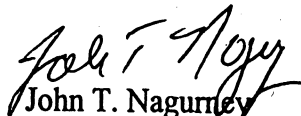
Page Four

We respectfully urge the Commission to accept and approve the petition to designate the William James house as an historical landmark. If we can assist the Commission in any way, we are at your disposal.

Sincerely,



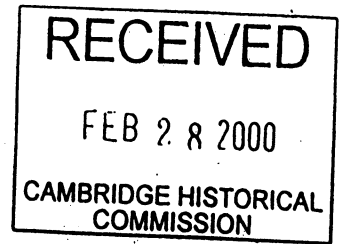
Wendy K. Mariner



John T. Nagurney

cc: Allison M. Crump, Vice Chair
M. Wyllis Bibbins
Suzanne R. Green
Helen F. Moulton
Robert G. Neiley
Jo M. Solet
Jennifer Jones
Anthony C. Platt

Lenore J. Weitzman
14 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138



February 23, 2000

William B. King
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. King,

I am writing to urge The Cambridge Historical Commission to designate the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark.

It seems self-evident that the William James house meets the criteria for landmark status -it is architecturally distinguished and it was the home of an American literary giant, William James. Either one of these criteria is enough for the house to be given landmark status. With both, I do not see how the Commission can deny landmark status to the William James house.

The architectural merit is clear from the fact that the house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Because the city's criteria for listing are based on their standards, it would seem self-evident that the house clearly meets the architectural distinction criteria.

As a Professor of Sociology I can attest to the fact that the house meets the second criterion: it is a place and a structure that is importantly associated with an historic person and with the broad social and cultural history of the City and the Commonwealth. The house is importantly associated with William James, the founder of psychology in the United States and one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history.

William James was important enough for Harvard to name its entire facility for the social sciences in his honor. William James Hall is the largest and tallest building on the campus -- a clear indication of his monumental importance.

I was distressed to learn that the blue historic marker-- which your Commission has issued for very few Cambridge houses -- carries no protection whatsoever. It is clearly misleading to the those of us who assumed it meant the house was protected.

I was even more distressed to learn that your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan has been meeting privately with the developer who bought the house, has given her informal permission to dismantle the property, and is publicly opposing the granting of Landmark status to the William James house -- even though his staff found that it meets the Commissions criteria for designation and the staff report recommended that landmark status be granted.

At the February meeting of the Historical Commission, your Executive Director, Mr. Sullivan, said that Cambridge can not attempt to preserve the house of every distinguished Harvard professor. While that may be true, you must understand that William James was not just a distinguished Harvard professor, he was a towering figure in America. The city of Cambridge should recognize that by taking this step to preserve the historical integrity of his house and not let it be turned into a modernized condominium.

In summary, the William James house at 95 Irving Street clearly deserves to be a designated landmark.

I strongly urge you to vote for that designation at the meeting on March 2.

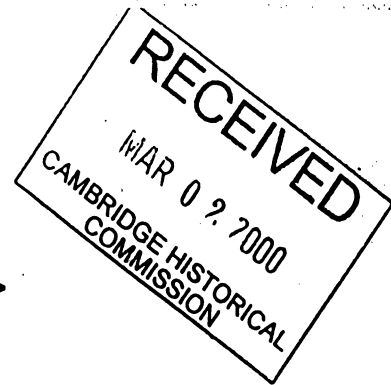
Sincerely,



Lenore J. Weitzman

cc: members of the Cambridge Historical Commission and
Allison Crump, Vice Chair
M Wyllis Bibbons,
Suzanne Green,
Helen F. Moulton,
Robert G. Neiley,
Jo M. Solet.
Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director,
Cambridge Historical Commission
Sally Zimmerman, Preservation Planner,
Cambridge Historical Commission

Date sent: Thu, 02 Mar 2000 14:30:08 -0500
Subject: William James House
From: "jane kamine" <eeandus@mediaone.net>
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us
Copies to: davidh@bwh.harvard.edu

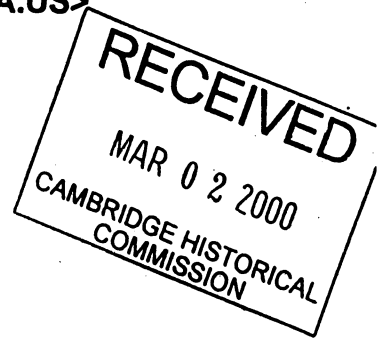


To: Cambridge Historical Commission
Re: William James House Landmark Designation

We favor the initiation and approval of this property as an historic landmark. The fact that it has not been a designated and protected landmark comes as a surprise to many who know of James' importance. There were and are many influential figures in Cambridge, but long-time residents Longfellow and James share worldwide significance. These are sites which distinguish Cambridge and they deserve to be visited, celebrated and preserved.

