

**The Abrams  
Management  
Company, Inc.**

Real Estate Development  
Management  
and Consultant

2 Park Square  
Boston, Massachusetts  
02116  
617 482-2747

Edwin D. Abrams  
President

April 15, 1980

Ms. Dorothea Johnston  
c/o Cambridge Committee of Elders, Inc.  
15 Pearl Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Johnston,

I would like to respond to several statements made by you at last night's City Council meeting regarding security and management issues at Putnam Square Apartments.

- a. You stated that our management plan for tenant education regarding security implied that we as a Management firm think the Elderly are stupid. Indeed, we do not think the elderly are stupid. Based on consultation with the Cambridge Police, we feel that all citizens can benefit from this type of program.
- b. You stated that there had been nine (9) break-ins at Putnam Square Apartments. On March 20th, six (6) residents reported burglaries to me and two (2) residents reported to me that they heard someone try to get into their apartments (in one case, a tenant installed alarm sounded).
- c. You stated that maintenance is regularly performed by our staff in the late evening hours. Our maintenance contractors have families and make repairs at night only on an emergency basis. Our plumber is one exception and sometimes, he does make repairs in the early evening hours. We try our best to schedule such items, but please understand that a plumber's schedule can be thrown off entirely by major problems. We think you are referring to an incident four (4) years ago when by human error, our plumber was given the wrong apartment number and inadvertently entered an apartment by mistake.

As a general practice when taking repair requests from residents, we as managers ask the Resident if our staff has permission to enter. Often times, our staff will wait on low-priority repairs to do them in the presence of residents. This is particularly helpful in explaining why something broke and/or what was involved in the repair.

- d. You stated you were glad to hear that there are Social Services at Putnam Square as there had been none. Mrs. Joan Mello, R.N. has served as Manager of Health and Social Services at Putnam for two years. Prior to that Mrs. Peg Deely served in that role. This is an Abrams Management Company position, the role of which is to act as liason between residents, social service agencies, and management. Joan coordinates activities including a yearly Bazaar each fall, a Spring Bake Sale, and participation in The Cambridge River Festival. Joan advocates for residents when issues of pensions, hospital bills, and service delivery occur. She also conducts a weekly blood pressure clinic (totally optional for residents) as a helpful adjunct to their medical care. Joan also coordinates outings, songfests, and celebrations of various holidays.
- e. You stated that tenants were left dead in their apartments and only the smell caused management to look in on residents. Last spring, during the Annual Cambridge Housing Authority Inspection, Inspector Daniels and Mrs. Mello experienced the dreadful sadness of finding a resident dead in his home. We were very distressed that this man did not die in dignity. But what about his neighbors? Well, this gentleman was a loner and had turned away help. A few years ago, some Putnam Residents had demanded that our staff perform daily floor checks. Mr. Abrams told the tenants that they should look out after one another in a spirit of caring because after all it is their home. The tenants refused to set up a watch program when management offered to coordinate one.
- f. You stated that tenants were afraid to make a formal request for a meeting with Management because of retaliation we would take against them. The days of landlord reprisals against tenant activism are over, over, over. Tenant involvement is a matter that this firm was fostered for over ten years. I find this statement of tenant recalcitrance based on fear to be inexcusable and, as a matter of fact it is an excuse. You justly advocate that Putnam Residents be recognized for their wisdom from age and experience and that they not be considered stupid. Please apply that philosophy to the matter of their realization of right and capability to voice their opinion to management. On many occasions, residents have called me or visited me in the Putnam Office to make suggestions or register complaints. Let me know who among them has experienced a repercussion.

As I stated in our telephone conversation today, we welcome the possibility of a Tenant Council or Steering Committee at Putnam. We appreciate your advocacy of The Elderly of Cambridge in general and of Putnam Square particularly. I have no doubt of your good intentions. It is the manner in which you chose to voice them with which I take issue. I ask you how you would have felt if accusations were made against you in a non-judicial public forum. I hope that this letter clarifies some issues for you. It is important that I respond to your statements so that the interests of Putnam Residents can be properly served by focussing on their most urgent concern: security.

Respectfully,

THE ABRAMS MANAGEMENT COMPANY, INC.

*Marianne E. McLaughlin*

Marianne E. McLaughlin, Manager  
Putnam Square Apartments

cc: Distribution:

The Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.  
The Honorable Francis H. Duehay, Mayor  
City Councilor Kevin P. Crane  
Thomas W. Danehey  
Saundra Graham  
Leonard Russell  
David E. Sullivan  
Walter J. Sullivan  
Alfred Vellucci  
David Wylie  
City Clerk Paul Healy  
Deputy City Clerk Joseph Connerton  
Mr. Stephen Daly, MHFA  
Edwin D. Abrams  
Officer Darling, Cambridge Police Dept.  
Dan Wuenschel, CHA  
George Yuse, CHA  
Joan Mello  
Thomas Mahoney, Secretary of DEA  
Janet Rose  
Gerald Bergman, Cambridge Committee of Elders

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

4/7/80

Dear Putnam Square Residents,

We wanted to bring you up-to-date on plans to improve security.

First of all, we feel there are two key elements to an effective program for Putnam:

## A. Mechanical:

1. Apartment Doors - Within the next 2 to 3 weeks (sooner, if at all possible) jimmy-proof, 24" interlocking plates will be installed on every apartment door. This will prevent access to your home by slipping a card by the lock.
2. Main Floor entry doors - The existing locks and door closures have been checked by our locksmith, The Pasek Corporation. As long as the door is allowed to swing closed, it will lock. If the door is held just before it closes, chances are the lock won't catch. Here is a chance none of us can afford to take. Please be sure that the door closes and locks behind you. We are investigating further modifications to these doors.

## B. Education:

We will be arranging future visits by professionals in the Crime Prevention field. They, as well as we, feel that tenant responsibility plays a necessary, effective role in the security of any building; and, Putnam is no exception. Therefore, we are planning a program of continuing education on tenant involvement in security.

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At this time, we would like to encourage you to express your concerns regarding this or any other issue by calling me at 661-8795 or visiting with me in the Putnam Management Office during my regular, Tuesday 9 a.m. - noon office hours.

We of course, respect and encourage your right to bring your concerns to various government and civic agencies. However, in using this approach, please do not force your opinions on any other resident. We respect your dignity and individuality, please show the same respect for your neighbors.

Very truly yours,

Marianne E. McLaughlin  
Manager

cc: Edwin D. Abrams  
Joseph Daly  
Steven Daly  
Joan Mello  
Leonard Woolley  
George Yuse

S-201

Copy of communication from the Abrams  
Management Co., Inc. to the Cambridge  
Committee of Elders, Inc. re: security  
and management issues at Putnam Square.

In City Council,

April 28, 1980

4/28/1980

Placed on File -