

Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD)	Date Established by City Council	Approximate location	City Commission that Administers the District	Map, Applications and Info Available Online?	Binding Categories of Review	Advisory (Non-Binding) Categories of Review	Exemptions	Do Appeals Become Part of City Record?	Notes
Half Crown NCD	1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Southwest of Harvard Square and is approximately bordered by Hilliard Street to the east, Hawthorne Street to the west, Fuller Place to the north, and Memorial Drive to the south, with Mount Auburn Street at the center of the district. •The district contains approximately 70 buildings. 	Half Crown NCD Commission	yes	Binding review is exercised over: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. new construction; 2. demolition of existing structures if a demolition permit is required; 3. construction of a parking lot as a principal use; and 4. any additions to an existing structure that would add to its gross floor area. 	All other determinations are advisory in nature and are not binding on the applicant.	Interior alterations and change of paint color are excluded from review in all NCDs. Other exempted work includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. alterations that do not increase or diminish the existing building envelope and that do not require the removal of any decorative trim or any change in the shape of the roof; 2. the application of siding in a manner that does not require the removal or enclosure of any decorative trim; 3. the installation of flat skylights or solar collectors parallel to and in close contact with the roof plane and no larger than one-third of the roof plane in which they are installed; 4. permanent professional signs, temporary signs and structures, lawn statuary, recreational equipment, and other such features, subject to conditions that the Commission may specify; 5. storm windows, storm doors, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae, trelliswork, and other features the Commission may specify; 6. terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks, and similar landscape features substantially at grade level that are not to be used for parking between the principal front wall plane of the building and the street; 7. walls and fences less than four feet high and located between the principal front wall plane of a building and the street, and walls and fences less than six feet high elsewhere on a property. 	yes	250 applications have been reviewed since the district was established in 1984. The proposal to merge the Half Crown and Marsh Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which was made by a joint study committee and confirmed by the Cambridge Historical Commission has been forwarded to the Ordinance Committee by the City Council. The study committee concluded that the two districts are sufficiently consistent in their historic and architectural development that the objectives and principles of the Marsh NCD order could apply equally to the Half Crown NCD. There is no need to significantly modify those objectives and principles to fit the Half Crown NCD; rather, the Marsh objectives and principles are supplemented with some additional wording to reflect the character of the Half Crown's architecture and street patterns. A principal difference between the orders governing the two existing districts is the standards for changes that are subject to review by the NCD Commission. In the Half Crown, only new construction, demolition, and construction of a parking lot as a principal use are subject to binding review, with all other changes subject to non-binding advisory review only. The Study Committee also concluded, after examining the provisions of the Marsh Order and the record relating to review in the Marsh District, that all changes in the consolidated district not exempt from review should be subject to binding review. The Study Committee recommends that the consolidation proceed as proposed in the interest of administrative efficiency, public participation, and commission effectiveness.

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Mid Cambridge NCD	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately bordered by Prospect Street to the east, Prescott Street to the west, Kirkland Street and the Somerville city line to the north, and Massachusetts Avenue to the south. Contains approximately 2,200 buildings. 	Mid Cambridge NCD Commission	yes	<p>The Commission may make binding recommendations for that portion of any of the following that are visible from a public way:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> New construction, including additions to existing structures, involving any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> more than 750 square feet of floor area; more than 33% of the lot area not already occupied by structures; enlargement of the floor area of an existing structure by more than 33%; Demolition of 33% or more of the floor area of an existing structure not originally used to garage automobiles, including relocation of an existing structure onto or off of a site; Any alteration or construction of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, except those subject to Historical Commission review; publicly owned structures; structures containing or proposed to contain non-conforming uses. 	<p>The Commission may make non-binding recommendations for any of the following that are visible from a public way:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> New construction, including additions to existing structures, of more than 150 and less than 750 square feet of floor area; Alteration of the exterior appearance of a structure that requires a variance or special permit under the zoning ordinance then in effect; Alteration involving any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> removal or enclosure of any historic or original decorative element, such as a cornice, fascia, soffit, bay, porch, hood, cornerboard, window sash, or window or door casing; increase or diminishment of the size and/or change in the location of, windows or doors; increase or diminishment of the slope, pitch, or configuration of a roof or removal of historic or original roofing material. 	<p>Interior alterations and change of paint color are excluded from review in all NCDs. Other exempted work includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Anything not otherwise listed as requiring binding or non-binding review. 	yes	2,937 applications have been reviewed since the district was established in 1985.

