



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

(617) 498-9017

JOSEPH E. CONNARTON
CITY CLERK

JOHN E. FLYNN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

June 24, 1988

TO: The Honorable, The City Council

FROM: Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk *JEC*

SUBJECT: Communication from "The Athenaeum Group"

Please be advised that the enclosed communication was delivered to this office while the Council was in session Monday. Since it relates to Council Order #4 of June 20th, 1988, as submitted by the Mayor, I thought I would forward same to you under separate cover.

I hope this information will be beneficial.

JEC/mh

Enclosure



THE ATHENAEUM GROUP

Athenaeum House
215 First Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142
617-492-2155

June 20, 1988

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

To the Honorable City Council:

This letter is intended to inform the City Council about the parking garage currently under construction at One Kendall Square. It is hoped that this review will assist the City Council in responding to questions and demonstrate that the developers have been responsible in meeting their zoning code obligations. We have organized the information in a question-and-answer format and have tried to cover the major facts and issues. If you have other questions, do not hesitate to call one of us directly at 492-2155.

1. How large is the parking garage? The One Kendall Square (OKS) Garage currently under construction is designed for 1530 cars.



2. Why so many spaces? The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance requires developers to provide parking spaces. The number of required spaces is dictated by the type of building uses; i.e., office, retail, etc. One Kendall Square is currently programmed for approximately one million square feet of mixed-use development. The majority of this space is represented by the rehabilitation of the 16 existing buildings. The zoning code requires parking for a minimum of 1314 cars and a maximum of 1968 cars based on the building areas submitted to the Inspectional Services Department in a letter dated January 28, 1988.

Historically, Cambridge policy makers have sought to minimize the number of required parking spaces as a way to encourage the use of public transit. The proximity of the Kendall Square T station certainly was a factor in our decision not to build the maximum number of allowable spaces at this time. However, neighborhood groups have recently petitioned the City Council to require developers to provide more parking than required by zoning as a way to keep tenants and their visitors off residential streets. Several residential neighbors near One Kendall Square have urged us to provide as many spaces as possible in the OKS Garage precisely for that reason.



3. How big is the parking garage structure? The OKS Garage is a large structure. The footprint of the garage is 414 feet long and 170 feet wide but it is considerably less than the area of the surface parking lot it sits on.

In order to provide meaningful setbacks from abutting residential properties and neighboring buildings, we added stories to the garage structure. The OKS Garage structure is two stories at the rear (that portion nearest our residential abutters on Cornelius Way), rises to four stories in the middle and is six stories at the entrance on Binney Street. In other words, we deliberately designed the garage to be lower than the existing townhouses in the rear. Architectural studies show that those houses, given the garage's height and setback, are never in the shadow cast by the garage structure, even in winter. We absorbed the additional construction costs to accomplish this objective because we thought it was the right thing to do.

4. Just how tall is the OKS Garage? The garage structure is 21 feet above the existing grade at the rear of the site; the safety rails are an additional 3'6". The total height of the structure is therefore under 25 feet parallel to the rear



property line. (There is a rear egress stair tower that is 31'4" tall because it must have an enclosed roof for fire safety purposes; however, it is less than 20' wide.)

The garage structure is 62'6" at the opposite end nearest Binney street and the existing One Kendall Square buildings. Again, the rails are an additional 3'6". The total height of the structure is therefore 66 feet. At this end the stair tower is 28 feet taller because it houses the elevators and machine rooms. The tallest point of the OKS Garage is still less than the existing height of B700 at One Kendall Square.

5. How far is the OKS Garage set back from the rear property line? We sited the garage so that it is roughly parallel to the existing townhouses and not our property line. The result is that at the northeast corner of the garage, it is 15 feet from our property line and over 90 feet from the houses. At the northwest corner of the garage it is 42 feet from our property line and over 65 feet from the houses. The rear stair tower, which is approximately 10' x 20', is attached to the garage structure at the northeast corner, 8 feet from the property line.



6. What are the zoning regulations regarding use, height and setback? One Kendall Square is in an Industry B zone and has been for 25 years. The parking garage is allowed as of right, and there are no height or setback requirements in the zone. The decision by the developer to provide rear yard setbacks and to step down the garage so that the rear portion is lower than the neighboring houses was voluntary.

7. How can the developers build so many spaces in a surface lot that has less than 500 spaces? The Binney Street lot was one of several parking lots used by American Biltrite (Boston Woven Hose) on their 12-acre site. The developer chose to consolidate all of the parking on the one large lot in order to make the primary eight-acre block automobile free. The result is that over 20 percent of the core site consists of landscaped courtyards, all open to the public.

It is important to note that the Binney Street lot was never striped to accommodate the maximum number of cars. The combination of all the parking lots of American Biltrite totaled over 1000 cars, an amount more than adequate to meet the demand of a manufacturing facility. The developer believes that a



structured parking garage is preferable to acres of asphalt and generates less traffic impact than several scattered lots with multiple curb cuts. In fact, the number of existing curb cuts on the site has been cut in half.

