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Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative
97 MAY 29 PM 2:45 Cambridge, MA 02139

CAMBRIDGE MA.

May 28, 1997

Total of 14 pages
submitted & numbered

To: The Honorable, the City Council

Re: Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative (CNI), and
Proposed Development of Polaroid Site, 784 Memorial Drive

For: City Council Meeting, Monday, June 2, 1997

On September 17, 1996, twenty abutters and near-neighbors of the six-acre Polaroid site at 784 Memorial Drive, also bounded by Pleasant Street and Putnam Avenue, met at the home of Joanne Kauffman and Jim Gutensohn, 152 Pleasant Street, at their invitation.

At this meeting, the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) was formed and co-chairs selected. *The purpose of CNI is to work cooperatively with Polaroid Corp. and any future developer, to ensure that the impacts of any development proposed for the site be fully understood by the neighborhood and the City, before or while plans are finalized.*

Our members want to focus on and understand issues of traffic, zoning, design, possible contamination, and necessary approvals at City and State level. We are committed to this effort for the long haul, and look forward to working with you, and with whomever necessary, to achieve our goal of mitigating impacts upon the surrounding neighborhood, and maintaining the quality of life that we treasure and value.

At that time, Spaulding & Slye (at that time, Polaroid's broker) and Community Development were requested to inform us of any development on the site.

On May 10, pursuant to a Boston Globe article that Polaroid and Spaulding & Slye are partners in developing the site, we arranged a meeting of CNI with David Vickery, SVP for real estate development of Spaulding & Slye, who represented Polaroid, as co-developer and builder. From a styrofoam model, we learned that an office complex of three buildings totaling 300,000 sq. ft. was proposed, with a 500-plus car garage. The historic building abutting Memorial Drive and the Charles River would be renovated. Between one and two acres would be sold to another developer for 25-30 housing units (30,000 sq. ft.). All traffic would enter and exit the garage through existing curb cuts on Putnam Avenue or Pleasant Street.

-2-

CNI was told, at subsequent meetings of 40 and 30 abutters and near-neighbors on May 15 and May 21, that the co-developers believe *no public process allowing neighborhood input, on the City or State level, other than a demolition permit hearing before the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) scheduled for May 29, would be necessary before this development could proceed.* This was a matter of concern to the group.

Ms. Kauffman prepared a consensus list of CNI's concerns on traffic, parking, housing, the demolition hearing before the CHC, and Polaroid's long-term commitment. Copies were sent May 16 to the City's Community Development Department (CDD) and Spaulding & Slye/Polaroid. This letter is attached.

No traffic study was done by the proponents. Also attached is a letter from Steve Kaiser, a member of our group, regarding traffic congestion concerns, especially about long queues of cars on neighborhood streets and Memorial Drive.

Further attachments relate to the Cambridge Historical Commission demolition process and to whether any review by the State may be required. A Boston Globe article indicating Polaroid may have legal problems in developing the site, which appeared May 22, is also attached, and is of concern.

We look forward to working cooperatively with the Council, CDD, other City agencies, and the co-developers, so that near-neighbor and abutter concerns are expressed, and knowledge about this proposed development and its significant impacts are widely disseminated, and properly evaluated and acted upon, by our elected officials and City agencies.



For the 50 members of the
Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative,

The co-chairs:

Daphne Abeel, 148 Pleasant Street

Jim Gutensohn, 152 Pleasant Street

Stash Horowitz, 12 Florence Street

Joanne Kauffman, 152 Pleasant Street

Elie Yarden, 143 Pleasant Street

21
3.
12 Florence Street
Cambridge, MA 02139-4635
617-491-1534
- 1 -

May 28, 1997

3 pages & 5 attachments.

12 pages total, submitted to
MEPA. Received May 29, 1997

Mr. R. J. Lyman
Director
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Unit
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02202

Dear Director Lyman:

RE: Citizens Request for Determination on
Environmental Notification (ENF), et al

Polaroid Corporation and Spaulding & Slye are partners in developing the six-acre site at 784 Memorial Drive in Cambridge, abutting the MDC Parkway and the Charles River.

