

(original)

Protected Landmark Petition: Live Poultry Fresh Killed Sign

August 20, 2021

To: The Cambridge Historical Commission
Mr. Bruce A. Irwin, Chairman
Mr. Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director
831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139



CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

- WHEREAS: The Mayflower Poultry shop, at 621 Cambridge St., is closing its doors after 89 years of business; and
- WHEREAS The “Live Poultry Fresh Killed” sign, which was trademarked in 2005, is a major Cambridge tourist attraction; and
- WHEREAS This 6 foot tall sign has garnered such interest that the shop has used it to sell “Live Poultry Fresh Killed” merchandise such as tee shirts and hats; and
- WHEREAS This “Live Poultry Fresh Killed” sign is a famous East Cambridge Landmark, evoking the long standing history of East Cambridge, and Cambridge more generally, in factory-produced butcher products, and:
- WHEREAS This “Live Poultry, Fresh Killed” sign appears prominently in such tourist-linked sites as YELP with statements such as “I spotted this sign as I was moving in to Fulkerson street nearly a year ago, and I knew I had come to the right place. Not only is the sign for Mayflower hilarious, it also proves to be an iconic landmark of East Cambridge;” and
- WHEREAS Like the now landmarked “Shell Sign” and “EMF Sign,” preservationists now recognize the importance of preserving key parts of the history of our worker and emigre legacy as an important piece of our community; and
- WHEREAS As the neighborhood guide in Boston Magazine has noted, East Cambridge has had a vital role in our City’s diverse ethnic history: “Filled with industrial jobs, the neighborhood welcomed working-class residents, who spent their days on the factory lines. Immigrants from Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, and Poland found their home base in East Cambridge, with their church parish serving as a touchstone for their local ethnic community;” and
- WHEREAS This same Boston Magazine article goes on to explain that, “By the 1960s, factories began to shut down. Nearby, Kendall Square started its ascension into a technology stronghold, filling up with life sciences, pharmaceutical, and venture capital companies, bolstered by MIT just around the corner. Today, these companies continue to hold court in the area, as the neighborhood works to coexist while maintaining its character in the face of change;”
- WHEREAS We also read in this Boston Magazine article that “Some of the most beloved locales are fading away....But there are still plenty of iconic spots going strong, ranging from fish markets and bakeries to Mayflower Poultry, with its “Live Poultry Fresh Killed” sign calling attention out front;”

- WHEREAS It is widely recognized that buildings can be repurposed, and maintaining important examples of the vernacular elements once broadly seen in East Cambridge and other neighborhoods in Cambridge is important to present and future generations, as well as visiting tourists, in conveying a distinctive and authentic picture of the neighborhood's history; and
- WHEREAS: **The** area in which this building is situated is rapidly undergoing change that risks depriving Cambridge of one of the most interesting of such important and historic work-and industrial-related structures to East Cambridge's identity, spirit of place, heritage, and cultural landscape; and
- WHEREAS: The "Live Poultry Fresh Killed" sign is inextricably linked to the history and culture of East Cambridge, and indeed the working class history of Cambridge itself; and
- WHEREAS: This specific sign is a vital and ongoing symbol of East Cambridge's environment of continual change and a key epicenter of this urban cultural landscape; and
- WHEREAS: The unique "LIVE POULTRY *Fresh* KILLED" lettering with its italicized and script-font "*Fresh*" and bold lettered "KILLED" on a white background, layered over an orangy yellow chicken image emblazoned on this sign displays the kind of eclectic and resonant mix of elements consistent with the one-time factory worker community and harkens back to the days when Cambridge specialized in blue-collar industries that supported the working class; and
- WHEREAS Too much of this City's history is being lost or forgotten and some "have worried about Cambridge losing that blue-collar edge, because the blue-collar is where you get your grit. It may not always be pretty, but it is certainly tough with a can-do spirit, and much needed in crucial moments. I have also worried about Cambridge losing its "edge" in general. An edge created by the colorful, creative types who live life outside the parameters of a shiny new Cambridge built on "bio-this," "techy-that," and copious hipster endeavors" (Kristina Kehrer EMF Radio – An Oasis of Cool and Tradition in Cambridge on www.neighbormedia.org); and

