

16 May 1996

To the Members of the Cambridge City Council

Dear Council Members:

As Cambridge property owners who would help pay the bills, we want to express support for building a library addition. We also want to express reservations regarding the tactics of some of the opponents of the proposed expansion.

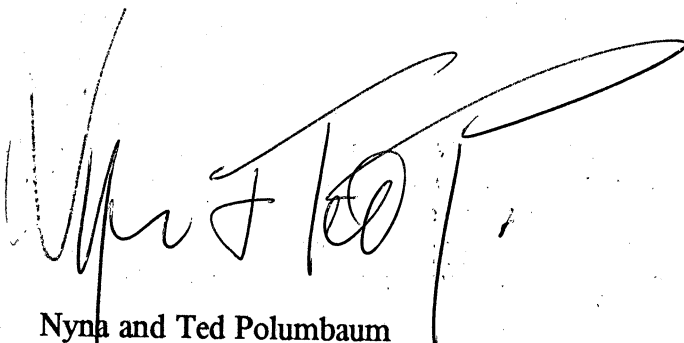
On one occasion we were waylaid and subjected to a hysterical plea to help stop the project. The proffered leaflet misrepresented several facts; the petitioner admitted this was the case but said the errors were "honest." But she swore it was a fact that the lawns all the way to Ellery Street would forever be deprived of sun. To check that allegation we tracked the sun's path at several times of day. It wasn't even close to the truth.

Several years ago, upon publication of a much-praised book, we were invited by the Newton Library to do a slide lecture. To our surprise we were welcomed by a packed house and learned that the new library, with its superb facilities, is considered a community treasure. In a place like Cambridge, where so many residents have a great deal to offer, it's shameful that our library is a grand architectural hulk with books inside rather than a community treasure.

Since the two of us use the inadequate and uncomfortable library regularly, why can't everyone? Why spend all that money? The truth is that we, like others, only walk in, choose recreational reading and make our escape. A couple of months ago I went with my 9 year-old grandson to his library in Coralville, Iowa, where he says he sometimes "hangs out." The gorgeous facility was absolutely filled with adults and kids of every description and color (in Iowa?) curled up on comfortable furniture, engrossed in reading.

We need a welcoming library; we need an intimate lecture and performance facility (not the high school auditorium or a converted classroom); we need research facilities; we need some kind of exhibition space; etc. The old man filling empty hours with a newspaper, the toddler starting a lifetime reading habit, the immigrant struggling with a new language all deserve better than they are getting. A living, breathing library is not a luxury.

Sincerely,



Nyna and Ted Polumbaum
326 Harvard Street
Cambridge 02139
491-4947

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

96 MAY 20 AM 11:33

CAMBRIDGE MA.

Consent Communication #11

S-304

Communication was received from
Nyna and Ted Polumbaum, 326. Harvard
Street, transmitting support for
building a library addition.

In City Council June 3, 1996

Placed on file