

WATERHOUSE TRUST COMPLEX

RECEIVED  
14 JUL 14 1996 OFFICE  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
94 JUL 14 AM 10:06

The Honorable Kenneth Reeves  
Mayor, City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Mr. Robert Healy, City Manager  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mayor Reeves and City Manager Healy:

We the undersigned residents of Cambridge write in regard to a problem of great neighborhood concern, the proposal by the Traffic Department to improve safety and traffic flow in Arsenal Square (the intersection of Concord Avenue, Garden and Follen Streets) by closing off the first block of Concord Avenue ("Little Concord Avenue") and Follen Street from Garden Street, thereby making Follen and Little Concord Avenue a U-structured connecting three-block one-way street.

Although this proposal has been under discussion in the neighborhood for two months, the City failed in a major way to notify residents of the Waterhouse Trust Complex (encompassing over 140 apartments at 1 Waterhouse Street, 19 Garden Street, 3 and 5 Concord Avenue). Instead, primary communication was to Follen Street residents, who have a priority interest in Follen Street enhancement, and through certain of those individually to a few Waterhouse Trust residents.

Despite the lapse in time and the progress made in plans to implement the Arsenal Square proposal, the residents of the Waterhouse Trust Complex must be brought into the discussion and have their concerns heard before any action of closure. We the undersigned residents and representatives of the Waterhouse Trust Complex do have objections to the proposal of closure, and we write to make our objections known, as follows:

- 1/ The City did not properly and officially notify all residents of the proposal of Arsenal Square closure and provide an opportunity for residents to participate in discussion about it.
- 2/ We believe that the Traffic Department in its proposal for Arsenal Square is undertaking to solve one neighborhood problem of safety and traffic flow by creating others, potentially serious, which are improperly and inadequately addressed.

We believe, first, that the U-structured street, with all traffic exiting at Follen-Waterhouse, will create another serious hazard at that intersection with traffic entering Waterhouse from Little Massachusetts Avenue.

And we believe, second, that the closure of Little Concord Avenue to through traffic, primarily from east and north Cambridge to west and south Cambridge, will create a serious backup problem of that traffic at the Waterhouse-Garden Street intersection, particularly at peak periods. We believe the planned signal at the Arsenal Square intersection will not be sufficient to relieve backup and safety concerns at the Garden-Waterhouse intersection, resulting in increased traffic and pedestrian hazards at an already hazardous intersection.

3/ We believe that the U-structured, one-way Little Concord Avenue/Follen Street will create serious blockage problems (no matter what traffic direction) from garbage trucks, recycling trucks, oil deliveries, moving vans, U-hauls, snow plows, taxis and other vehicular blockage. Mr. Preston of the Traffic Department thinks this will be minimal, but even some Follen Street residents are deeply concerned. In a discussion on July 12 Mrs. Detlev Vagts, 29 Follen, complained of snow removal blockage and said, "We are blocked all the time" by oil delivery trucks (at the rear of 1572 Massachusetts Avenue).

Ms. Eleanor Williams, 33 Follen Street, in the same discussion, said: "There is blockage every day at 50 Follen Street. It is a distinct danger and persistent. No ambulance could possibly get through. There are 90 apartments in that building, and there are always moving vans, always U-hauls. It is a problem now for every resident of Follen Street. That's why I have a phone in my car, to call the police. You ask the kids to move, and they just give you the finger."

4/ We are greatly concerned about possible loss of parking spaces in the neighborhood as a consequence of attempts to solve such problems.

We repeat, to us as residents of this neighborhood these problems have not been addressed to the satisfaction of the Waterhouse Trust Complex (140-plus apartments). We believe that the only way that the analysis and opinions of the Traffic Department can be evaluated is by a trial period in advance of any finalization of plan. The proposal of Arsenal Square closure should be confirmed as workable before put in place. For a trial period to be effective, it should

- 1/ be given appropriate temporary signals in Arsenal Square as well as barriers;
- 2/ be in September (not in August) when street traffic will be at its fall and winter maximum and the Longy School of Music will be in session;
- 3/ be at least one month in duration;
- 4/ be properly and fully publicized to all area residents;
- 5/ provide opportunity for the residents of the Waterhouse Trust Complex to participate in evaluation of the trial.

We respectfully request that the Traffic Department be instructed to arrange the month-long trial in September to ascertain the essential facts to assess the proposal of Arsenal Square closure.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues and of our request.

