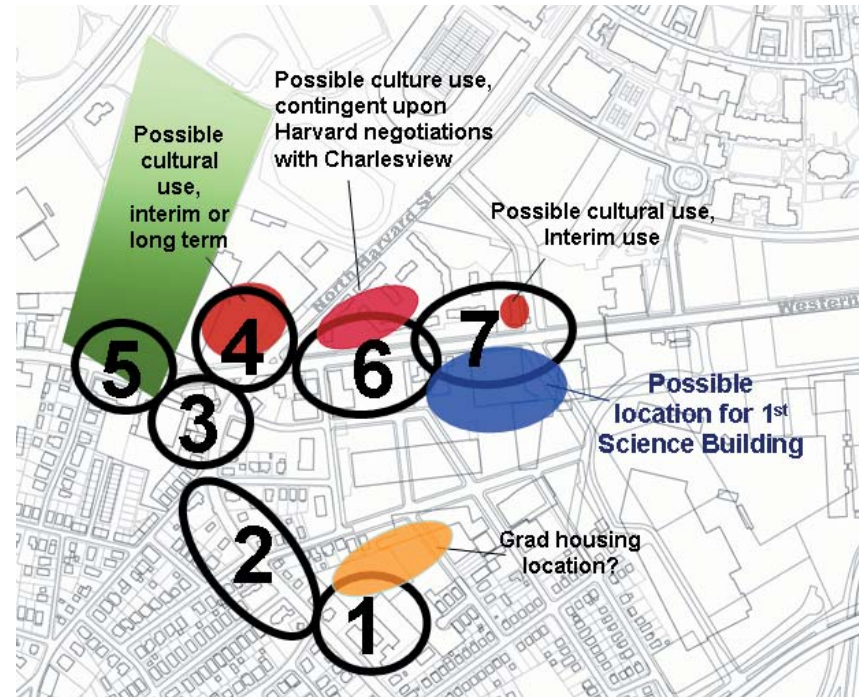


# Allston Initiative



# PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES AT BARRY'S CORNER

Workshop Results: March 4, 2006

## GROUP 1

### Library front, side, rear and street

Many ideas emerged that would improve the library's street presence and create a more usable space that would be buffered from the traffic by landscaping. This protected space could include a café, seating, and a water element/fountain. The space in back of the library, which might eventually link to Harvard graduate housing, could become a space comfortable for both the neighborhood and Harvard community to use – a commons with areas where children could play, events and music could occur, a field for impromptu softball games, shaded seating areas, a trellis, a giant chess board, sculptures, etc.

- Museum - Harvard, natural history, AB Historical Society
- Educational displays
- Cultural uses
- Park, play area for children - tiles by kids
- Public Art/sculpture (Harvard + community)
- Chess area
- Gardening
- Band shell - performance space
- Water feature
- Trellis/pergola connecting graduate housing and library
- Cafe - wrapping around
- Use the wall to bring people together
- Children's activities, theater, music
- Traffic calming, street improvements



Honan-Allston library

## GROUP 2

### Church to bank and street experience

This group was concerned with the quality of the street environment and how to make it more attractive and conducive to walking and shopping. They suggested many street improvements like lighting, wider sidewalks, landscaping, and better bus stops. They saw the Peoples Federal Savings Bank as a prominent anchor that could be enhanced, and the potential for more retail along North Harvard Street leading into Barry's Corner.

- Curb bump-outs, trees, pedestrian lighting
- Peoples Federal Savings Bank a great spot, a real anchor
- Expand the retail along this stretch
- Space behind church: farmer's market, community events
- Integrate bus stops with bank and church
- Better link from bank to Barry's Corner proper - something to draw you there - more shopping or better walking environment



Peoples Federal Savings Bank

On March 4th, 2006, approximately 50 people gathered at the Honan-Allston Branch Library at 300 North Harvard Street, for a Placemaking Workshop facilitated by New York-based Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS). The intent was for Allston residents to brainstorm ways the North Allston-Harvard relationship could be realized in a positive way through the public realm around Barry's Corner (the intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue). The ideas will help inform the Allston Initiative planning process and Harvard's Master Plan.

Barry's Corner was chosen as the site to focus on because it is at this intersection where the community assets in Allston converge with the future developments of the Harvard Allston campus.

After a presentation by PPS, participants then went outside to conduct a Place Evaluation exercise around seven sites, shown above.

Participants were asked to brainstorm ideas for what activities and amenities would attract them to use these spaces more often, and to list ideas for improvement in the short and long term. For example:

What kinds of public activities would you like to be able to do here, especially in the ground floor and outdoor areas?

What amenities / features would add to the character of this place and support the activities described above (e.g. water, character of landscaping, buildings, seating, etc.)?

What street improvements are needed to make better connections and walkability?

A full report of the workshop is available online at:

[www.allston.harvard.edu/community/pps.pdf](http://www.allston.harvard.edu/community/pps.pdf)

## GROUP 3

### Verizon Building ground floor uses--Dunkin' Donuts, Gas Stations, 7-11, Bus Stops

This area was envisioned to be a better retail destination, with more shops, especially those more oriented to (and run by) the local community. In addition, bus stops could be more visible and become part of overall improvements to the street and sidewalks.