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Avon Hill NCD	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately bounded by Linnaean Street, Raymond Street, Upland Road, and the zoning boundary of the BA-2 and C-2 zones along Massachusetts Avenue; Contains approximately 220 properties. 	Avon Hill NCD Commission	yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> construction of a new building, as defined in the zoning ordinance then in effect; construction of an accessory building, as defined in the zoning ordinance then in effect; construction of a parking lot as a principal use; construction of an addition to an existing structure that would increase its gross floor area by more than 750 square feet in the A-2 zone or more than 500 square feet in the B and C-1 zones; construction of an addition to an existing structure that would increase the total lot coverage on the property to 30% or more in the A-2 zone or to 40% or more in the B and C-1 zones; demolition of an existing structure not originally used to garage automobiles and if a demolition permit is required; alteration of the exterior architectural features of a building listed on or determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; alteration of the exterior architectural features of a structure that requires a variance or special permit under the zoning ordinance then in effect; or alteration of the exterior architectural features of a publicly-owned structure or of a structure containing a use established or continued by variance or special permit, or proposed to contain or continue a use that would require a variance or special permit under the zoning ordinance then in effect. 	In all other cases than those listed in the sections for binding review or exemptions, the determinations of the Commission shall be advisory only and not binding on the applicant.	<p>Interior alterations and change of paint color are excluded from review in all NCDs. Other exempted work includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The alteration of exterior architectural features on the premises of a property in the District in a manner that does not increase or diminish the existing building envelope and that does not require the removal, enclosure, or addition of any cornice, fascia, soffit, bay, porch, hood, cornerboard, window sash, window or door casing, or any other decorative element, including historic shingled siding, wood or copper gutters and downspouts, and copper, slate, or wood shingle roofing, and that does not alter the shape of a roof. The construction of terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks, and similar structures that do not involve a change in grade level and that are not to be used for parking between the principal front wall plane of a building, or the principal front and side wall planes of a building that occupies a corner property, and the street. The construction of walls and fences less than four feet high as measured from the sidewalk or existing immediately adjacent grade and located between the principal front wall plane of a building, or the principal front and side walls of a building that occupies a corner property, and the street. Walls and fences less than six feet high elsewhere on the property shall not be subject to review. Signs, temporary structures, lawn statuary, or recreational equipment, subject to such conditions as duration of use, dimension, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify. Storm doors and windows, screens, and window air conditioners. 	yes	<p>229 applications have been reviewed since the district was established in 1998.</p> <p>The Study Committee completed its review on 9/28/06 and made the following recommendations for administrative reforms and amendments to the order establishing the District:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond Street should remain in the district, and that the problems that Raymond Street petitioners and others have encountered are better dealt with through the jurisdiction and governance changes recommended below. Clarify the general purpose and approach of the District by amending the preamble of the Avon Hill NCD Order. Eliminate a provision of the Order requiring NCD review when a special permit or zoning variance is required. Require binding review of aluminum or vinyl siding and aluminum, vinyl, or vinyl-clad windows where they currently do not exist outside as well as within the National Register portion of the District. Require binding review for alterations that affect the building envelope, including altering, adding or removing bays, dormers, roof shapes and porches outside the National Register portion of the District. Eliminate non-binding determinations and replace them with advisory administrative reviews by CHC staff. Change the guideline regarding total lot coverage from 30% to 35% in the A-2 zone and 40% to 45% in the B and C-1 zones. Add a conservation guideline for architectural features such as siding, trim and windows, clarifying that these features should generally be compatible with the architectural style of the building. Specifically state that vinyl siding and vinyl windows should not be used. Allow up to two additional Cambridge residents living outside the District to serve on the Commission (one as a member, one as an alternate), with preference given to those who have served on other NCD commissions. Encourage residents to nominate potential candidates for membership. Enforce the provision of the Ordinance that Commission members are limited to two consecutive terms of service. Allow former members to be considered for reappointment after one year of retirement. Recommend to the City Manager that he appoint a new Commission of members and alternates who have not previously served. Assign the Historical Commission clear responsibility for the oversight of NCDs. The Historical Commission should hold periodic joint meetings with the Avon Hill NCD Commission to review the operations of the District and report its findings to the City Manager and the City Council. The Avon Hill NCD Commission should continue to use the hearing procedures recently established. The Historical Commission should increase training of Commission members and should consider establishing a Code of Conduct for Commissioners. The Historical Commission should consider increasing its public education efforts. The Historical Commission should consider recommending that the City Council amend the NCD Ordinance so as to consolidate some of the city's smaller NCDs under one citywide NCD commission. Consolidation of the Avon Hill NCD with the proposed Lower Common NCD is not recommended.