They propose an office complex of three six-story buildings totaling 300,000 sq. ft.; one of which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1982), is 45,000 sq. ft., will be restored as office space, and directly abuts Memorial Drive. New construction will total 255,000 sq. ft.

There will be a multi-level parking garage with over 500 parking spaces. It will use the two existing curb cuts, on Pleasant Street and Putnam Avenue, for two-way entrance/exit traffic into and out of this garage. Pleasant Street is two-way between the curb cut and Memorial Drive, a distance of about 70 yards. Thus, half of the traffic could use this exit/entry to go to and from Memorial Drive.

The developer has told two meetings of abutters and near-neighbors, on May 15 and May 21, that both co-developers believe no environmental notification form (ENF), nor any State permit or review which entails public comment, is needed.

We request you, or the appropriate State agency, to make a determination on whether an ENF or any other State permit is needed for this proposed development.

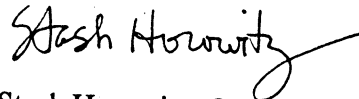
The co-developers are Spaulding & Slye, SVP David Vickery, 125 High Street, Boston 02110 (617-523-8000 or 617-531-4129) and Polaroid Corp., 549 Technology Square, Cambridge 02139 (617-386-6584).

Mr. R. J. Lyman
Director
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Unit

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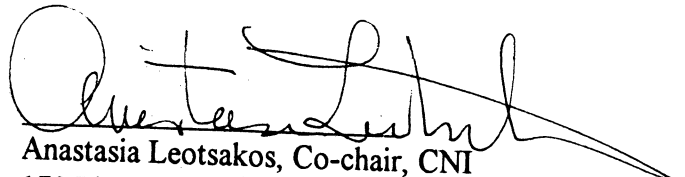
Thank you for your kind attention. Please inform me, at the above address, of your determination.

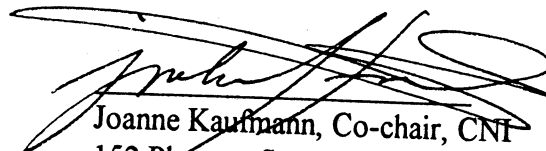
Very truly yours,

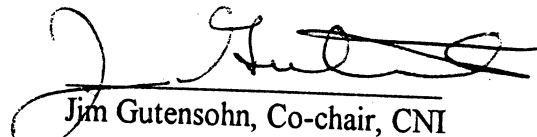


Stash Horowitz, Co-chair
Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative

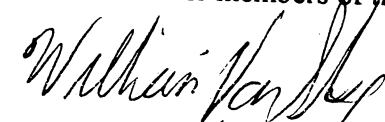
50-Member neighborhood group of abutters and
near-neighbors to the proposed development


Anastasia Leotsakos, Co-chair, CNI
170 Pleasant Street


Joanne Kaufmann, Co-chair, CNI
152 Pleasant Street


Jim Gutensohn, Co-chair, CNI
152 Pleasant Street

Other members of the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative.


Elie Yarden
Nona B. Yarden
Lisa Biblo

W. Van VAN SLAY
ELIE YARDEN
NONA B. YARDEN
Lisa Biblo

251 Chestnut St.
143 Pleasant St.
Cambridge MA 02139

143 Pleasant St. Cambridge

MELISSA SMITH

MELISSA SMITH

143 PLEASANT ST. 2C, CAMBRIDGE

Katerina Dobes

Katerina Dobes

143 Pleasant St. #3D, Cambridge

Gordon Fellman

GORDON FELLMAN

143 Pleasant St. #3B Cambridge

Niki Baccus

Niki BACCUS

12 Florence St. Cambridge 02139

Elaine Dailey

Elaine Dailey

14 Florence St. Camb. MA 02139

Daphne Abeel

Daphne Abeel

148 Pleasant St. Cambridge

Laurie Taylor-Berry

Laurie Taylor-Berry

164 Pleasant St. Cambridge 02139

Mr. David Vickary
Spaulding & Slye

May 16, 1997

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5.

