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East Cambridge Planning Team
Paul Dodds, Secretary / Treasurer
833 Third Street
East Cambridge, Mass. 02141
DEC 20 1986
CAMBRIDGE MA

Members of the Board of Zoning Appeal
57 Inman Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

December 20, 1986

Re: Plans for St. Francis School
Gore Street, East Cambridge

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Appeal:

We are writing to state our opposition to the plans which were recently presented to us for the commercial reuse of the St. Francis School on Gore Street in East Cambridge. The developer hopes to turn the basement and part of the first floor into a health club and rent the remaining 10,000 square feet as offices. The proposed health club would have a membership of around 600 members. The school is in a "Residence C-1" Zone and we would very much like to see it redeveloped into housing. If the developer chooses to proceed with these current plans, we ask you to grant him no variances or special permits.

As you know, East Cambridge is undergoing a building boom which is threatening to change our neighborhood entirely. Traffic, pollution and parking are getting out of control. The intersection of Gore and Third Streets near the school is already one of the most congested in East Cambridge. It is bound to get worse. Despite its bad traffic, Gore Street is still mostly residential. We would like to keep it that way. We fear that allowing commercial development of the school would change the residential feeling of the street, increase gentrification, worsen traffic and make a bad parking situation intolerable. The development plans which were presented to us completely failed to address any of these concerns. We ask you to find both that no real hardship exists to justify a variance and that this project could not go forward in its current form without detriment to the public good and derogation of the purpose of the zoning ordinance.

Parking is a special problem for this site. The developer proposes to handle the acute shortage by reserving the few on-site spaces for the exclusive use of employees in the building. Though we would like to believe that this strategy will make visitors and club patrons use alternate forms of transport, we suspect that most of them will arrive in cars which they will park in neighborhood spaces. They cannot be prevented from doing so. Ignoring this fact will not make it go away. If a sensible parking plan cannot be arranged - and for this

proposed use, we feel that it cannot - then another use for the site must be considered.

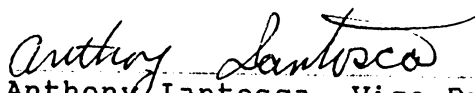
Though we are strongly opposed to these current plans, we recognize the Church's pressing need to dispose of this excess property. We very much hope that we are given the chance to work with the parish and the Archdiocese to find a creative plan for the reuse of the old school. We feel confident that with good communication and careful planning, we can find a "win/win" solution. Unfortunately, the current proposal offers no such promise. Until it is behind us, we fear that good solutions will not be forthcoming.

Thank you very much for your attention to neighborhood concerns.

Respectfully yours,

The East Cambridge Planning Team

By: 
Nicholas Geraigery, President


Anthony Iantosca, Vice President


Paul Dodds, Sec'y / Treasurer

cc:

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge Community Development Department
Cambridge Planning Board
Cambridge Board of Zoning Appeal
His Eminence Bernard Cardinal Law
Father Roland Petinge
Mr. Anthony Luisi
Cambridge Chronicle
Cambridge Tab
Boston Globe
Boston Herald

5.

S-700

Comm. from Nicholas Geraigery, Pres., East
Cambridge Planning Team, et al, expressing
opposition to the plans for commercial re-
use of the St. Francis School on Gore St.

In City Council,

December 29, 1986

Placed on File