

3 July 1986

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To the Cambridge City Council:

The Business Association of North Cambridge (BANC) would like to express its general position and concerns about development proposals for Porter Square.

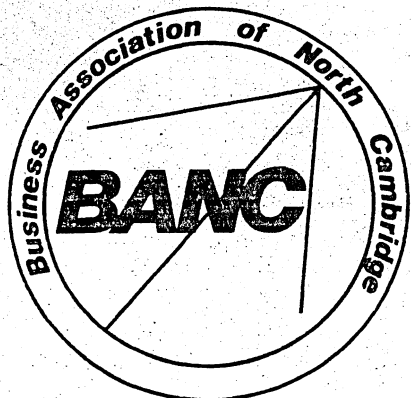
BANC represents the business community in the area between Harvard Square and the Arlington town line. Its membership is made up primarily of owner-operated, sole proprietorships, many of which are in or near Porter Square.

These local service stores, specialty stores, restaurants, and professional service businesses have helped create a shopping atmosphere that is unique in Cambridge. These owner-operated businesses have contributed greatly to the mixed residential and business "character" of the northern corridor of the city. We would like to see that character preserved.

This is not to say that BANC is opposed to any change or development. There is room for other services and businesses in the area. We feel that the loss of Sears, with its parking lots, leaves a void that should be filled by a retail anchor. On the other hand, we do oppose any major redevelopment that would: 1) overwhelm existing businesses and residences and change the character of the Avenue, or 2) add to the already serious problems of traffic and parking. We would like to see any proposals avoid adverse impact to either the existing businesses or residential communities.

To achieve this protection of the area's character, we urge developers to bring their proposals early on to community groups and BANC. We support the open process of public hearings sponsored by the appropriate city agencies—the Zoning Board, the Planning Board, and Licensing Commission. And, we have been impressed with the fine work of these boards and their staff people.

We believe this open process, while time-consuming, best achieves the compromises usually needed to balance the interests of residents, businesses, and the city at large. Traffic, noise, parking, crimes, and overcrowding are impacts which must be considered in any development in North Cambridge.



P.O. Box 125 Cambridge, MA 02140

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We would like to see the city take this process one step further to ensure that once a developer is allowed to proceed, he or she cannot change the nature of the project so as to defeat the open meeting process. We would like both the Zoning Board and Licensing Commission to require strict adherence to the terms of a license or variance. For example, if a restaurateur is granted a license for a seafood restaurant, he or she should not be allowed to convert to a fast food outlet without going back to the Licensing Commission for approval.

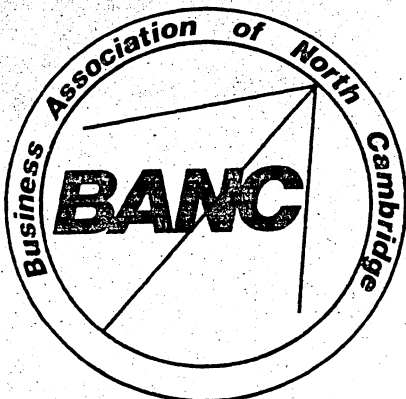
In summary, BANC favors well-considered development of the Avenue with minimal impact on existing business and residential communities. We do not want North Cambridge to be overly developed. The character of North Massachusetts Avenue is worth preserving, and we are confident that businesses, residents, and city officials will make every effort to preserve that character while encouraging appropriate development.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Swaim, President
For the Board of Directors

cc. Robert Healy, City Manager
Michael Rosenberg, Community Development Department
Joseph Cellucci, Inspectional Services Department
George Teso, Traffic & Parking Department
James McDavitt, Licensing Commission
Brendon Sullivan, Zoning Board of Appeals
Joel Bard, Agassiz Neighborhood Council
Peter Kasch, North Cambridge Stabilization Committee
Top Sawyer, Neighborhood Nine Committee



Comm. from Karen Swaim on behalf of the Business Assoc. of North Cambridge Board of Directors Re: their position & concerns on Porter Square development Proposals.

In City Council,

August 4, 1986

*Referred to the
Petition*