Via Fax: 523-8001 ~~2 PAGES~~

Dear Mr. Vickary:

On behalf of the more than 30 residents of Cambridgeport who attended last night's meeting, I want to thank you for presenting us with Polaroid's plans for developing the site between 784 Memorial Drive and Putnam Avenue to accommodate its national headquarters. As you know, the community is very supportive of Polaroid as its long-term neighbor. We look forward to working with you, the company, and the city to ensure a development that contributes to the quality of life of the neighborhood, and that reflects Polaroid's quality as both citizen and corporation.

In that spirit, we look forward to meeting with you again on May 21st at 7 pm at the home of Nona and Elie Yarden, 143 Pleasant Street. We would be delighted if representatives of Polaroid could join you for that meeting to discuss neighborhood concerns. The agenda for the meeting will be the five issues that were raised last night and for which you offered to seek Polaroid's input:

i **The proposed demolition hearing:** Is the company willing to postpone the demolition permit hearing before the Cambridge Historical Commission until June 26 to allow time for the company to build neighborhood support for its project?

ii **Traffic:** Is the company aware of the potential traffic congestion issues associated with the proposed development, and will it carry out a comprehensive traffic plan taking into account existing and proposed development in the neighborhood? Given the increased traffic problems, population density, and proximity of a grammar school to the site, what are the company's plans to relieve traffic tension?

iii **Parking:** What alternatives are being considered for the proposed 500 place parking lot? ^{garage?} How will the entrance/exist traffic be managed? Will the company consider off-site parking for employees with shuttle service to the headquarters?

iv. **Housing:** As currently envisioned, the company plans to sell off a parcel of the land for development of residential property on Pleasant Street. What assurances can the company provide as to a) the quality and aesthetics of the development (deed restrictions, design competition, other?); b) the process by which the developer will be selected; c) that what they propose to do will actually be done -- and that they will not use the site for something else?

v. **Long term commitment:** What is Polaroid's time commitment to inhabiting the site?

We look forward very much to hearing your own and Polaroid's response to these concerns. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call any of us for further information.

CC: Cambridge Community Dev. Dept.
Cambridge Historical Commission

Joanne M. Kauffman/864-0636

with CNI chairmen

Jim Gutensohn/864-0636
Stash Horowitz/491-1534
Anastasia Leotsakis/497-9201

May 27, 1997

21
6.

*Stephen H. Kaiser
191 Hamilton Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02139*

Susan Schlessinger
Assistant City Manager for Community Development
57 Inman Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

**SUBJECT: Traffic Implications of the Polaroid Site
Development on Memorial Drive**

Between press reports, community meetings, and phone conversations, I understand that the City of Cambridge has requested its traffic consultant, Rizzo Associates, to review at least some of the traffic aspects relating to the proposed office and housing proposal for the Polaroid site on Memorial Drive.

I do not know what is the scope of the Rizzo work, but I would suggest that a fairly precise scope and work product should be the goal, so that we can avoid another Alewife. The proposed 500-car garage can be expected to release about 250 cars an hour onto Pleasant Street during the afternoon peak hour, with 70-75 % of it headed towards the Turnpike or other points to the West. The resulting 175 cars would encounter long vehicle queues on both Memorial Drive and Putnam Avenue. Currently, there is no space for more traffic and no traffic mitigation plan. On Memorial Drive, another 175 cars joining the queue would extend the traffic backup by 2000 feet. Since today's queues regularly extend to Strawberry's and often back to Magazine Street, the queuing problem should be obvious.