- Highlight the three bus stops and improve the corner
  - More kiosks
  - Greenery
  - Restaurants and pubs
- Neighborhood's current needs need to be served as neighborhood is being rebuilt
- Community retail: affordable, book store, home furnishings
- Movie theater
- Encourage more walking
- Farmer's market, maybe near Harvard's recycling center



Spur Street looking West

## GROUP 4

### 175 - 219, Possible Cultural Use, Ceramics Studio

The parking lot and buildings at this site were seen as an opportunity to create a multi-use destination and public space that was very community-friendly. Among the ideas for the plaza were: a market, an info kiosk, outdoor movies, a public space connected to Smith Field, fountains, sculptures, arts and cultural events, and festivals. A school, legal assistance center, and day care center were also recommended.

- Multi-use center
  - Info kiosk
  - Greenspace area - connect to Smith Field
  - Day care/community center
  - Farmer's market/flea market on parking lot
  - Outdoor movies and theater
- Harvard-funded school (K-12), after-school programs
- Connection from college to community and river
- Legal assistance center
- Aesthetics: awnings, murals, landscaping
- Encourage/assist small business for community shops
- Wider sidewalks, more defined crosswalks
- Free and affordable arts, science and cultural events
- Ethnic shops and restaurants that are affordable



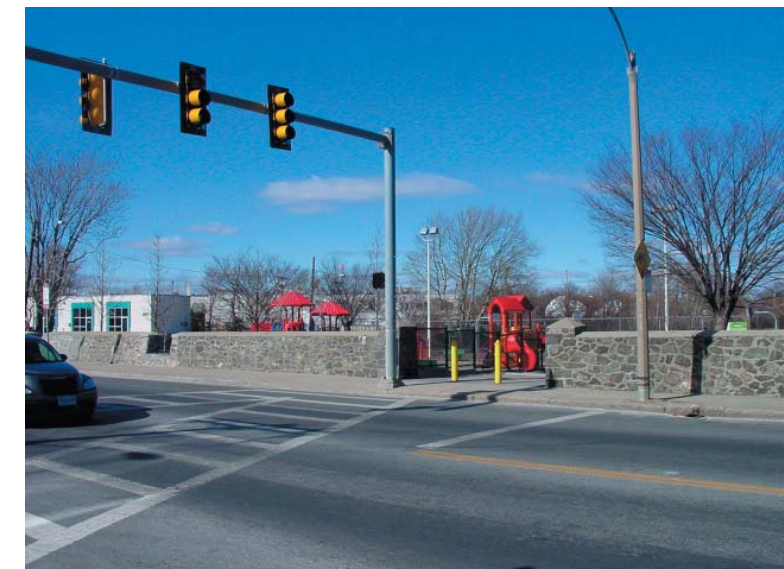
Facade of 219 Western Ave

## GROUP 5

### Teele Hall and edge of Smith Field

This group identified an existing restaurant inside Teele Hall that needs to be brought out to activate the sidewalk. The sidewalks on Western Avenue need to be wider to help connect the activities on both sides. People thought Smith Field could have many more community uses along its edge, to make a park within a park more oriented to local people looking for a nice place to sit. This improved park area could include a dog run, flowers and landscaping, a fountain, food carts, and some use in the back of 219 Western Ave. The group stressed how there could be better connections across the field to Harvard Square and the river.

- Bring Teele Hall restaurant out to the street
- Farmer's market in the parking lot behind Teele
- Highlight Smith Field activities - street hockey, soccer
  - remove on-street parking on Smith Field side
  - Widen the sidewalk in front of park
- Fairs/events at the field - need to be publicized
- Tables or seating for kids, adults
- Better landscaping in the park - setting for benches
- Dog park
- Skating/hockey rink - flood the field in the winter
- Widen both sidewalks to get activity on both sides
- Extra crosswalks (only one now)
- More natural walking connection through park to Harvard Sq
- Bike routes - better lane markings
- Better lighting on the street and sidewalks
- Stripe the soccer fields
- Open up wall in places: more entrances/sitting niches
- Incorporate 219 building to open onto the park
- Riverdale and St. Anthony's connections



Entrance to Smith Field, crosswalk, and playground

## GROUP 6/7

### Western Avenue--Possible Cultural Uses, Public Realm at Science Center

The group thought that both the new science building and new Harvard cultural buildings could offer activities for the community to enjoy. At the science building, that could mean a Discovery Center or interactive exhibits, while a cultural building could include a community theater space and performances open to or geared to the public. There could also be a local history center about the neighborhood, its people, and storytelling. Western Ave should have more retail and restaurants, along with lighting and greenery. A pedestrian route from Western Ave to the back of the library was recommended as a good short-cut and possible spine for additional activities. One member of the group remembered when the neighborhood had a "Big Backyard" where informal activities like softball games and picnics happened.

- Science Discovery Center for kids
- Interactive art museum
- Performances, community theater
- Greenery and lighting down the street to connect Barry's Corner
- Eateries
- Pathway from Science to Library
- "Big Backyard" - softball games



Western Ave looking towards Barry's Corner