Jane Kamine
David Holtzman
5 Scott Street
Cambridge, 02138

Forwarded by: "Kathleen L. Rawlins" <krawlins@CI.Cambridge.MA.US>
Forwarded to: sburks
Date forwarded: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:33:36 -0500
From: AFBernays@aol.com
Date sent: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:11:19 EST
Subject: (no subject)
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us



As abutters of the William James House on Irving Street, we object to the proposed "renovations" now under consideration and urge you to designate this important house a landmark house. To fail to do this suggests a serious lack of concern for Cambridge intellectual and architectural history.

Sincerely,

Justin Kaplan and Anne Bernays
16 Francis Ave.
Cambridge, Ma 02138

Forwarded by: "Kathleen L. Rawlins" <krawlins@CI.Cambridge.MA.US>
Forwarded to: sburks
Date forwarded: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 12:02:43 -0500
From: Jknames@aol.com
Date sent: Thu, 2 Mar 2000 11:17:39 EST
Subject: William James House
To: HistComm@ci.cambridge.ma.us



As a professional literary historian and biographer as well as an abutter, I recognize the crucial importance of the William James House. As others have pointed out, this is not just another eminent professor's house. William James is a major figure in American intellectual and literary history, a member of a family (the Jameses) that remains a national treasure. If any house in Cambridge deserves landmarking it is surely 95 Irving Street. As I write this to you I can see, from my study window, the rapid desecration of the William James House. IBut it is not too late to call a halt.

Respectfully yours,

Justin Kaplan
16 Francis Avenue

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

120 HAVILAND HALL # 7400
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-7400
(510) 642-4341
(510) 643-6126 (FAX)

January 31, 2000

Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I am writing to request that the Cambridge Historical Commission consider designating the house of William James at 95 Irving Street as a Cambridge Landmark. He lived there the last 21 years of his life, from 1889-1910, and completed ALL of his major works in psychology and philosophy there, including Principles of Psychology (1890), Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), Pragmatism (1907), The Meaning of Truth (1909) and A Pluralistic Universe (1909).

After partly designing the house himself, and pestering the architect, William Ralph Emerson, for months with suggested changes, William James and family moved into 95 Irving Street in the fall of 1889, with carpenters and painters still finishing up. The house "was a gracious residence with a large entrance hall, a welcoming parlor, and its most prized feature, a grand library--more than twenty-two feet wide and twenty-seven feet long--with floor-to-ceiling bookcases, a wide fireplace, and a generous desk....Its southern exposure made the room unusually bright and cheerful; from its many windows, one could look out on the lawn, the garden, and the woods through which Irving Street had been cut. The library connected with the parlor, allowing James to jump from his desk and join visitors" (Simon, 1998, p. 228). In a letter to Henry James on December 15, 1889, William says "At home I am in Elysium. I didn't know that material comfort could do a man such inward good." It is here in his library on the first floor, and standing at a desk in the attic that he completed works in psychology and philosophy that made him recognized as the outstanding psychologist in the United States, and one of the country's most eminent philosophers.

By chance, I had the unnerving experience of attending a real-estate Halloween fund-raising party in this house on October 28, 1999. The motif was black and orange balloons, fake cobwebs and spiders on the walls, and a "blues brothers" band in the library, with real estate agents in Halloween costumes dancing up a storm in a house with the downstairs largely emptied, the kitchen gutted, and upstairs rooms boarded off.

On one hand, it was a thrill sitting for hours in the former library, thinking of the array of people who had visited James there. On the other hand, it was disconcerting to hear that the house had been sold to a developer, and hearing of plans to divide the house into two units with modifications which might be made.

