



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
City Hall Annex Inman & Broadway EXTENSION 344

To James L. Sullivan
City Manager

From David Vickery, Assistant City Manager **Date** October 5, 1978
for Community Development

Subject Council Order #10, 9/25/78 re: Negotiations -
Arsenal Square Moratorium

During the time that the Temporary Development Moratorium has been operative in Arsenal Square, both the Community Development Department and the Historical Commission have met with neighborhood residents and have begun to investigate possibilities for implementing land use controls to diminish the intrusions of incompatible development into low density residential neighborhoods.

The threat of intrusive development in Arsenal Square was magnified by the demolition of the two houses at 21 Concord Avenue and 14 Garden Street. The properties belong to Mr. Haven O'Moore of the Institute of Traditional Science. Prior to the actual demolition, I met with neighborhood representatives and Mr. O'Moore to discuss his development plans for the properties. Due to the diametrically opposed positions concerning the appropriate future of those buildings, negotiations broke down almost immediately and have not been revived since.

The Community Development Department is pursuing several approaches to the Arsenal Square problems including: consideration of possible density and bulk regulations for institutional buildings on the fringes of residential neighborhoods; research of the experiences of other cities through the Planning Advisory Service and the National Institute of Municipal Law Officers; and consultation with the Historical Commission staff to evaluate ways of protecting distinctive residential neighborhoods from inappropriate development.

The Arsenal Square Neighborhood Association approached the Historical Commission this summer and asked to have the Arsenal Square and Berkley Street neighborhoods considered for Historic District designation. The Commission studied the possibility at its September 7, 1978 meeting, but decided not to proceed with designation at this time. The Historical Commission is working on a draft of a neighborhood conservation plan which would offer alternatives to Historic District designation for protecting the integrity of Cambridge neighborhoods. However, these alternative forms of designation will require state legislation which takes a considerable amount of time. The threat in Arsenal Square is imminent and therefore the Commission suggested that the neighborhood seek protection through the zoning process in the form of an overlay district.

This possibility is being considered by the Community Development Department's land use staff and will be discussed with neighborhood representatives in the near future.

The Historical Commission has prepared a draft of a citywide demolition ordinance in response to another Council order. Such an ordinance would provide a measure of protection for Arsenal Square and other areas of Cambridge where low-density, older buildings are threatened with demolition for replacement with more intensive development.

The Community Development Department is continuing to work on alternatives for encouraging development in Arsenal Square and other established neighborhoods in forms which are compatible in bulk, height, building coverage, open space and traffic generating characteristics, as intended by the moratorium.

SEE 12.14.74

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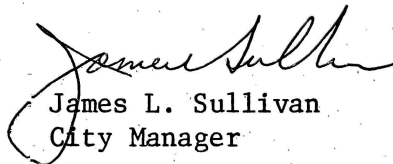
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

October 23, 1978

To the Honorable, the City Council:

With respect to Awaiting Report Item No. 10 regarding negotiations concerning Arsenal Square during the moratorium, enclosed please find copy of a report from David Vickery, Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Very truly yours,


James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/mbf
enc.

Agenda # 6

0-74

Response to Awaiting Report No. 10 re:
negotiations concerning Arsenal Square
during the moratorium.

In City Council,
October 23, 1978

10/30/78

Placed on File -