

Perez, Lori

From: Allan Sadun <aesadun@alum.mit.edu>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 8:53 AM
To: City Council; Clerk
Subject: Short comment on landmarking

Dear City Councillors -

City Manager's Agenda #2 tonight ([CMA 2021 #182](#)) is a report that the Cambridge Historical Commission has landmarked a single-family house two down from where I live. The reasons they gave for landmarking the building are:

- It is "an example of residential construction during the early industrialization of the neighborhood's development"
- The previous owner, who had undertaken major interior work and planned to sell the house in the near term, sent the CHC a letter of interest, in which she stated that she enjoyed the garden and the "shared open space of the continuous rear yards".
- There is a "presence of additional development potential on the site", putting pressure on the property to be redeveloped.
- A notable person (in this case, the first Black woman to graduate Radcliffe) grew up there.

Frankly, over half the buildings in Cambridge could meet these four criteria - and I find the idea that this landmarking takes place because the property owner requested it, whereas all other theoretically possible landmarkings do not because the property owner does not, to be a perversion of what landmarking is supposed to be about. I write not to strongly object to this landmarking in particular, but to highlight for the Council's attention the trend of "historical preservation" being stretched thinner and thinner to cover what are so often merely aesthetic whims and property value interests.

Best of luck with what I know are more important items on tonight's agenda.

Thank you,
Allan Sadun
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