The afternoon peak hour is most significant for congestion problems and for traffic diversion through the adjacent residential community. The morning peak hour would reasonably be expected to operate without new congestion on the Cambridge side of the Charles River, but the added traffic problems will occur at the bottlenecks on the Boston side, at the Turnpike exit. The morning problem in Cambridge will be one of safety for school-children, since entering traffic would likely pass through two intersections on Putnam Avenue which today have traffic safety officers and a school bus stop.

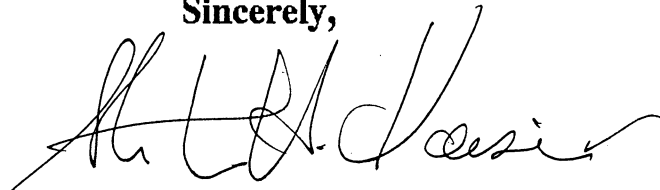
May 27, 1997

We need to develop a mitigation plan for the 250 peak hour trips. Rizzo should explicitly consider traffic queues and diversions through the neighborhood -- topics which were ignored by the proponents of Stop and Shop. The location of driveways should be assessed, including the desirable relocation of the existing Putnam Avenue and Pleasant Street driveways. The possible use of Florence Street for traffic heading South or East should also be evaluated. It appears that the current development strategy is to display a "building only" plan, in order to avoid any environmental or City Council review. At some later time, possibly during building construction, there would be submissions to rebuild entrance drives, curbcuts and sidewalks. Such a segmented approach is bad planning process. I would hope that we could agree that the integrity of the planning process should be a priority for respect by all sides.

Currently, Spaulding & Slye/Polaroid has retained a traffic consultant to perform an analysis of zip codes of existing Polaroid employees. Surely, the developers should be expected to provide a more substantive traffic assessment, and such information should become part of the City's overall analysis. At Alewife, Spaulding and Slye did prepare a fairly thorough traffic analysis -- one I found very useful -- but City officials did not seem to appreciate the value or the effort of that study. We should not repeat that error in Cambridgeport.

The City should have an active but neutral presence on the Polaroid traffic problem. The City should not become an advocate for Polaroid at the expense of the neighborhood and should not be an advocate for the neighborhood at the expense of Polaroid. Furthermore, the City should be working to develop traffic expertise on the staff of Community Development and the Traffic & Parking Department, without having to rely so exclusively on outside consultants. The more people we have being paid directly by the taxpayer to serve the taxpayer, the better our city services should work. In the meantime, the City should assemble its best consultant and city expertise to deal with the many traffic problems in Cambridge.

Sincerely,



Stephen H. Kaiser
Traffic and Transportation Engineer

cc. S. Clippinger, Traffic & Parking
P. Dietrich, Planning Board

21
8.

TO: Cambridge Historical Commission

May 23, 1997

FROM: Joanne M. Kaufmann, Anastasia Leotsakos, Jim Gutensohn, Stash
Horowitz, co-chairs, Cambridge Neighborhood Initiative

RE: Statement for the public hearing on the demolition permit for the
Polaroid site on Memorial Drive on May 29, 1997

As co-chairs on behalf of the Cambridge Neighborhood Initiative which was formed in September 1996, and has 50 neighborhood members, we hope you would consider our concerns regarding the historical value of the Polaroid site and the company's request for a demolition permit.

We wish thank the Commission's Executive Director, Charles Sullivan, for meeting with us on May 19 to explain the permit process and the purview of the Historical Commission.