Respectfully yours,

MATHER COURT TENANTS ASSOCIATION

*Vera Bissell*  
Vera Bissell, 1 Waterhouse Street

WATERHOUSE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

*Roberta C. Cummins*  
Roberta Cummins, 3 Concord Avenue  
*Elizabeth Smith*  
Elizabeth Smith, 3 Concord Avenue

*Carolyn Pizarzyck*  
Carolyn Pizarzyck, 19 Garden Street

*Karen Dorn*  
Karen Dorn, 19 Garden Street  
*William R. Crout*  
William R. Crout, 5 Concord Avenue

*John O'Reilly*  
John O'Reilly, 5 Concord Avenue

cc: Members of the City Council (Nine)  
Mr. Lauren Preston, Traffic Department

/wrc

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94 JUL 19 PM 1:50

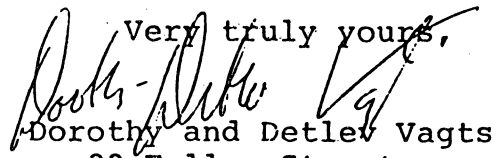
TO: The Mayor, The City Council and the Manager

RE: Concord Avenue and Follen Street Changes

This is written to support the concept of rerouting the end of Concord Avenue and Follen Street by closing them off from Arsenal Square. We write particularly because the letter from "The Waterhouse Trust Complex" is misleading in several respects. First, it describes the procedures that have been followed in such a way as to minimize the extent of the efforts made to include all interested parties in the discussions. It is never easy to get together the residents of apartments or condominiums to join in the process. Indeed, it is not at all clear how representative the signers of the July 14th letter are of all the residents in those buildings. We know that copies of the letter of notification of the first meeting were posted on the exterior doors of the apartments and I am told by members of the Follen Street committee on the changes that they made a real effort to include apartment dwellers. One cannot hold up projects indefinitely because some additional persons turn up who say that the concept is new to them.

Second, we agree as to the merits of the proposed change. One should not forget that the basic reason for the shift is to increase safety. It is obvious that the chaotic character of traffic flows in Arsenal Square is likely to lead to accidents and disruptions. The only way of dealing with that problem is to reduce the number of entrances into Arsenal Square by cutting off two streets so that traffic lights can control the rest. One then faces various questions of how that change is to be carried out. Any version causes some problems but it is evident that great efforts have been made to think through these questions and do what is best for the neighborhood. The total traffic flow in the circuit will be diminished because people in search of short-cuts will no longer use Concord or Follen approaches. The danger of additional blockages on the street can be much reduced by setting aside two spaces as a loading zone in front of 50 Follen Street. Snow removal problems can be handled if the parties cooperate.

Thus we urge you not to waste time on this but to allow the process to go forward so as to meet the timetable for fall completion

Very truly yours,  
  
Dorothy and Detlev Vagts  
29 Follen Street

**9 Concord Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138**

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July 18, 1994

**The Honorable Kenneth Reeves  
Mayor, City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139**

**Dear Mayor Reeves:**

**We are the residents of the home at the corner of Follen Street and little Concord Avenue (interestingly, the only people able to make this claim because of the peculiarities of this intersection). Our front door is on Concord and our driveway and kitchen door are on Follen. Through these doors, both on foot or with a car, we depart and return from work, take the children to and from school, and go about all the ramifications of our professional, social, and family lives. Therefore, we believe that we have some "standing" in what happens here. We would appreciate this acknowledgement when you hear dissenting opinions about the plans for this corner from those who do not have this intersection at their doorstep. Whether they are a block away or ten blocks away, they have not experienced the chaos and transgressions as we have.**

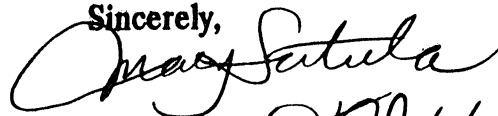
**We were immensely pleased to learn that our city officials have recognized the difficulties that occur at the unique junctures of streets that compose Arsenal Square. The safety concerns on Concord and Follen are serious. Our children are learning that danger, disorder, and blatant disregard for traffic rules are just beyond their sidewalk. As they get older and want to walk to school, the Peabody School, the street that we worry the most about their crossing is the one outside our kitchen window.**