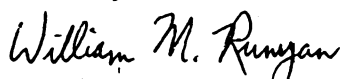
It can be argued that William James was one of the most important figures in American cultural and intellectual history, and a significant figure in the history of Western philosophy and psychology. He is seen as the single most eminent founder of psychology in the United States, and an important figure in the history of Western philosophy, with a current resurgence of interest in pragmatism.

The Modern Library had a panel of intellectuals who nominated a list of the "100 Best Nonfiction Books of the 20th Century" (in English), with William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* as second on the list. Other ratings were 1. *The Education of Henry Adams* by Henry Adams, 2. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James, 3. *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, 4. *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, 5. *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, 6. *Selected Essays, 1917-1932* by T. S. Eliot, 7. *The Double Helix* by James D. Watson, and so on up to 100. It is, I am sure, unwise to make too much of such a list, but the general point is that James is in the most distinguished intellectual company, and that 95 Irving Street is where much of this work was done.

In preparing for the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh which were published as *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James wrote to his brother Henry on February 20, 1899, that "I must work unremittingly all that year for my second Gifford course, and one's own library is the place for that.... When I get into my bare attic room, fifty-two feet long and nothing in it but a table, a standing desk, and an arm chair, paper, inkstand and the books I bring up; flooded with warm white winter sunshine, I get a feeling of seclusion and power which I am sure that nothing on the Continent of Europe could give me." In search of a cure for his heart problems in Germany, James ended up writing some of the lectures in Europe, and finishing them at his home back in the United States. His library on the first floor, with photos enclosed, and his working place in the attic are important creative sites in American, Cambridge, and even Western History which justify considering the house as a designated landmark.

I realize that Cambridge can not preserve the house of every distinguished intellectual who lived here, or the whole town would grind to a halt. It can be argued, however, that William James was not just a run-of-the-mill distinguished Harvard professor, but an important figure in American cultural and intellectual history, even in the history of Western philosophy and psychology. The country, and the city of Cambridge, have an obligation to do better by a central cultural figure than letting his house be turned into a modernized condominium. At the very least, William James' s house at 95 Irving Street deserves serious consideration as a designated landmark.

Sincerely,



William McKinley Runyan
 Professor, School of Social Welfare
 Affiliated Professor, Psychology Department
 University of California at Berkeley.

P.S. This year I am a Visiting Scholar in the Human Development and Psychology Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, with past books on Life Histories and Psychobiography, and Psychology and Historical Interpretation, working on a book about the biographical side of the history of psychology.

Current address: 872 Mass. Ave., Apt 1003
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 492-4777



Figure 4 Henry and William James (ca. 1902/pfMS AM 1092 box 2).

speaking, had been chosen for him by his father. Alice was a 27-year-old school-teacher who shared his interests in European culture, literary tastes, and a liberal world view. The marriage also seems to have initiated a lengthy period of serious psychosomatic illness in James's only sister Alice, a condition from which she never recovered.