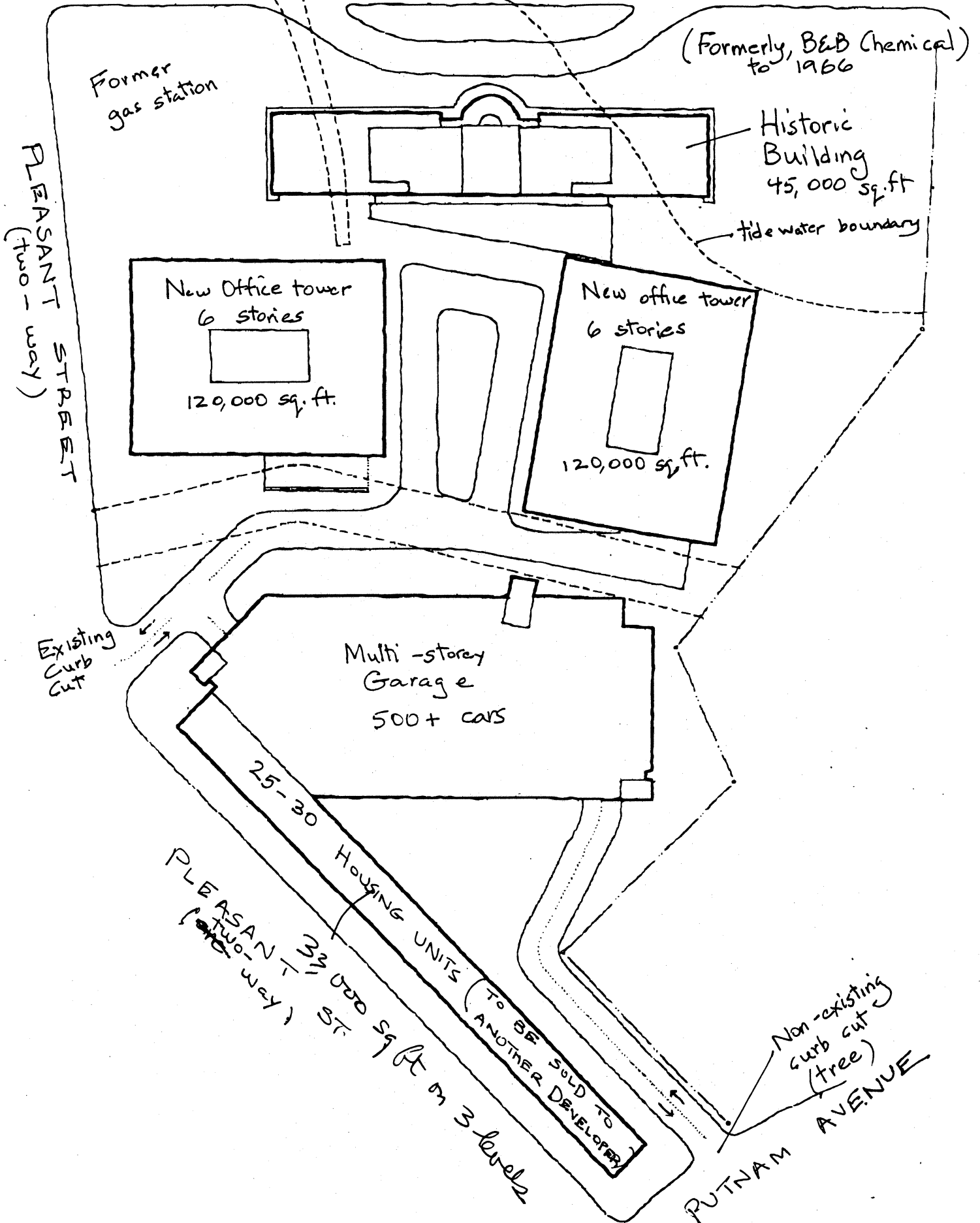
We are encouraged by his reassurance that the Commission is mindful of its responsibility to preserve the historical integrity of Cambridge neighborhoods and that the Polaroid's complex of buildings clearly contributes to the character of the city, the riverway and the neighborhood. Protecting this important landmark, will be a priority of the Commission in fulfilling its mandate according to Mr. Sullivan.

