



City of Cambridge

O-9.

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 24, 2003

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

ORDERED: That the proposed sale of the Bulfinch Property located in Tech Square, 50 Hampshire Street, 201 Broadway and additional lab in the vicinity be reviewed and be included by the City Manager in the report submitted to the City Council on March 24, 2003 as Consent Agenda #3 and said report be referred to the Neighborhood Long Term and Planning Committee for a hearing.

In City Council March 24, 2003.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "D. Margaret Drury".

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

A major upcoming addition will be a new Polcari's restaurant at the corner of Main and the new street that now connects Main to Broadway—before the redevelopment, this street did not exist. Entries to the new restaurant, which is scheduled to open this spring, will be at the sidewalk level. Polcari's will have an indoor dining area, outdoor seating complementing the newly-accessible central plaza, as well as a take-out window on the new side street. The Special Permit for Tech Square allows and encourages the provision of further retail as it proves to be feasible from a market perspective, and the buildings are designed to allow for this eventuality. The proponent hopes to find additional restaurant uses for the project and possibly a convenience store along Portland Street.

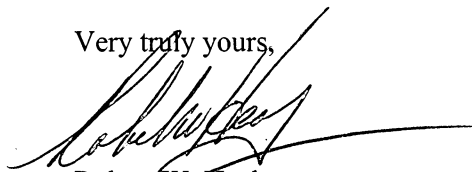
There are many other aspects of the Tech Square landscaping design that should soften the character of this emerging project over time. For example, the addition to the Portland Street parking garage will be covered by vines as they grow over the next few years. The numerous new trees that were planted last year throughout the project and along adjacent city and internal streets will mature, and are provided with new underground irrigation to help them thrive. At the City's request, MIT and Draper are also improving the landscaping along Portland Street near the parking garages.

In a broader context, there are many other buildings recently completed, under construction, and in planning phases that will help make a more inviting setting for Tech Square in the coming years. In the One Kendall Square area, the new Amgen project expanded the successful pedestrian plaza system, providing a better link between One Kendall and the nearby day care center and movie theater. Along Main Street in Kendall Square, the former fire station was moved from the back of its site to front onto the sidewalk, and was converted to an inn with a ground floor café.

At the corner of Vassar and Main streets, the new Stata Center, designed by Frank Gehry, will open within the year and a new Brain and Cognitive Sciences Center will be constructed directly across Main Street from Tech Square. Both of these projects include significant landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Also, Draper Labs has received approval for a new addition to its building on the north side of Broadway; this structure will have a much friendlier relationship to the street and will provide extensive new landscaped plaza space and pedestrian ways.

Generally speaking, the addition of more workers throughout the area will increase the amount of foot traffic within as well as to and from the site, and will provide additional demand for retail stores and restaurants. The Legal Seafood restaurant is undergoing a major renovation and is scheduled to reopen this spring. Across the street from Legal Seafood, the 7 Cambridge Center site has been rezoned to include a 200,000 square foot housing component, and there is hope that this project will, once built, bring even more life to the area. In summary, some of the recent citywide zoning changes, and especially the new project review requirements, have provided opportunities for the City to look for more pedestrian-friendly environments, urban design of buildings that meet the street more effectively, additional opportunities for ground floor retail, and better transitions between commercial and residential areas.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec



3.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

March 24, 2003

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report 03-32, regarding a report on efforts to create a Tech Square, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein reports the following:

Technology Square was originally built in the late 1960s as a single large "super-block" of 15 acres, with four office buildings clustered around a central plaza. This plaza space was several feet higher than the elevation of Main Street and screened from view by the small concrete Polaroid building along Main Street; as a result, few people not working in Tech Square even knew there was a plaza. Along Portland Street, there were only parking and loading areas, with no buildings fronting onto the street. This type of isolated development was typical in the 1960s, when the connection of a development project to its surroundings was not necessarily seen as a primary design goal.

More recent redevelopment in Tech Square was subject to a special permit issued by the Planning Board in July of 1999. This new development has benefited from increased attention to the pedestrian environment, more direct relation of buildings to the surrounding streets, and acknowledgement of the desirability of liveliness of uses both day and night. As stated in the decision by the Planning Board,

"The transformation of the physical layout and programmatic composition of Technology Square as proposed in this application are fully consistent with city policy: an isolated, self-contained office block is proposed to be reoriented outward to the public streets; setbacks are being used adjacent to the residential development to provide an appropriate transition; internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation is reorganized to create a new system of circulation akin to a public street grid; and substantial retail use in service to the office tenants as well as the general public is introduced for the first time. The entire complex will be more accessible to the general public and better integrated into the life of the city around it."

The former single superblock of Tech Square is being transformed into a more accessible district through the creation of several parcels that are defined by private ways accessible to the public, and open spaces designed to connect more effectively to the adjoining public realm. In particular, the plaza now opens directly to Main Street, and outdoor furniture is provided to encourage its use in good weather. Extensive new sidewalks make it easy for pedestrians to circulate throughout the area.

While the Tech Square project is nearing the end of construction, there are still vacant spaces yet to be filled. Clearly, the arrival of Novartis as a major tenant in this complex of buildings now owned by MIT will bring new energy to Tech Square, as well as to the larger surrounding environment of Kendall Square and MIT. As Tech Square continues to evolve, the intent is that there will be several ground floor retail uses available to the general public. The first such uses are the Kinko's copy center, the Fitcorp health club, and a cafeteria (The Grove), which have been open for about a year.

S-103

Consent Agenda #3

Awaiting Report Item Number 03-32, regarding a report on efforts to create a Tech Square.

In City Council March 24, 2003

**REFERRED TO
NEIGHBORHOOD AND LONG
TERM PLANNING COMMITTEE.
ORDER ADOPTED.
SEE ORDER #9.**