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that support our varied lifestyles, or we will become indistinguishable from Newton or Brookline, or, for that matter, from any other upscale white neighborhood anywhere else in the country.

As a city we have the obligation to preserve our city and our neighborhoods for those who live in them. I don't believe the Holmes proposal will add anything positive to my neighborhood. And it may detract a great deal-- aesthetically, culturally, economically.

Please do all you can to prevent this proposal. And to maximize neighborhood involvement in the process.

Sincerely,



Sandy Martin

cc: Central Square Advisory Committee
Cambridge Tab
Boston Globe
Cambridge Chronicle

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59 Norfolk St, #6
Cambridge, MA 02139

CAMBRIDGE MA.

Cambridge City Councilors
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

July 25, 1997

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

I've been a resident of Central Square for about 10 years, 8 of those years in Area 4, where I've been a member of the Area 4 Coalition. I am extremely upset by the proposed Holmes Nominee Trust project.

I tried to attend two public hearings that the city has held on this project: both were overcrowded, overheated and impossible to hear. Which meant that many people left early, and even those who stayed were unable to hear what did happen. The most recent of these meetings was in the new and expensive senior center -- how is it that the main event room in that building has an inadequate sound system and temperature control?

More importantly, I want to share my concerns about the building project that has been proposed. I live in Central Square because it is a diverse neighborhood- diverse in race, ethnicity, age and class. With the end of rent control, I've watched many buildings getting face lifts, and I'm finding it harder to park my car. Most of the units in my building now have new tenants and I see many new faces on the street. Rapid change is rarely good for any urban community -- community takes time to build, but it can be destroyed very quickly.

A rapid change in the commercial stores in Central Square will add significantly to the destabilizing effect that the loss of rent control has already begun. We can't stop the closing of Woolworth's, since that decision was made on a national level. It seems that we can't stop the arrival of Starbuck's in the Harvard Donut location, since I hear that that is a done deal. But we do still have control over the Holmes proposal.

We need to maintain stores that cater to low-income residents of diverse backgrounds. We need to maintain stores that give our neighborhood character, rather than a Gap which looks exactly like the Gap in Porter Square or Peoria, Illinois. I love Central Square because it is a unique neighborhood, not filled with stores that are identical to those available at every other subway stop. We need to support independent small business owners, or the economy of the neighborhood (and the country, for that matter) is doomed.

I love Central Square because of the combination of small residential buildings and free-standing houses. I don't believe we need more housing stock, though we do need some rehab work on some of the housing we do have. For an urban area, Cambridge is fairly low-density, yet another reason I enjoy living here. But Central Square is already the most densely populated area in the city - precisely the wrong place to add more high density housing.

I've recently finished reading a fascinating book, which I recommend to all of you. It discusses the negative impact that financial institutions, banks and real estates companies, can have on a thriving urban neighborhood -- using Roxbury as the example: Death of an American Jewish Community, by Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon. While many forces were focused on maximizing their own profits, there was no strong voice focusing on the long-term health of the community. The Cambridge City Council, supported by residents, has the opportunity to be that voice in this case.

I believe that Cambridge is at a crossroads-- forced in large part by the end of rent control. Either we will fight to maintain our unique racial, ethnic, class and age diversity by expanding affordable housing options and maintaining independent commercial enterprises

Consent Communications #61

S-482

Communication was received from Sandy Martin, transmitting her concerns on the proposed Holmes Nominee Trust Project.

In City Council August 4, 1997

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