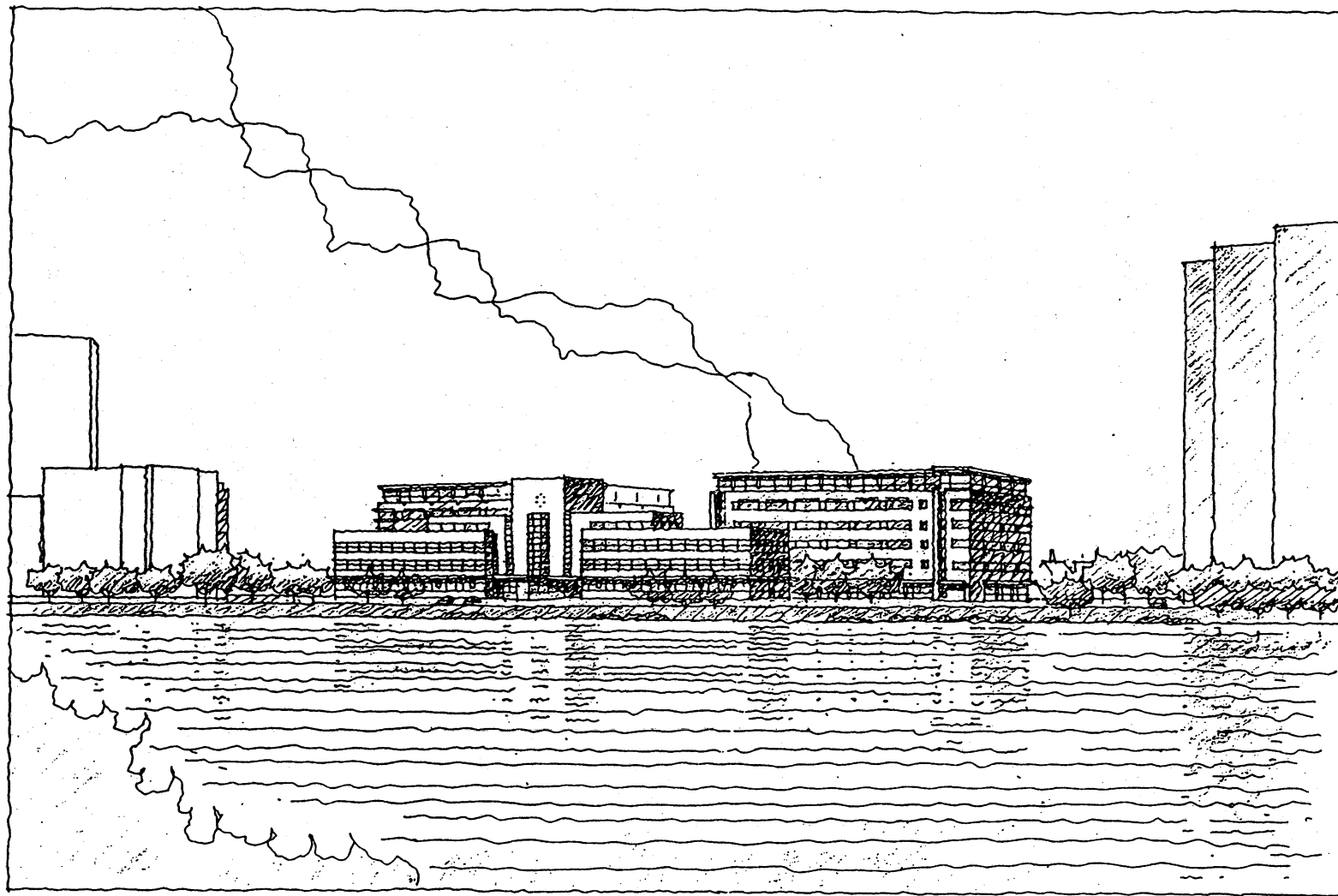
We are pleased that in fulfilling this mandate not only the facade of the historically important buildings are considered, more importantly the full 360 degree context of the site on which it is located.

We thus believe our concerns are relevant and pertinent to the request for a demolition permit. We present them below, along with our May 16 letter to Spaulding & Slye's Senior Vice President David Vickery (faxed to you earlier).