DESIGNATIONS

- WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council in 1983 enacted legislation designed to preserve and conserve buildings and sites of significance in Cambridge's history; and

CURRENT THREATS

- WHEREAS: After the Mayflower Poultry shop closes, and their long term building at at 621 Cambridge St was sold, and the business itself relocated, the sign is anticipated to be auctioned off on August 26; and
- WHEREAS: The East Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee is now evaluating whether to create a Conservation District in this important part of the City; and
- WHEREAS: Cambridge citizens have complained publicly about the potential homogenization of architecture and use

LANDMARK DESIGNATIONS

- WHEREAS: The "Live Poultry Fresh Killed" sign at 621 Cambridge Street's design, history, setting, and use make it worthy of preservation as a Cambridge Landmark; and
- WHEREAS: This sign at 621 Cambridge Street is one of a select number of properties that is important not only to Cambridge's economic and working class history but also its artistic vibrancy and indeed to Cambridge as a whole; and
- WHEREAS: Protecting the "Live Poultry Fresh Killed" sign with local landmark status will enable its unique qualities to be maintained for the benefit of all Cambridge and all Cantabridgians; and
- WHEREAS: Official landmark designation would "foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge" of its distinctive characteristics and significance; and
- WHEREAS: Individually landmarking this locally significant structure is needed to ensure that public participation and review guidelines contribute to the historic and visual enhancement of East Cambridge for future generations; and
- WHEREAS: Notwithstanding the fact that the City of Cambridge has yet to afford official recognition and protected status to the "Live Poultry Fresh Killed" sign at 621 Cambridge Street; so

THEREFORE do we, the undersigned residents of the City of Cambridge, pursuant to Ordinance 1002, Article III, Section 180(D) of Chapter 2.78 of the Cambridge Municipal Code, hereby respectfully pray that the Cambridge Historical Commission initiate with all possible haste the process of designating the "Live Poultry Fresh Killed" sign at 621 Cambridge Street as a protected landmark of the City of Cambridge.

ENDORSEES

Printed Name	Address	Zip	Signature
1 John Whisnant	61 Otis St.	02141	John Whisnant
2 William F. Dines Jr	69 Otis St.		William F. Dines Jr
3 Marie Sacoccio	55 Otis St		Marie Sacoccio
4 Betty Le Sacoccio	55 Otis St.		Betty Le Sacoccio
5 Heather Hoffman	213 Hurley Street	02141	Heather Hoffman
6 Ovadia R. Simha	303 3 rd St	02142	OVADIA R. SIMHA

ENDORSEES

	Printed Name	Address	Zip	Signature
7.	Suzanne Blier	5 Fuller Place	02138	Suzanne Blier
8.	RUDOLPH BLIER	5 FULLER PLACE	02138	Rudolph Blier
9.	GILL DEFORD	3 FULLER PL.	02138	Gill Deford
10	Lana Deford	3 Fuller Place	02138	Lana Deford
11	Raine Figueroa	9 Hilliard St.	02138	Raine Figueroa
12	Theodora Sheadas	988 Memorial Dr. Apt. 185	02138	Theodora Sheadas
13	Nicola Williams	8 Brewer St	02138	Nicola Williams
14	Ann M. Gilby	989 Memorial Dr.	02138	Ann M. Gilby
15	Stephene Peck	989 Memorial Drive	02138	Stephene Peck
16	GODFREY AMPHETT	8 1/2 Ash St. Place Cambridge MA 02138	02138	G. Amphett
17	GLADYS P GIFFORD	15 Hilliard St	02138	Gladys P Gifford
18	Maureen Smith	9 Hilliard Pl.	02138	Maureen Smith
19	Susan Sabandh	9A Forest St.	02140	Susan Sabandh
20	Robert Master	9A Forest St	02140	Robert Master
21	Rhonda Massie	211 Charles St.	02141	Rhonda Massie

