

# Harvard Square Advisory Committee

*c/o Cambridge Community Development Department  
344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139  
617/349-4647*

February 25, 2015

To: The Board of Zoning Appeal

From: Liza Paden on behalf of the Harvard Square Advisory Committee

RE: BZA#6009-2015 – 30 Brattle Street

Unfortunately, due to recent events, the Harvard Square Advisory Committee was unable to convene to discuss the sign variance case. I distributed the BZA variance application electronically and collected a number of comments below.

John P. DiGiovanni, Trinity Property Management, Sheldon Cohen

*I think this application is worthy of support because the signage plan successfully addresses the two level retail in this building in a thoughtful manner. The signage is appropriately scaled and the projecting signs focus on the pedestrians from the multiple visual vantage points. I understand there was significant collaboration amongst the retailers which resulted in this thoughtful design and I completely support this application.*

Frank Kramer

*Due to its location and shape, this is a difficult building to sign adequately for visitors and customers to find their intended destination. There are business occupants on two levels, so the signing ordinance should apply to each level separately. I believe that this plan addresses these issues and I'm in favor of this proposal.*

Pebble Gifford for the Citizen's Design Review Group for Harvard Square: Carole Perrault, Marilee Meyer, Jane Thompson, Kenneth Taylor, James Williams, Costanza Eggers Kari Kuelzer, and Carol O'Hare

*The retail tenants in 30 Brattle St. do themselves a great disservice by loading up the facade of their building with so much visual clutter (a total of 350.5 sq. ft. of signage). It is a well designed building that makes a distinguished termination to Brattle St. If well displayed, the windows provide a quick glance of the retail nature of the store.*

*It is Citizen's concern about its new location partially on a lower level that is driving this request for additional signage. This concern is based on the wrong premise. Their problem is the large number of competing banks in Harvard Sq. that were there long before Citizens. (see link below showing number and location of other banks).*

<https://www.google.com/maps/search/location+of+banks+in+and+near+Harvard/@42.3729132,-71.1181085,17z>

*Citizens believes that all the extra signage they put on the building will combat the competition. This is very unrealistic.*

*At the CHC hearing that I attended, Citizen's lawyer argued that the location of the 30 Brattle St. at the intersection of Brattle and Eliot St. was confusing for potential bank clients because it wasn't clear exactly where the bank was located. We felt that this was a weak argument, because the situation could be improved by a simple street sign on the corner that showed Eliot St. went one way, and Brattle went the other, and in lieu of all the signage, how about big red (or green) "30" in a prominent place on the building.*

*Finally, the most egregious exterior display is the treatment of the ATM's: first, its appearance is one of a 50+ sq. ft. billboard set within the facade; all the other building openings appear black whereas this one is florescent green that can be seen as far away as Story St. as one approaches the Square; finally, there are two bright, internally-lit logos (much too bright) above the ATM's, and halo lighting around the perimeter of each ATM and the night drop; In addition to all this, there is a not so subtle attempt to create the logo in a lighter shade of green in the background of the night drop.*

*Because of the BZA's recent inclination to allow variances for signage that far exceed the requirements of Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board's recommendation to the BZA is very important. Harvard Square is within a Conservation District and sensitivity to its historic character should be demonstrated in all issues of design. This is one of those instances, so we request that you temper accordingly Citizen's Bank's application for so much excessive signage.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Pebble Gifford for the Citizen's Design Review Group for Harvard Square

Carole Perrault, Marilee Meyer, Jane Thompson, Kenneth Taylor, James Williams, Costanza Eggers Kari Kuelzer, and Carol O'Hare