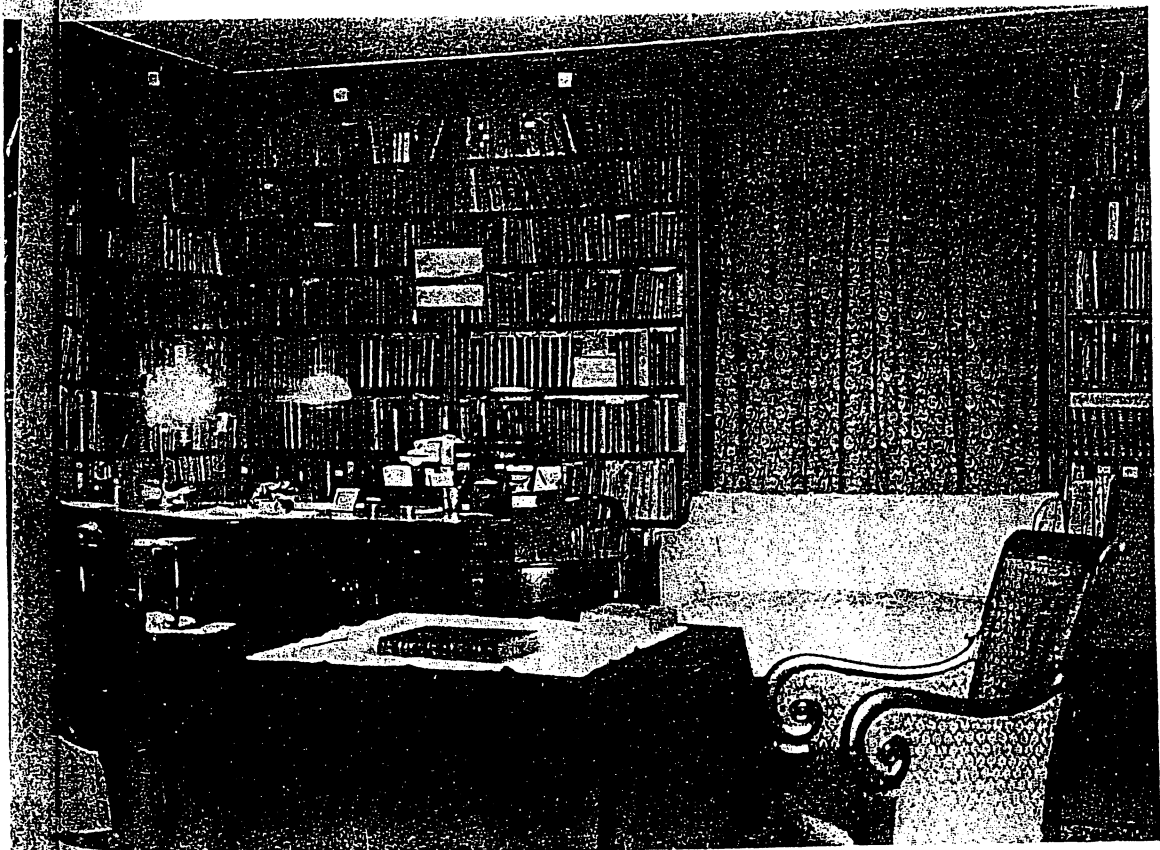
In 1879, William's first son, Henry James (1879–1947), who was named after his paternal grandfather and uncle, was born. It was also during that same year that James began to offer regular courses in philosophy. Less than a year later, in 1880, he received a professorial appointment in philosophy at Harvard. Promotions to full professorship in philosophy and the sub-discipline of psychology followed in 1885 and 1889, respectively. The 1880s also brought many dramatic changes in the family constellation. In 1882 alone, James's mother died from pneumonia; in June his second son, William James (1882–1916), was born; and in December his father died "tranquil and painlessly" at the age of 71. A third son, Herman James, "a beautiful, Jewish-looking, sturdy and lively boy" was born in January of 1884. However, Herman became ill with whooping cough and died from pneumonia in June of the next



Figure 5 The James residence at 95 Irving Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts in winter (pfMS AM 1092).



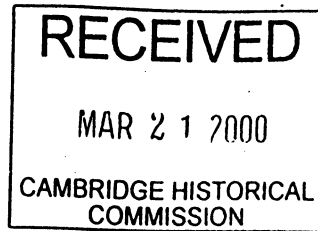
(Right) William James in 1907.
(Below) William James's library and study at 95 Irving Street (1923)



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
EMERSON HALL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138
(617) 495-2191



March 17, 2000

Sarah J. Zimmerman
Preservation Planner
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sarah J. Zimmerman,

I understand that 95 Irving Street, Cambridge (the former house of William James and his family) is under consideration for landmark status.

As a philosopher who has, along with my wife, Ruth Anna Putnam, written and taught about William James I thought it important that the Cambridge Historical Commission understand James's remarkable and innovative contributions to philosophy and American thought. James taught at Harvard first as a professor of psychology and later as a professor of philosophy—his intellectual reach and influence, however, extend far beyond his role(s) at Harvard.

James made seminal contributions (most written from 95 Irving Street) in many areas of philosophy. His writings have been linked with those of Dewey and Peirce, and compared with those of Wittgenstein. Bertrand Russell wrote in 1921 "Their views [the 'new realists'], which are chiefly held in America, are in large measure derived from William James, and before going further it will be well to consider the revolutionary doctrine which he advocated. I believe this doctrine contains important new truth, and what I have to say will be in a considerable measure inspired by it."

