

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

340 Franklin Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
JUL 10 1 07 PM '84
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

City Manager
City of Cambridge

Sir:

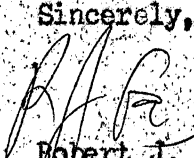
On July 2, 1984, I forwarded to you a report on activities resulting from the city council vote concerning 871 Massachusetts Avenue.

The second page of my report was extensively devoted to an analysis of the proposed building dimensions. I have reviewed the zoning calculation figures upon which my analysis was based and determined that the developer's figures are organized in a confusing manner. I interpreted these figures in accordance with their clear meaning. Further review of the figures indicate that a different meaning was intended.

The figures go on for pages in the following form: Plane X, Average height = Y', Setback = Z'; all repeated and repeated. I looked at all these numbers and assumed that the listing indicated that Plane X had a proposed average height of Y' and a proposed setback of Z'. I did not look at the summary paragraphs. I was too busy trying to figure out which numbers went in which direction. The summary paragraphs indicate that the intended interpretation for these groupings is: plane X, proposed height, required setback. The proposed setback is presented in the summary paragraphs, separately from the proposed height.

The principle comments in my report continue to be valid.

Sincerely,


Robert J. La Tremouille

Duplicate copy being mailed to City Manager, Mr. Horgan and City Council c/o City Clerk on July 4, 1984. It is my intention to hand carry copies to you between 7:15 A.M. and 7:30 A.M. on July 5, 1984, in the same manner as on July 2, 1984. I, however, had difficulty getting into the building at that time, and I wish to ensure that you receive this correction as promptly as I can.

RECEIVED
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
JUL 5 8 50 AM '84
75 Franklin Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
July 4, 1984
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

City Manager
City of Cambridge

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Sincerely,


Robert J. La Tremouille


City Council

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OFFICE OF CITY CLERK Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
July 2, 1984
JUL 2 8 17 AM '84

City Manager
City of Cambridge

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Sir:

I understand that you wish a report on activities resulting from the city council vote concerning 871 Massachusetts Avenue.

I have participated in numerous meetings on this matter during the past several weeks with many other concerned people. The most striking aspects of these meetings were the total absence of the most important player: the community development department.

The CDD, supported by the planning board, has submitted multiple recommendations to the city council that the zoning of this area of Massachusetts Avenue, including 871, be changed to make the area similar in future uses to Harvard and Central Squares. The CDD's proposals would have physically combined Harvard and Central Squares in what is now a residential area, and whose zoning now permits new office construction only conditions which minimize the disruption on existing structures and on the adjacent residential neighborhood.

The CDD's proposals have died in the city council. None were explicitly voted down. The lack of negative votes, however, was a matter of courtesy which did not obscure killing of so many recommendations. Emphasizing the city council intent was a vote initiated by Walter Sullivan on June 11 after mention of the 871 situation. Councillor Walter Sullivan took a CDD proposal off the table which would have died for failure of passage within the time limits. The city council then defeated it unanimously. Councillor David Sullivan's motion with amendments by Councillors Vellucci and Graham passed at the June 25 meeting.

The CDD put the 871 developer in touch with owners to the North, Northeast and East. It is to their benefit, but not to the city's benefit, to shove the building to the lotline heading south and west. This corresponds with the many CDD attempts to reduce or kill setback requirements, as in Central and Harvard Squares, but not as presently exists on almost all of Lee Street or on most of five consecutive blocks on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue.

Existing zoning creates a balance among the needs of abutters and the needs of neighbors on Lee and Mass. Ave., and the general needs of the city. An extremely big building is allowed, but only if the lot is big enough to hold strict yard requirements. On smaller lots, smaller buildings result. Only one building on Lee is built to the lot line; only two buildings on Mass. Ave. between Dana and Inman are built to the lot line.

If the Community Development Department were doing its job, this very valid city policy would have been implemented. The CDD has defied city policy. It has taken actions which have locked developer and three abutting buildings into defiance of that policy along with it.

*Please note - because of time constraints
this letter is essentially a first draft R/LD*

Our meetings reflected the results of the CDD actions. The four parties see the present proposal to their mutual benefit; they insisted on that proposal in all aspects of major policy significance. The developer's only concession was one which he described as having no impact; conceding retail. He sees little difference in putting in a bank.

Interestingly, however, my detailed review of the proposal indicates that certain "concessions" from the developer to the three abutters appear meaningless. His repeated threat to put in a big box appears to be implemented in the plan submitted to the BZA. Claims of setbacks on upper floors, combined with drawings and models showing those setbacks, are not supported by the numbers in the proposal.

Diagrams on page 1 and 3 of the zoning calculations included with the proposal show what the developer has been claiming as his big contribution to the neighbors. Those diagrams show 20%, by length, of the building (away from Mass. Ave.) to be significantly lower than the other 80%. The setback figures are on page 6 and 7 of the proposal. The Lee Street lotline is 106.33 feet; the height is 94.29 feet. The length of the base is 90.53 feet. The shorter portion of the building, 30/40 feet high, has a total length of 5.16 feet. An additional setback shown near the top is .03 feet in length. The top of the building is 5.19 feet less long than the bottom.

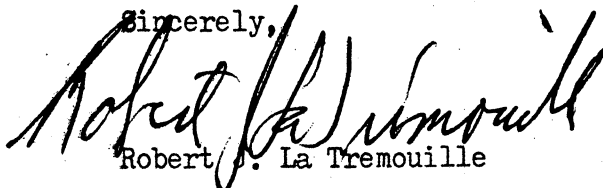
The developer claims to be adding sun for the three abutters by additional building setbacks on the side facing 863 Mass. Ave. The claim is shown in the diagram on page 6 of the zoning calculations, with the actual figures appearing on page 3. The top of the building is 1.58 feet less wide than the bottom. There is actually a bulge where the diagram shows a setback. The distance from the 863 lotline ranges from 21.75 to 24.68 feet. The average setback claimed on the application is 24.7 feet; a claim contradicted by the detailed calculations.

The building is a box, ranging in height from 90.5 to 94.29 feet. Its length (Lee Street) ranges from 85.34 feet to 90.53 feet. Its width (Mass. Ave) varies from 62.38 feet to 60.25 feet. Lot dimensions are 106.33 and 84.33 respectively. Open space is non-existent for all practical purposes. The building has a three story high false front that looks like a gasoline station. It violates existing front yard patterns on both Massachusetts Avenue and Lee Street.

The building is damaging. It violates existing city policy after the failure of the staff to change that policy. The city's staff must be held in line to city policy. The developer has no hardship running to the land which makes the lot different. The developer appears to have made severely misleading claims in obtaining city approvals.

Court action is appropriate and necessary.

Sincerely,


Robert J. La Tremouille

cc: City Council
Mr. Horgan

8.

S-492

Two

Comm. from Robert J. LaTremouille Re: the
premises numbered 871 Mass. Avenue.

In City Council,

August 15, 1984

Placed on File