**Cara Siederman, Loren Preston, Ann Daughaday and Mary Webb have patiently and professionally addressed the neighborhood's questions at the four meetings held thus far. Those of us who placed this issue in high priority made the time and the necessary arrangements to attend all the lengthy meetings. At the last meeting, someone who has been "too busy" to participate in the process to date, came forth to question and disrupt the completion of the neighborhood-city plan. Please do not allow this to happen.**

**In summary, we wish to express our support and to encourage the continuation of the efforts that are being made to close the street. We believe that whatever perceived or anticipated minor inconveniences there may be to daily routines are secondary to the real**

threats to safety that we now face. We strongly urge you to support the continuation of the ongoing process and to help the street closure project proceed in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,



Mary Sutula

Francis C. Sutula



**P.S. Over the past few years, the number of children on Follen Street has more than tripled, and this is once again becoming a family neighborhood. At last count, there were 6 children under the age of 10 on Follen and 5 children under 10 on Concord. Please help us make this a safe neighborhood for them!**

Ken - We'd appreciate your support  
on this. The safety issue is  
an important one.

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Thanks Jane  
P.S. How are you?

Mr. Richard Rossi  
Assistant City Manager  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge MA 02139

Dear Richard,

Thanks to you and the team of department heads you assembled, we have a neighborhood largely in agreement on a street closure plan as well as a street enhancement program. George Fernandez, Lauren Preston, Cara Seiderman, Ann Daughaday, Mary Webb, and Sam Corda have given many hours of their time taking us step-by-step through a complicated, sometimes trying, planning and logistical process. They have been helpful, informative and extremely patient-- a wonderful credit to the City.

It is unfortunate that Bill Crout and a few other he's rounded up have decided to object to the plan so late in the day. Contrary to his assertion of not being informed of what was going on until after a few months, I provided him with notices of the May 5th meeting at the Longy School to post in his building, 3 Concord, 1 Waterhouse, and 19 Garden Streets. Since some individuals from those buildings came to the meeting, I have to assume he did so.

In light of the most important issue to my husband and I, that of improved safety in Arsenal Square, we urge the City Council to take prompt action in approving the Follen Street/ "little" Concord Avenue closure plan. Anything you can do to help expedite the process will be greatly appreciated.

Best Wishes,

Jane Reed

cc: to the above mentioned; City Manager, Robert Healy; the City Council.

36 Follen Street  
Cambridge MA 02138

*Ken - We'd appreciate your support on this. The safety issue is such an important one.*

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Best Wishes,

Jane Reed

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36 Follen Street  
Cambridge MA 02138

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Dear Mayor Reeves, City Councillors and City Manager Healy,

Having attended four meetings on the Closing of Follen and Little Concord Ave., I, and many others, support the Proposal as the best way to resolve what is now a very dangerous intersection. I also feel that making the two minor streets one U-street will result in our having far less through traffic, including taxis and a far safer, quieter Street. Longy School agreed in 1991 to encourage a Garden Street drop-off for their students, and such a safe drop-off place has been promised us.

I would like to thank the City for the good presentations of their staff and it's cooperation in meeting all our concerns.

- 1) I feel the City did the best job possible notifying the neighborhood residents of the Proposal. ( See details on page 2. I tried to help by mailing out 30 copies of the minutes of all meetings.
- 2) We recognize that all the area traffic problems will not be totally resolved by the Closing, but many of us feel that it will definitely decrease them. The neck-downs planned for the entrance and exit of the new U-Street should increase its safety. Having a space opposite 50 Follen St restricted during the day, by hours or by meters, for large commercial vehicles should avoid any street blockages. Stricter parking violation crackdowns is the real answer for U-hauls etc. Such vehicles should be encouraged to use the Waterhouse meters for longterm parking anyways.
- 3) Actually no parking spaces have been eliminated. The neckdowns merely demarcate existing legal setbacks from street corners and hydrants.
- 4) The juncture of Waterhouse and Garden does remain a potential problem. However, not too many of us see it as insoluble. Clearer signs should expedite all turns, and, if the lights are synchronized, there should be the intervals necessary for turns. We should remember that cars using shortcuts avoid traffic lights, so actually fewer cars may continue to use this route. Neighborhood residents may also realize that there are more than one way to get to where they are going.
- 5) Mr. Preston has offered to put up a temporary barrier to test how his theories translate into action. However, he points out that no test would be realistic before full signal installation. Therefore any trial would be but a waste of time which we ill afford. Several of us are willing to hold more meetings in early September to work out differences and details, such as the final direction of the U-Street, but we feel that the decision for Closing of the two streets must be made now to insure the work can be completed this fall. To accomplish this the Proposal must be submitted to the Historical Commission by September 8th, not too far away.