- **Historical Significance** We believe the proposed demolition of the annex buildings--especially the two immediately behind and adjacent to the main building--are historically significant and worthy of preferable preservation, according to the criteria outlined by Mr. Sullivan, because of their influence on the historical front building. If they are replaced by taller buildings as proposed in the developer's model, the appearance of the front historic building will be negatively influenced in every direction.
- **Effects of massing** The two new proposed six-story office buildings, each 120,000 sq. ft., will intrude a continuous barrier wall between the neighborhood and the Charles River Parkland.
- **Design review** Polaroid's neighbors are favorably disposed to the company's intent to locate their headquarters at Memorial Drive. We appreciate Polaroid's former commitment and concern about Cambridge. Since the Historic Commission does have authority to impose design restrictions to ensure the character of development around historically significant buildings, we implore you to do this regarding all buildings to be developed on the site by any current and future developers/purchasers.
- **Impacts of other concerns** Because of the neighborhood's concerns about traffic, parking, et al. (see attached letter), we ask that you delay granting the demolition permit or impose such conditions, so that Polaroid, its co-developer Spaulding & Slye, and the neighborhood can have sufficient time to work with the City of Cambridge to come to a mutually agreeable resolution of the concerns about what is proposed for this historically significant site.

MEMORIAL DRIVE





Polaroid Corporation

784 Memorial Drive Cambridge, Massachusetts



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PUTNAM AVENUE

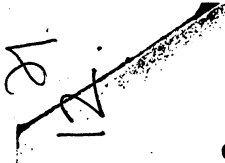
PLEASANT STREET

FLORENCE STREET

MEMORIAL DRIVE

784 Memorial Drive Cambridge, Massachusetts





CURRENT DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

- Restoration of 45,000 SF front building for Polaroid executive offices.
- New construction of two 120,000 SF six story office buildings on the site; approximate total build-out of 285,000 SF.
- Class A office park environment for Polaroid's world headquarters and other tenants.
- Construction of parking garage to accomodate 500+ cars.
- Sale of land fronting Pleasant Street for development of housing.

RESTORATION PROGRAM FOR FRONT BUILDING

- Stabilization and partial replacement of glazed brick and glass block.
- Replacement of most windows with a system that replicates original design but meets current energy codes.
- Obtain government certification to qualify as an historic rehabilitation through the Massachusetts Historical Commission and National Park Service.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- RESTORE the Polaroid building to pristine condition while providing a new entrance on the east (rear) side.
- COMPOSE new buildings which are sympathetic to the Polaroid building yet have a distinctive personality.
- DEVELOP a campus organization for the site which forms a central quadrangle and discreetly accomodates service requirements.
- DEFINE the eastern extension of the site with housing which provides a transition to the surrounding neighborhood and screens the parking structure from view.
- ENLIVEN the grounds with trees, appropriate paving, landscaping and lighting.
- ESTABLISH traffic patterns which avoid interference with residential neighbors



Polaroid Corporation

784 Memorial Drive Cambridge, Massachusetts



13. 21
JOHN R. MOOT
44 Coolidge Hill Road
Cambridge, MA 02138
PH: (W) 508-686-2964
(H) 617-491-8120

May 27, 1997

Letters to the Editor
The BOSTON GLOBE
BOSTON, MA 02107-2378

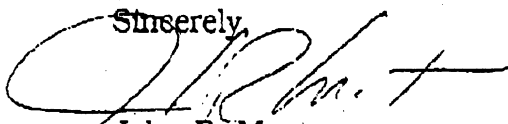
This Thursday, Spaulding & Slye, a development firm acting on behalf of Polaroid, will ask the Cambridge Historical Commission to approve the demolition of several old buildings on the Polaroid property on Memorial Drive. With that permit in hand, the developer believes that he will be free to proceed at full speed with development of this six-acre site without need for any public input and comments about the neighbors' concerns, nor any public review or permits from the City or State.

