



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112

E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: www.cambridgema.gov/Historic

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

1. The undersigned hereby applies to the Cambridge Historical Commission for a Certificate of (check one box): ☒ Appropriateness, ☐ Nonapplicability, or ☐ Hardship, in accordance with Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws and/or Chapter 2.78 of the Municipal Code.

2. Address of property: , Cambridge, Massachusetts

3. Describe the proposed alteration(s), construction or demolition in the space provided below:
(An additional page can be attached, if necessary).

President and Fellows of Harvard College through the Harvard Law School proposes to replace two existing exterior platform lifts that serve entrances to Lecture Halls in the west and east wings of Austin Hall. The lifts are required under state accessibility regulations to provide an accessible entrance to each Lecture Hall, which are tiered internally. The existing custom made lifts were installed in 2000 in the rear of the building. Having reached the end of their service life they are increasingly unreliable for users and difficult to maintain because replacement parts require custom fabrication, service access is confined and there are limited qualified service providers. The proposed replacement lifts, a premanufactured unit with dependable service providers, will provide reliability for accessibility, in the same location as they exist today, but will not be retractable. See attachments.

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. The undersigned also attests that he/she has read the statements printed on the reverse.

Name of Property Owner of Record:		President and Fellows of Harvard College c/o Gene O'Connor, HLS	
Mailing Address:		Harvard Law School, Holmes Hall 6, 18 Everett St Cambridge MA 02138	
Telephone/Fax:	617-496-8863	E-mail:	goconnor@law.harvard.edu
Signature of Property Owner of Record:		Gene O'Connor	
(Required field; application will not be considered complete without property owner's signature)			
Name of proponent, if not record owner:			
Mailing Address:			
Telephone/Fax:		E-mail:	

(for office use only):

Date Application Received: _____ Case Number: 5382 Hearing Date: 11/8/2026
Type of Certificate Issued: _____ Date Issued: _____

Instructions for Completing this Application:

An application must be filed with the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) before work begins. Twelve (12) copies of the application should be attached to twelve (12) copies of supplementary material such as sketches, scale drawings, site plans, specifications, or photographs sufficient to enable the CHC to understand the details of the work proposed and to make a determination on the application. Plans no larger than 11" x 17" are preferred. Please submit reduced copies of plans if originals are of a larger dimension. Do not use spiral bindings, plastic covers, or heavy stock (these will be removed prior to mailing). Double sided copies are encouraged to save paper and postage. See our website or call for a list of meeting dates and deadlines.

The CHC staff welcomes advance inquiries for interpretations or advice. Please call 617/349-4683.

An application is considered incomplete without accompanying plans and drawings. The CHC reserves the right to determine an application incomplete at the time of hearing the application if it determines that the plans, drawings and other information submitted are not sufficient to enable it to determine whether to grant or deny a certificate.

Owners are urged to appear before the CHC in person or to designate an agent to act for them. The CHC will deem the agent to be authorized by the owner to make decisions regarding the extension or waiver of the period within which the CHC is otherwise required to make a determination on the application.

All meetings are open to the public.

Administration of Historic Districts, Landmarks, and Protected Properties:

The administration of historic districts and landmarks is guided by the provisions of Ch. 40C of the Mass. General Laws and by Ch. 2.78 of the Code of the City Of Cambridge. Other properties may also be subject to CHC jurisdiction including properties with conditional variances and properties governed by individual preservation restrictions.

Any new construction, alteration of exterior architectural features, or demolition within an historic district or on the premises of a protected property or a designated landmark must be reviewed by the CHC. No building permit for such work on a protected property, designated landmark, or property within a historic district may be issued by the Inspectional Services Department until a certificate has been issued. The CHC must approve the alteration or construction of all structures, including signs, fences, walls, terraces, walks, driveways, light fixtures and the like, which are "open to view from a public street, public way, public park or public body of water," whether or not a building permit is required, and must approve changes in exterior color for properties within a historic district or as otherwise agreed.

Prior to each hearing, the CHC staff will take slides or digital photographs of the subject property in daylight with ordinary camera equipment for the purpose of documenting the publicly visible conditions of buildings and exterior architectural features for the CHC and the public to view at the hearing. More information can be provided on request.

The CHC issues three types of certificates. A Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued when the CHC has determined that the construction or alteration will be appropriate for or compatible with the preservation or protection of the historic district, designated landmark, or other protected property. A Certificate of Nonapplicability may be issued when an application does not involve an exterior feature, or when the exterior feature is not then subject to CHC review. A Certificate of Hardship may be issued when failure to approve an otherwise inappropriate project would involve substantial hardship to the applicant and the CHC determines that the project can be accomplished without substantial detriment to the purposes of the district, preservation restriction, or landmark designation.

The CHC considers each application on its own merits, and does not apply specific architectural guidelines. Landscaping with plant materials is not subject to CHC review unless it is planned in conjunction with alterations or new construction. The CHC must approve projects that are not incongruous with the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the protected property, landmark, or historic district.



Harvard Law School – Austin Hall
Deferred Maintenance Project

Proposed Exterior Lift Replacement
Site Plan, showing Lift Replacement Locations

Austin Architects
10 December 2025



Retractable lift

Harvard Law School – Austin Hall
Deferred Maintenance Project

East Wing: Existing Accessible Entrance with Retractable Lift

Austin Architects
10 December 2025



Painted steel
and glass lift
enclosure

Harvard Law School – Austin Hall
Deferred Maintenance Project

East Wing: Accessible Entrance with proposed Replacement Lift

Austin Architects
10 December 2025



Retractable lift

Harvard Law School – Austin Hall
Deferred Maintenance Project

West Wing: Existing Accessible Entrance with Retractable Lift

Austin Architects
10 December 2025



Painted steel
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Harvard Law School – Austin Hall
Deferred Maintenance Project

West Wing: Accessible Entrance with proposed Replacement Lift

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HARVARD
UNIVERSITY PLANNING AND DESIGN



December 15, 2025

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

RE: 1515 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Enclosed please find twelve copies of the application and additional materials for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed exterior lift replacements at 1515 Massachusetts Avenue.

The project team and I look forward to presenting this project to the Cambridge Historical Commission at the January 8, 2026, public hearing.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 617-496-3606.

Sincerely,

Diane Gray

Diane Gray
Senior Campus Planner

Cc: Gene O'Connor, HLS
Jonathan Austin, Austin Architects
Tom Lucey, Harvard University

Enclosure