8. Why is a pile driver being used and how long will this noise last? The decision to add stories necessitated foundation piles to support the structure. Pile driving is a necessary evil of most construction in Cambridge given the soils condition.

The construction schedule calls for a 4-6 week period for pile driving, depending largely on the weather. In the first two weeks, slightly over half of the piles were driven, which suggests the schedule is secure. No construction begins before 7:00 a.m. and pile driving ceases by 4:00 p.m. The developers have asked the contractor not to work on Saturday or Sunday.

9. When will the construction of the OKS Garage be completed? The garage will take approximately 400 days to be completed; however, all current parking for One Kendall Square will be in the ramp portion of the garage by the end of 1988.



10. Does the developer have all the necessary permits for construction of the OKS Garage? Yes. A permit for the storage of gasoline is required prior to occupancy and the developer plans to petition the License Commission in the near future, as is customary for all parking garages in Cambridge. The Cambridge Fire Department was consulted during the design of the garage and the facility meets or exceeds all fire codes relative to fuel storage.

11. What has the developer done to minimize the impact of the garage? After meeting and talking with several neighborhood residents and groups over the past five years, the developer elected to provide access to and egress from the OKS Garage only from Binney Street. There has been widespread neighborhood support for the reduction of curb cuts, loading docks, and parking lot access from Cardinal Medeiros Avenue. In fact, at a prior meeting of the License Commission, the developer agreed not to provide access to parking off Cardinal Medeiros or to add additional loading docks. The location of parking signs was discussed at a Pole and Conduit Commission meeting and modifications were accepted by the developer after a walking tour of the site with neighborhood residents and several public officials.



Additionally, the developer has offered to review its landscaping plans with the abutters on Cornelius Way and agreed to install security and visual screening measures as well. On the Binney Street side of the garage, the F&T Diner will be rehabilitated and returned to its unique historical status as a Kendall Square institution. Open spaces and pedestrian-level plazas should likewise contribute to a positive urban design solution to a very practical problem of providing tenant parking.

12. Who is the developer and what have they done for Cambridge and its neighborhoods? The Athenaeum Group (TAG) is a Cambridge-based development company that specializes in the rehabilitation of existing buildings. In 1982, TAG purchased the Boston Woven Hose site and began the renovation of the 16 buildings in phases.

To date, 10 of the existing buildings have been completed and others are under construction. The real estate tax revenues for Phase 1 alone exceed the total property tax bill from the entire American Biltrite owned site. In 1982, the abandoned factory had only six employees; today, there are over 1500 workers on site and over 250 construction jobs have been



generated every year. The OKS Garage is a union job and the largest subcontract is a Cambridge-based firm.

The Athenaeum Group has been helpful to a number of local organizations, especially those in the Kendall Square area. TAG has made significant contributions to COPA, CMAC, and the Kendall Community Group. The Cambridge Boy Scouts, Montessori School, and St. Anthony's Church have been allowed to use the site at no charge. One Kendall Square is home to the Bright Horizons Children's Center, a daycare facility for 45 children, built and donated by TAG.

Several nonprofit organizations, including Young Audiences of Massachusetts, Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders of Eastern Massachusetts and Cambridge Community T.V. enjoy special lease arrangements at One Kendall Square as well.

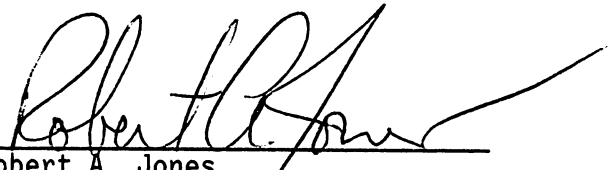
The principals of TAG, both as individuals and as a company, have strong backgrounds of community service and responsible economic development. The One Kendall Square project, the largest conversion in the history of Cambridge, has been accomplished without a single dollar of public funds or a single

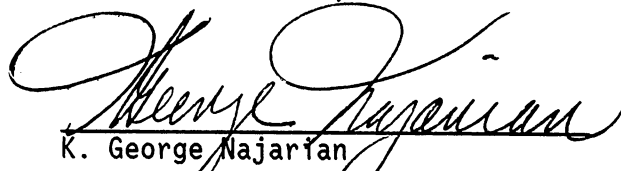


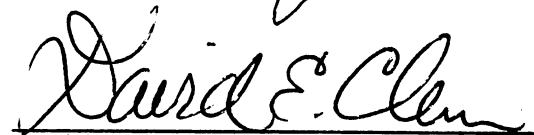
zoning variance. We are proud of the development and genuinely believe One Kendall Square is rapidly becoming an exciting and important part of the community fabric.

We hope this information is helpful to the City Council. We urge you to visit the site.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert A. Jones


K. George Najarian


David E. Clem

DEC:rmf

S-449

Comm. from Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk,
Re: enclosed communication submitted while
the Council was in session on June 20, 1988
from the Athenaeum Group Re: parking garage
construction at One Kendall Square.

June 24, 1988

Placed on file.