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Harvard Square NCD	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Harvard Square Conservation District is an area of mixed-use buildings in the historic center of Cambridge, and it is approximately bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and Mount Auburn, Eliot, Bennett, Story, and Church streets. The district contains approximately 110 buildings. 	Cambridge Historical Commission	yes	Exterior alterations that are visible from a public way but not otherwise exempted from review.	Not applicable in this district.	<p>Interior alterations and change of paint color are excluded from review in all NCDs. Other exemptions includes the following.</p> <p>A. Exclusions from Review The following structures or features may be constructed or altered without review by the Historical Commission.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Storm doors and storm windows. Signs that conform to Section 7.000, "Signs and Illumination" of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge, as the same may be amended with respect to Section 11.50, "Harvard Square Overlay District." <p>B. Certificates of Nonapplicability The following categories of alterations shall be issued a Certificate of Nonapplicability provided they conform to the applicable standards and guidelines of the District:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Roof repairs and HVAC equipment not visible from a public way. Replacement windows pursuant to regulations that after public hearing the Historical Commission may adopt for this purpose. Alterations that the Executive Director of the Historical Commission determines do not alter, enclose, or extend further than the decorative or structural framework of the building or retail space originally intended to surround a storefront. The framework consists of such elements as piers, columns, cornerboards, quoins, cornices, and similar structural or decorative features. Storefront alterations that the Executive Director of the Historical Commission determines do not obscure, remove, relocate, or replace historic or original exterior architectural features. Exterior architectural features include, but are not limited to, such features as brackets, window and door casings, fascia, hoods, bays, and window sash. 	yes	418 applications have been reviewed since the district was established in 2000.

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Marsh NCD	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately bounded by Willard, Mount Auburn, Lowell and Foster streets. Also included in the district are properties north of Foster Street, including Foster Place and Brown Street. Contains approximately 130 properties. 	Marsh NCD Commission	yes	The Commission reviews all construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color, within the district that is visible from any public way in Cambridge or Boston. The authority of the Commission shall be binding except with regard to the categories of structures or exterior architectural features identified as exemptions.	Not applicable in this district.	<p>Interior alterations and change of paint color are excluded from review in all NCDs. Other exempted work includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The construction of terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks and similar structures substantially at grade level, provided, however, that they are not to be used for parking between the street and either the principal front wall plane of a building or the principal front and side wall planes of a building that occupies a corner property. The construction of walls and fences four feet high or less as measured from the grade of the sidewalk or the surface of the ground immediately below the wall or fence, whichever grade is lower. The installation of storm doors and windows, window air conditioners, trelliswork and similar appurtenances. The installation of flat skylights or solar collectors parallel to and in close contact with the plane of the roof provided that all new and existing skylights and collectors are not larger than one-third of the area of the roof plane in which they are installed. The installation of intake and exhaust vents of less than one square foot in area provided no more than two such vents are installed on an elevation. The installation of permanent exterior lighting provided it is installed in a manner that will prevent direct light from shining onto any adjacent property. The installation of chimney caps provided they are installed in a manner that will allow their removal without altering the structure or appearance of the chimney. 	yes	<p>79 applications have been reviewed since the district was established in 2001.</p> <p>The proposal to merge the Half Crown and Marsh Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which was made by a joint study committee and confirmed by the Cambridge Historical Commission has been forwarded to the Ordinance Committee by the City Council.</p> <p>The study committee concluded that the two districts are sufficiently consistent in their historic and architectural development that the objectives and principles of the Marsh NCD order could apply equally to the Half Crown NCD. There is no need to significantly modify those objectives and principles to fit the Half Crown NCD; rather, the Marsh objectives and principles are supplemented with some additional wording to reflect the character of the Half Crown's architecture and street patterns.</p> <p>A principal difference between the orders governing the two existing districts is the standards for changes that are subject to review by the NCD Commission. In the Half Crown, only new construction, demolition, and construction of a parking lot as a principal use are subject to binding review, with all other changes subject to non-binding advisory review only. The Study Committee also concluded, after examining the provisions of the Marsh Order and the record relating to review in the Marsh District, that all changes in the consolidated district not exempt from review should be subject to binding review.</p> <p>The Study Committee recommends that the consolidation proceed as proposed in the interest of administrative efficiency, public participation, and commission effectiveness.</p>