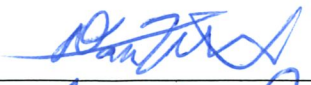
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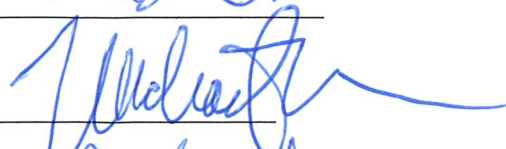
	Printed Name	Address	Zip	Signature
22	MARK JAQUITH	213 HURLEY ST.	02141	Mark Jaquith
23	Gabriel Thornton	163 Charles St. #2	02141	G. Thornton
24	PAUL J. KEPLIN	211 Charles St.	02141	Paul J. Keplin
25	MARIA VIEIRA	222 CHARLES ST.		Maria Vieira
26	Jean Spera	12 Sciarappa St.		Jean Spera
27	ANNA Spera	12 Sciarappa St.		Anna Spera
28	Jean Perry	32 Griswold St.		Jean Perry
29	Jeannette Hernandez	2 Leighton st.		Mato
30	Jennifer Dempsey	324 Hurley St. Apt 2		J. Dempsey
31	MARIA SERVA	24 Bristol St.		Maria Serva
32	Wendell Billet	570 Cambridge St	02141	Wendell Billet
33	PAMELA HART	18 Donnell St	02130	Pamela Hart
34	Kelly Donohue	55 Magazine St	APT 27	Kelly Donohue
35	Katie Diasti	85 Seaport Blvd	Apt 1105	Katie Diasti
36	Kyle Nipulan	425 Cambridge St.		Kyle Nipulan

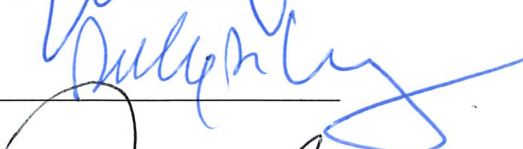
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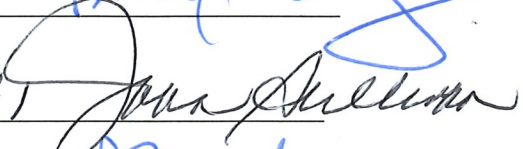
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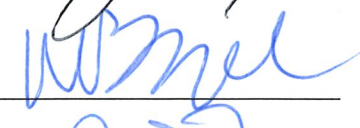
Printed Name Address Zip Signature

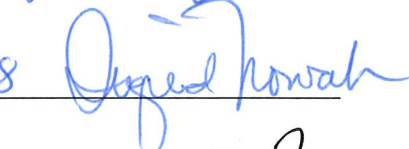
- 37 Daniel Totten 54 Bishop Allen Dr #2 02139 

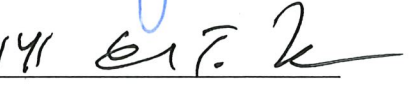
- 38 Michael Monestime 4 George St 02140 

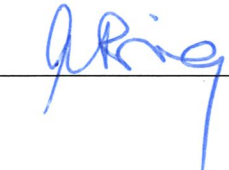
- 39 Duck Lowrey 3 Ward Street #302 Somerville 02143 

- 40 Joan Sullivan ^{Camb, MA} 41 Plymouth St 02141 

- 41 Grete Prodenstedt 77th St. APT 2 02141 

- 42 INGRID Nowak 11 Thingvalla Ave 02138 

- 43 CHARLES T. HINDS JR. 207 1/2 CHARLES ST 02141 

- 44 Allison Berg 207 Charles St. #2 02141 

ENDORSEES

	Printed Name	Address	Zip	Signature
45	Laura Roberts	1715 Cambridge St	02138	Laura Roberts
46	Susan Arnott	1707 Cambridge St.	02138	Susan Arnott
47	Elizabeth Gombosi	42 Irving St.	02138	Elizabeth Gombosi
48	FRANCIS DONOVAN	42 IRVING ST	02138	Francis Donovan
49	EDWARD BELOVE	1715 CAMBRIDGE ST	02138	Edward Belove
50	Betsy Groban	1462 " "	02139	Betsy Groban
51	Ideli Melloner	74 Avon Hill St.	02140	Ideli Melloner
