



# Cambridge Historical Commission

City Hall Annex, 57 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139. 617/498-9040



Robert G. Neiley, *Chairman*; William B. King, *Vice Chairman*; Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*.  
Dwight H. Andrews; Arthur H. Brooks, Jr.; James F. Clapp, Jr.; Charles W. Eliot, 2d; Joseph G. Sakey; *Commission Members*.  
John Lyons, Geneva T. Malenfant, Frances Pierce, *Alternates*.

September 24, 1979

To The Honorable, the City Council

SUBJECT: MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE/CHAUNCY STREET NEGOTIATIONS

Two petitions now before City Council would downzone a portion of land along Massachusetts Avenue south of Chauncy Street now zoned Residence C-3. Within this area there are three buildings to be demolished and replaced by a 68-unit ten-story apartment building. The existing buildings are now under a six months stay of demolition.

In response to the City Council Order of August 6, 1979, staff of the Historical Commission and the Community Development Department met with Mr. David Altschuler and Mr. Joseph Raduano, the lessees and developers of the parcels at 1588-1600 Massachusetts Avenue, to negotiate a settlement of the development and preservation issues surrounding these parcels. The first meeting was held on September 11, 1979. At a second meeting, held on September 19, 1979, Mr. Jack Morway, owner of a parcel at 4-6 Chauncy Street, which is surrounded on two sides by the developers' parcel, was also present.

Our objective was to explore a development approach that would save the front two buildings (The Greycroft and 1600 Massachusetts Avenue) while enabling new construction which would permit the developers to meet their lease obligations. The Historical Commission prefers a solution that would allow both front buildings to remain in place but recognizes the expendability of 1588 Massachusetts Avenue, the former carriage house behind the Greycroft. The Community Development Department supports a mixed development scheme but is concerned that the site design for such a development be the best possible given the diverse objectives being sought. Neither the Commission nor the Department opposes intensive development of the property if it is then possible to save these buildings, even at the expense of partial demolition or minor relocation of the two houses on the site.

The developers' position is that only a scheme that allows construction of at least a 68-unit apartment building is acceptable to them. They maintain that any redesign of their proposal which would incorporate the existing buildings would require renegotiation of their lease, which they feel would be prohibitively complicated and expensive. However, they have stated their willingness to donate the two buildings for removal to another site and have offered to pay some of the moving costs.

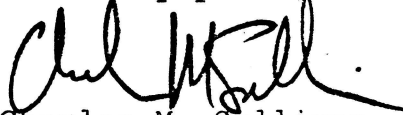
September 24, 1979

After this position was established, Mr. Jack Morway was brought into the discussion because of his willingness to consider selling the property at 4-6 Chauncy Street if this would contribute to further preservation of The Greycroft. In response, the developers stated that a combined development/preservation solution may be possible, that their new structure must have some Massachusetts Avenue frontage, and that the City consider a Chapter 121A tax agreement to offset the additional costs of delays and redesign of their project.

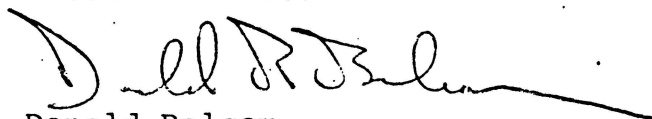
The developers and Mr. Morway are now discussing the possibility of combining parcels. If the developers' conditions are met, the most likely outcome will be a new apartment structure that can be sited perpendicular rather than parallel to Massachusetts Avenue, and preservation of either The Greycroft or 1600 Massachusetts Avenue, but not both.

The present C-3 zoning is the only residential designation which will permit preservation of both, or even one, of the structures, in addition to the new construction. Should the downzoning petition be passed, the developers intend to continue with their plans for demolition. Therefore, it is recommended that the petitions be tabled by the City Council to allow further negotiations toward a compromise solution such as that outlined above. If the discussions have not resulted in some commitment by the developers by November 15, one or both of the petitions should be refiled and advertised before the expiration of the demolition hold on December 11.

Sincerely yours

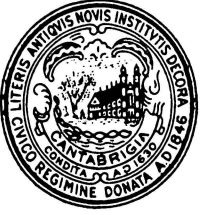


Charles M. Sullivan  
Executive Director



Donald Balcom  
Community Development Department

CMS/DB:jp



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139  
Tel. 498-9011

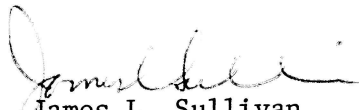
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
JAMES L. SULLIVAN  
City Manager

September 24, 1979

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Enclosed please find copy of a self-explanatory communication from Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission, in response to City Council Order of August 6, 1979, relative to downzoning a portion of land in the area of Massachusetts Avenue and Chauncy Street.

Very truly yours,

  
James L. Sullivan  
City Manager

JLS/mbf  
Enc.

Response to Council Order of 8/6/79 re: down-  
zoning a portion of land in the area of Mass.  
Avenue and Chauncy Street.

In City Council,

Sept. 24, 1979

*Placed on File -  
9/24/79 File  
Copy with Calendar  
lt/  
Item 9 on the  
Calendar #9  
Which was passed  
to Day Reading  
on motion of E. Sullivan*