This prominent six-acre site on Memorial Drive is a significant feature on the Charles River and is adjacent to a large residential area. The rough conceptual plans released to date include a new multi-storey 500 car garage and 240,000 square feet of additional office space. No consideration of the impact of the traffic on the community, nor any other environmental permits, nor public hearings, are planned by the developer.

"It's just completely unfeasible to do a development like this without going through a normal development process", stated Richard Williams of Equity Co., which is suing Polaroid for backing out on a sale of these 6 acres to his firm. But Polaroid and Spaulding & Slye are proceeding with utmost haste to do just that. As of last Friday, they did not even have any building plans to submit to the Historical Commission so it could prepare for its meeting this Thursday, May 29th at 6 p.m.

Polaroid started in Cambridge, and the company and Dr. and Mrs. Land have been very active and generous supporters of agencies that work with the people to improve all neighborhoods and the environment for the residents. Let us not now abandon those principles by releasing the developer from all considerations of the impact of this substantial project on the beauty of our riverfront and the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Sincerely,



John R. Moot

CC: Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative

1421

Firm sues to block Polaroid redevelopment

Claims camera maker reneged on the sale of Memorial Drive property

THE BOSTON GLOBE • THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1997

By Richard Kindleberger
GLOBE STAFF

A Cambridge developer is trying to block Polaroid Corp. from redeveloping its landmark Memorial Drive property, claiming the company reneged on an agreement to sell it.

The Equity Co. alleges in a suit pending in Middlesex Superior Court that Polaroid backed away after agreeing to sell the six-acre property to Equity for \$10 million. The developer contends Polaroid changed its mind when Equity refused to avoid seeking environmental permits or attending public hearings to obtain approval of the plan.

"At first I couldn't believe it. I



GLOBE FILE PHOTO

The Polaroid building at 784 Memorial Drive.

thought it must be a misunderstanding," Richard Williams, Equity's president, said yesterday. "It's just completely unfeasible to do a development like this without going through a normal development process."

Equity had planned a residential development of up to 349 units with possibly some office space. It would have restored the 1930s-era building closest to the street, which enjoys protected status as architecturally significant.

Polaroid spokesman Robert Guenther rejected Williams' allegations and said the Cambridge company would fight the suit. He said that no deal was ever reached with Equity and that Polaroid POLAROID, Page D19

Firm contends Polaroid reneged on property sale

■ POLAROID

Continued from Page D1

has since decided that 784 Memorial Drive "would be a great location for a headquarters."

The manufacturer of instant cameras and film is now based at Technology Square. Previous attempts to sell the Memorial Drive property were unsuccessful.

The property, which includes a half-dozen buildings in addition to the protected structure, was used for years by Polaroid as a customer service center and materials laboratory. It was vacated last year.

A spokesman for Spaulding & Slye, a co-defendant in the suit, declined to comment. The Boston real estate services firm has been advising Polaroid.

Polaroid officials declined to respond in detail to the suit, which was filed in November. But in an affidavit filed with the court, a Polaroid real estate executive denied that the company tried to persuade Equity to avoid filing environmental documents required by the state.

Rather, said David Wellons, Polaroid insisted that Equity agree to a development that would not require such filings. He said the company did not want any problems in getting Equity's project approved to delay sales payments.

Equity's lawyer, James E. Grumbach, said yesterday his client's plans would not require a zoning variance or an environmental impact report, but it was not possible to avoid any filings or public hearings. He noted that just to demolish the rear buildings at the site would require approval from the Cambridge Historical Commission because the buildings are more than 50 years old.

"My sense of it is that the only way you could buy the property and not get any public input at all would be to leave it alone," Grumbach said.

Consent Communication #21

5-342

Communication was received from Stash Horowitz and members of the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Initiative, transmitting their concern on the proposed development of the Polaroid Site, located at 784 Memorial Drive.

In City Council June 2, 1997

Referred to
City Manager,

Copy sent
6-4-97
mcl