A number of my writings, and those of my colleagues across America and around the world, grapple with the extremely complex views of William James. His Pragmatism and his Essay in Radical Empiricism are "required reading" for any serious student of philosophy—or for that matter of American thought.

James's thinking is as valuable and as relevant as ever. As I concluded one of the chapters in my book Pragmatism: "If there is one overriding reason for being concerned with James's thought, it is that he was a genius who was concerned with real hungers, and whose thought, whatever its shortcomings, provides substantial food for thought—and not just for thought, but for life."

One of America's greatest philosophers lived and worked and wrote and taught at 95 Irving Street. It is only fitting that William James's legacy be permanently recognized by designating 95 Irving Street with landmark status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hilary Putnam". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name. A long horizontal line extends from the end of the signature across the page.

Hilary Putnam,
Cogan University Professor

RECEIVED

MAR 16 2000

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

March 16, 2000

Sarah J. Zimmerman
Preservation Planner
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sally Zimmerman,

I am writing to you, and the Cambridge Historical Commission, in support of providing 95 Irving Street, Cambridge, the former home of William James and his family, with landmark designation status (Case L-59). I understand that a study is currently underway. Almost daily I pass by 95 Irving Street. Until very recently I thought (especially given that the library seemed similar to pictures taken in James's day) it was either owned by Harvard University or protected as a local or national landmark (or both). It is difficult to convey the depth of my disappointment in its current transformation.

While living at his house on 95 Irving Street (which he and his family moved into in the fall of 1889) William James wrote or saw through to publication such seminal works as: *The Will to Believe*, *Pragmatism*, *A Pluralistic Universe* and most of the papers of the posthumously published *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. These include James's most important philosophical works.

In a 1992 lecture, subsequently published as "The Permanence of William James", Hilary Putnam offered this assessment:

My purpose in adding to this cloud of praise and criticism that swirls around the figure of William James is not simply homage to a predecessor. I believe that James was a powerful thinker, as powerful as any in the last century, and that his way of philosophizing contains possibilities which have been too long neglected, that it points to ways out of philosophical "binds" that continue to afflict us. In short, I believe that it is high time we paid attention to Pragmatism, the movement of which James was arguably the greatest exponent.

James's work in philosophy is today enjoying a national and international renaissance. In 1997 Ruth Anna Putnam edited *The Cambridge Companion to William James* with articles from eighteen scholars in various disciplines. Morris Dickstein as editor of the 1998 book of essays, *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law and Culture* (part of the increasing interest in American Pragmatism spurred by the writings of Richard Rorty) provides contemporary contributions on the role of pragmatism and thinking in law, literature, religion, philosophy, history and social theory. Harvard University Press in 1987 completed a seventeen volume definitive scholarly edition of the works of William James. I understand that scholars have provided you with information noting James's pioneering work in

psychology. (James's Harvard appointment was changed from Professor of Psychology to Professor of Philosophy in 1897.)

James's house at 95 Irving Street was a home for students—whom he often invited to lunch or dinner. His house was a place of ideas shared both through letters and in person. His son, in his two volume *The Letters of William James*, wrote:

If he was returning home to lunch [...] he was apt to have some student with him whom he was bringing home to lunch and to finish the discussion at the family table, or merely for the purpose of establishing more personal relations than were possible in the class-room.

James's Harvard office hours were listed as the hour of his evening meal—in order that he could see students in a more social and relaxed setting. (James's students included: Gertrude Stein, W.E.B. DuBois, and Bernard Berenson.)

His house was an important intellectual center. As his son noted:

In his own house it seemed as if he was always at work [...] Soon after he had taken an essential after-lunch nap, he was pretty sure to be "caught" by callers and visitors. From six o'clock on, he usually had one or two of the children sitting, more or less subdued, in the library, while he himself read or dashed off letters [...] He always had letters and post-cards to write. [...] One evening, all the windows of the deserted Irving Street house would suddenly be wide open to the evening air, and passers on the sidewalk could see James sitting in his shirt-sleeves within the circle of bright light that stood on his library table.

From 95 Irving Street James kept up a correspondence with many of the leading thinkers of his day: Henri Bergson, H.G. Wells, Charles Eliot Norton, Henry Adams, and, of course, Henry James.