The arguments against the Proposal simply do not justify keeping such a dangerous intersection any longer. Imposing a third year of construction onto the two Streets would also add insult to possible injury.

I hope you will agree

Sheela G. Cook 7-15-94

The Proposal to close Follen St. and Little Concord Ave. to ensure a full signal at Arsenal Square that would be efficient and safe for all the traffic there, local and through, car, bicycle and pedestrian, was first presented by Lauren Preston at a Meeting in the Longy School on May 5. Despite the assertion of the Waterhouse Trust Complex's assertion that the Meeting was not adequately publicized, I know the City did leaflet the apartments. I, also personally sent announcements to at least one person in each unit. Certainly there was no effort to keep the issue secret.

Follen St was given the month of May to decide about burying our wires, which did keep us occupied. but leaders in the apartments certainly could have demanded more meetings then. The Meetings of June 14, June 27 and July 12th meetings, were publicized a week in advance. They were held at the same place, 34 Follen St. At least one representative from every apartment, except for 19 Garden St. Carolyn Pisarzek was invited, but never came. Nor did Karen Dorn. Bill Crout did not come until the last meeting but he talked to me and to Lauren Preston at great length on June 28th.

About 25 people came to the June 14th Meeting to hear Lauren Preston and Cara Seiderman including Vera Bissell, Roberta Crumline and Betsy Smith. None of the latter raised objections to the closings of the streets then. The majority at that meeting accepted the necessity of closing the streets went on to discuss in detail problems of resolving traffic flow as well as Enhancement Proposals for both the Streets. It was decided then to have the traffic enter on Little Concord. We also decided to put most of the Enhancement budget into resolving the traffic problems at the junctures of Follen and Concord at Waterhouse and to beautify the "barricade," which mainly enhanced Little Concord Ave.

3 apartment residents attended the June 27 Meeting to express renewed concerns as voiced by Bill Crout over the Closings. He had not attended any of the Meetings to date. Therefore I called him and urged him to call Lauren Preston, which he did. I was informed that he seemed satisfied. So the meeting on July 12 was expected to be but a final wrap-up of details. Instead Bill Crout and 6 others from the Waterhouse Trust Complex appeared with the complaints they state in their memo to you. We spent two hours going over the reasons for the Closings. We also tried to resolve all the objections I could think of. I know that 3 apartment residents were persuaded by these arguments as presented by Preston.

These meetings have been well publicized. They have never been clandestine, and all who wished to attend were more than welcome. Follen Street is well aware that the 1986 down-zoning of the Street was made possible only through the help from the surrounding apartments. For this we are eternally grateful, and have always recognized that we must act as a Block to achieve our goals.

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July 15, 1994

The Honorable Kenneth Reeves  
Mayor, City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Reeves:

As a resident of the Follen Street/little Concord Avenue neighborhood, I would like to applaud the decision to close off Follen Street and little Concord Avenue and thereby, finally make Arsenal Square a safer place for vehicles and pedestrians. I am pleased that the city has acknowledged this problem and is taking the initiative to correct it.

As you may know, there have been a series of meetings, open to all, to establish consensus and obtain neighborhood feedback on this project. Thanks to the efforts of Cara Siederman, Loren Preston, and their co-workers, these have been informative, intensive, and productive sessions. As a result, a plan for the street closure has evolved that promises to greatly improve the safety and beauty of our neighborhood.

For those of us in this community who daily venture apprehensively into the chaos of Arsenal Square on foot or in a car, for those of us who have come to fear the potential of speeding cars going the wrong way on Follen or ignoring the stop sign at the Concord/Follen corner, the completion of this project is something to look forward to.

