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4437 Southeast Ninth Avenue,
Cape Cod, MA 033904
July 31, 1987

Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Members of the City Council:

I am the former owner of 67 Hammond Street, Cambridge, MA. I am very sorry to see such a terrible controversy arise over property which my family and I enjoyed living in for nearly 27 years and which was used by me to house many divinity students who have subsequently become religious leaders throughout various communities in the United States.

I moved into the house as a tenant a year or so prior to buying it. I was a widower with three grown up children. The owner died. She had lived in the property and the executrix asked me if I wanted to buy the property. I decided to buy the property. The property was in desperate need of repair. I lived in the house myself while making repairs. Shortly thereafter I remarried. We had a child but my wife had been divorced and she had two children, one of which came to live with us when we married. My stepdaughter got married shortly thereafter and moved to the third floor with her husband. My mother-in-law came to live with us.

I always renewed the rooming house license which came with the property but because of my extended family, I never rented a room in the house until approximately 1967 when my daughter moved out and I rented the third floor apartment and one room on the second floor to one person named Mr. McDonald when my mother-in-law died on. After her death, my wife and I felt it would be nice to have some young people in the house. We wanted to rent to older students and we chose the Harvard Divinity School. We would have no more than two students. Some would stay just for the Summer. This would allow my wife and I to go away without worrying about the house and during the winter we would choose two students who would be there for that academic year. we often shared meals together.

I was employed as a technician for a psychology department center for cognitive studies. We were one happy family. Even after the students left, they would refer other people from their diocese who were going to the divinity school. To be very frank and honest, I did not run it as a business. I charged nominal amounts. I charged some students less if they couldn't afford the minimal. This was not a business. This was our home and we were sharing it.

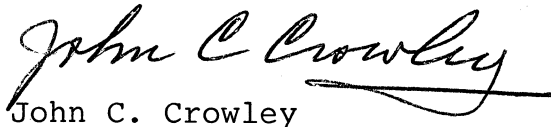
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I retired in the mid 1970's with 100% disability. These students often helped me out and without them it would have been very difficult to maintain the house. They shoveled the snow, took out the barrels, etc. My wife and I decided to sell the house around 1983 but we never quite did it. In 1985, Dr. Pu who was my next door neighbor indicated an interest in buying it. My wife and I decided that he and his family would be the right buyers. We wanted to see a family buy the house and enjoy it as we did. Dr. Pu allowed my daughter to remain there until she finished college and has allowed my wife and I to stay there with her until she moves out tomorrow August 1, 1987.

Neither my wife nor I are physically well enough to appear before the City Council. It will be too much for us and the anxieties we have over this whole terrible situation will only worsen. My wife and I ask you as reasonable people to consider the facts. This was not an ordinary rooming house even if it has a rooming house license. In reality it was two people who care about the youth of our country and who wanted to share their home and their family life with divinity school students. If we made a mistake then we did so unknowingly but we never intended our house to be a rooming house. We did not understand about rent control.

I hope that you will see it fit to resolve this matter. These are true statements I am making. I have never had to write to elected officials so I do not know if the procedure I am using is correct but it is the true story.

Sincerely yours,


John C. Crowley

Aug 3 1987

S-53p

Comm. from John C. Crowley, former owner of
67 Hammond St., relative to the controversy
surrounding said premises.

September 14, 1987