I hope I have made the point that 95 Irving Street is an historically significant *place*—a place formerly of thought and interchange of the highest order. To my mind it more than merits recognition with a landmark designation (ideally it would preserve some relationship with Cambridge-based students and faculty). I hope it can be preserved as much as possible, perhaps we may yet be able to restore some of the experience of that incomparable place, even imagining it as in James's day—if only as passers-by?

Sincerely,



Jonathan Binks
43 Ivaloo Street, No. 5
Somerville, MA 02143

Forwarded by: "Kathleen L. Rawlins" <krawlins@CI.Cambridge.MA.US>
Forwarded to: szimmerman
Date forwarded: Wed, 3 Jan 2001 08:48:53 -0500
Date sent: Tue, 02 Jan 2001 19:35:41 -0800
From: William McKinley Runyan <runyan@uclink4.berkeley.edu>
To: histcomm@ci.cambridge.ma.us
Subject: William James House

Dear Cambridge Historical Commission,

I am pleased to hear that the Commission will be hearing a report on designating the William James House at 95 Irving Street as a landmark at its January 4, 2001 meeting. I regret I will not be able to be there, as will not be returning to Cambridge from California until January 10.

I want to thank the staff, particularly Sally Zimmerman, who I hear has prepared an excellent report.

I would like to add my voice to those strongly supporting designating the house as a historic landmark.

Sincerely,

William McKinley Runyan
872 Mass Ave., Apt 1003
Cambridge, MA 02139

P.S. Enclosed is a one page article from the September 2000 issue of Monitor on Psychology on the cultural impotence of the house.

On the Web site of the American Psychological Association, there is also a longer article on preserving the house in the September 2000 issue of Monitor on Psychology by Jamie Chamberlain, titled "What Will Become of William James's Grand Old Home?", which includes photos of the house and comments from Charles Sullivan.

Volume 31, No. 8 September 2000

Shared perspectives Preserving William James's legacy
By Dr. William McKinley Runyan
University of California, Berkeley

Turning William James's home into condominiums seems a serious cultural mistake, like converting Goethe's childhood home in Frankfurt into an upscale clothing store; turning Darwin's house in Downe, England, into a cozy country inn; or developing Jefferson's Monticello into a country club.

The house at 95 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass., was the site where James penned some of the country's most important works in psychology and philosophy. He was visited in the library-study by those such as his

brother Henry James, Josiah Royce, Hugo Munsterberg, Edward L. Thorndike, Hermann von Helmholtz, Mary Calkins, Gertrude Stein, W.E.B. DuBois, Walter Lippman, Charles Sanders Peirce and others.

At his death in 1910, "James was remembered as America's representative thinker, foremost psychologist, and preeminent philosopher, as well as its most influential writer on religion, psychical research and self-help" (Myers, 1986, page 1). His work has stimulated countless reinterpretations over the years, and has been an inspiration for those drawn to both natural science and human science traditions in psychology. There is also a widespread resurgence of interest in pragmatism in philosophy, social theory, law and cultural studies, with valuable collections in Menand's "Pragmatism: A Reader" (1997) or Dickstein's "The Revival of Pragmatism"(1998).

As his work has proved so fertile, enormous scholarly effort has been invested in the production of a scholarly edition of "The Works of William James" (19 volumes, Harvard University Press, 1975-86), and in "The Correspondence of William James" (1992, with seven of 12 planned volumes completed). His family is one of the most studied in American history, with biographies of William James, his brother Henry, his sister Alice, two lesser known younger brothers, his father and the family as a whole). Given my own interests in the study of lives ("Life Histories and Psychobiography"; "Psychology and Historical Interpretation"; Oxford University Press, 1982 and 1988), and more recently, in the history of psychology, the connections between James's life and work are particularly interesting.