Therefore, I wish to express my support and to encourage the continuation of the efforts that are being made to close the street. I believe that whatever perceived or anticipated minor inconveniences there may be to daily routines are secondary to the real threats to safety that we now face. I strongly urge you to support the continuation of the ongoing process and to help the street closure project proceed in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

Rebecca B. Williams

34 Follen Str.

Cambridge, MA 02138

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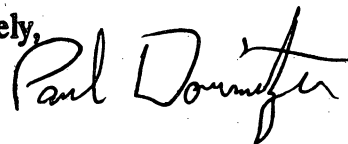
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Jessie and Bill Nixon  
5 Follen Street

Sincerely,

A. B. Ham  
5 FOLLEN

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Sincerely,

Virginia Wang

50 Follen Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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Sincerely,

Emily McClintock  
Emily McClintock  
15 Follen St.  
Cambridge, MA

TK McClintock  
THOMAS K. MCCLINTOCK  
15 FOLLEN ST.  
CAMBRIDGE

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Sincerely,

*Flornie Darwin*  
*7 Follen Street*

MALCOLM & SUSAN ROGERS  
7 CONCORD AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

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Dear Mayor Reeves:

We are the residents of the home at the corner of Follen Street and little Concord Avenue (interestingly, the only people able to make this claim because of the peculiarities of this intersection). Our front door is on Concord and our driveway and kitchen door are on Follen. Through these doors, both on foot or with a car, we depart and return from work, take the children to and from school, and go about all the ramifications of our professional, social, and family lives. Therefore, we believe that we have some "standing" in what happens here. We would appreciate this acknowledgement when you hear dissenting opinions about the plans for this corner from those who do not have this intersection at their doorstep. Whether they are a block away or ten blocks away, they have not experienced the chaos and transgressions as we have.

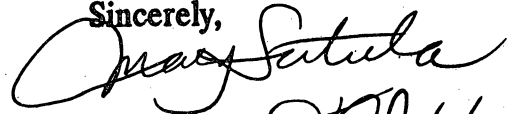
We were immensely pleased to learn that our city officials have recognized the difficulties that occur at the unique junctures of streets that compose Arsenal Square. The safety concerns on Concord and Follen are serious. Our children are learning that danger, disorder, and blatant disregard for traffic rules are just beyond their sidewalk. As they get older and want to walk to school, the Peabody School, the street that we worry the most about their crossing is the one outside our kitchen window.

Cara Siederman, Loren Preston, Ann Daughaday and Mary Webb have patiently and professionally addressed the neighborhood's questions at the four meetings held thus far. Those of us who placed this issue in high priority made the time and the necessary arrangements to attend all the lengthy meetings. At the last meeting, someone who has been "too busy" to participate in the process to date, came forth to question and disrupt the completion of the neighborhood-city plan. Please do not allow this to happen.

In summary, we wish to express our support and to encourage the continuation of the efforts that are being made to close the street. We believe that whatever perceived or anticipated minor inconveniences there may be to daily routines are secondary to the real

threats to safety that we now face. We strongly urge you to support the continuation of the ongoing process and to help the street closure project proceed in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,



Mary Sutula

Francis C. Sutula



P.S. Over the past few years, the number of children on Follen Street has more than tripled, and this is once again becoming a family neighborhood. At last count, there were 6 children under the age of 10 on Follen and 5 children under 10 on Concord. Please help us make this a safe neighborhood for them!



# City of Cambridge

38.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
August 1, 1994

MAYOR REEVES  
COUNCILLOR BORN  
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY  
VICE MAYOR RUSSELL  
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU  
COUNCILLOR WALSH

WHEREAS: Various residents of the Arsenal Square area have written the attached letters detailing their opinions, both pro and con, regarding a proposal by the Department of Traffic and Parking to improve safety and traffic flow at the intersection of Concord Avenue, Garden Street, and Follen Street; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That City Manager is hereby ordered to consider these here detailed concerns in any plans by the Department of Traffic and Parking to close off the first block of Garden and Follen Streets from Concord Avenue, or any other changes of traffic policy in Arsenal Square; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Manager is ordered to keep neighborhood residents, particularly residents at Waterhouse Trust Complex at 1 Waterhouse Street, 19 Garden Street, and 3 and 5 Concord Avenue, fully involved in any deliberations by the Department of Traffic and Parking regarding this issue.

In City Council August 1, 1994.  
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.  
Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:- *D. Margaret Drury*

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk



# City of Cambridge

38.

IN CITY COUNCIL  
August 1, 1994

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Born, Quehay, Russell  
Triantafyllou Walsh

Consent Order #38

CM-251

Mayor Reeves re: Improve traffic  
problems at the intersection of  
Concord Ave. Follen St. and Garden  
St. (Arsenal Square).

In City Council August 1, 1994

Order adopted.