



Town of Lexington
Historical Commission

David Kelland, Chair
Marilyn Fenollosa
Wendall Kalsow
Frank Kern
Sally Zimmerman

1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420
781-862-0500 Ext. 701

October 27, 2016

Ms. Suzie Barry
Chair, Lexington Board of Selectmen
1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420

Re : Lexington Center

Dear Ms. Barry:

The Lexington Historical Commission was established "for the preservation, protection and development of the historical or archeological assets of [the town]... [f]or the purpose of protecting and preserving such places, it may make such recommendations as it deems necessary to the ... selectmen." Because of this statutory responsibility, we are writing to express our recommendations regarding Lexington Center.

At our October 19th meeting, the Historical Commission received the Tier 1 Report of the Center Streetscape Design Review Ad Hoc Committee, dated September 26, 2016. The Commission believes that Lexington Center is a significant mid-century modern landscape where the design was led by the internationally respected landscape architect and Lexington resident Hideo Sasaki and included other significant architects, such as Norman Fletcher, Walter Gropius and Walter Pierce.

The Commission voted unanimously to support the Ad Hoc Committee report, specifically the three key recommendations:

1. BRICK SIDEWALKS

Replacing the existing water-struck brick with similar colored wire-cut brick will maintain this important visual and historic feature and meet all Massachusetts Architectural Access Board and ADA standards. Tom Hopkins, Executive Director of

the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, confirmed in a meeting with the Ad Hoc Committee that wire-cut brick, properly installed is in full-compliance with accessibility standards.

2. PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTS

Replacing the pedestrian scale octagonal lights with very similar looking lights is important in replication this unique and visually prominent element of the Sasaki design.

3. ROADWAY LIGHTS

The Commission agrees with the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation to replace the Cobra-head street lights with simple LED street lights, since these lights are not visually important elements.

The Historical Commission believes that treating the mid-century modern Lexington Center as a historic resource is important, and that the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* should be followed.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

If the Lexington Center project follows the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, the project will qualify for at least partial funding from Lexington's CPC. If the project does not follow the Secretary's standards, it will not, in the opinion of the Historical Commission, qualify for CPC funding.

We strongly urge the Board of Selectmen to support the Lexington Center project and adherence to recognized preservation standards, so that we can maintain and improve our unique and special Lexington Center.

Very truly yours,

David R. Kelland
Chair

cc. Carl Valente
Howard Levin