Saving other historical homes

It would have been better if preservation efforts had started earlier, and sometimes I despair at what has been lost. However, much can still be done. Many preservation or restoration efforts do not start as early as one might have imagined, with Jefferson's Monticello not being preserved as a public site until 1923, almost a century after his death. What can we learn from an array of other examples? Freud's home at Berggasse 19 in Vienna, which he left in 1938 with the Nazi occupation, was turned into the Sigmund Freud Museum in 1971; while his home at 20 Maresfeld Gardens in London became a museum soon after his daughter Anna died in 1982. Einstein insisted that he did not want his house at 112 Mercer St. in Princeton to be a museum; it is currently a private residence owned by the Institute for Advanced Study. Mark Twain's house in Hartford, Conn., sold by the family in 1903, became a private residence, a boy's school and an apartment building before it was preserved. After Darwin died in 1882, his house was retained in the family until around 1900, and in 1907, it became The Down House School for Girls. With funds from the British Association for the Advancement of Science, it was purchased in 1927, and with public donations, opened to the public in 1929.

What can be done?

William James is a central person in American psychology, philosophy and intellectual history. The country is defined in part by how we handle such cultural legacies. It seems a shame to be subdividing and remodeling his home at the same time there is a rising tide of interest

in his work. His life and legacy are generative and complex enough to deserve preservation and to be made available for fresh encounters by subsequent generations. I would be delighted to hear from those with ideas, organizations or economic-political resources for preserving the house. (E-mail me at Runyan@uclink4.berkeley.edu.)

William McKinley Runyan, PhD, is professor in the School of Social Welfare and affiliated professor in the psychology department at the University of California, Berkeley. Portions of this article have been adapted from a longer piece on "History in the making: What will become of William James's house and legacy?" in the August 2000 issue of History of Psychology. Dr. William McKinley Runyan University of California, Berkeley

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Lenore J. Weitzman and William J. Goode
12-14 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138



January 4, 2001

Fax: 349-3116
William B. King, Chair and members of the
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
tel: 349-4683

ref: hearing on January 4, 2001 re William James House

Dear Mr. King,

We are writing to re-affirm our strong support for the designation of the William James House at 95 Irving Street as a historical landmark.

We support the recommendations in the report of the Historical Commission staff.

Sincerely,

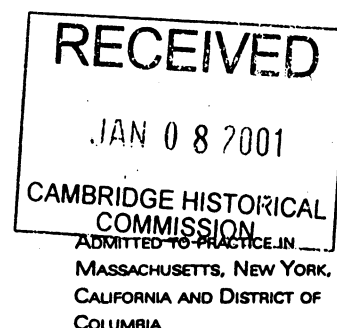
Two handwritten signatures in cursive script. The first signature is "Lenore Weitzman" and the second is "William J. Goode".

Lenore J. Weitzman and William J. Goode

cc: Tom Bracken, esq. (fax: 617-742-4953)

TELEPHONE(617) 742-4950
FACSIMILE (617) 742-4953

THOMAS B. BRACKEN
ATTORNEY AT LAW
33 MOUNT VERNON STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108



January 5, 2001

Sally Zimmerman
Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: William James House
95 Irving Street

Dear Sally:

The neighbors are all very impressed with the thorough and well documented study report you prepared in connection with the proposed landmarking of the William James House. It provides a strong basis for the Commission's unanimous decision last night to recommend landmarking the structure to the City Council. Please let us know what action the neighbors can take to ensure that the Council adopts the Commission's recommendation.

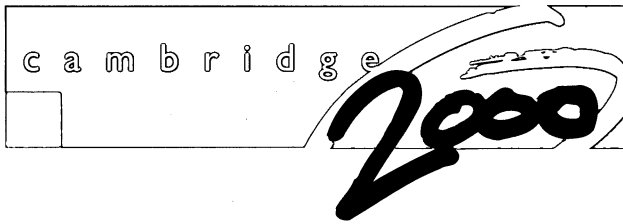
With the exterior alterations to the William James House now satisfactorily resolved, the neighbors look forward to working with you to establish a Shady Hill Neighborhood Conservation District to provide a mechanism for addressing such issues as they relate to other historic properties.

Sincerely,



Thomas B. Bracken

TBB/pah
cc: Wendy Mariner



5.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

January 22, 2001

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached for your consideration the William James House Landmark Study Report received from Executive Director of the Historical Commission Charles Sullivan.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

Cal 6
575

Consent Agenda #5

The William James House
Landmark Study Report.

In City Council January 22, 2001

Tabled for two
weeks for
notification to
property owner
on the motion of
Councillor Born.

In City Council/
February 5, 2001

ORDER ADOPTED
ORDER ADOPTED

9-0-0