

February 24, 2014

Cambridge Planning Board  
344 Broadway  
Cambridge MA

Re: Petition #288 Leggat McCall (Oppose)

On March 4 you will have the opportunity to right a historic wrong. I implore you to deny the special permits requested by developer Leggat McCall to give second life to the Sullivan Courthouse, a sick building that has been roundly reviled since it began terrorizing its residential neighbors like a concrete and asbestos King Kong four decades ago.

While I live in West Cambridge, I work on the border of historic human scale East Cambridge and the shining Emerald City of Kendall Square. The contrast of scale and values could not be more pronounced, or more welcome as evidence that working and middle class families still have a toehold in Cambridge today. When I walk from my office to toward Cambridge Street or Third Street, the Sullivan Courthouse looms large from every angle, night and day. It is a brutal 22-story reminder that a prior group of public servants were derelict in their duty to preserve the neighborhood's history and esthetic for future generations of Cantabrigians from all walks of life and all parts of town.

Since I have already signed the petition being circulated by the Neighborhood Association of East Cambridge (see <http://40Thorndike.org>), I will not attempt to paraphrase the argument that the group has so eloquently and persuasively stated. I agree that the only reasonable course, legally and morally, is to terminate the disposition process, and to require the state to raze and remove this toxic monstrosity and return the site to the city to repurpose for a public use that conforms to the neighborhood zoning and respect the neighborhood's wishes.

No decision the Planning Board and City Council will make this year – or this decade – stands to have the same impact or legacy as the one presented by petition #288. Please do the right thing and send the Commonwealth back to the drawing board. Let it be known that the “c” in Cambridge stands for the courage to respect the community's values and needs.

Sincerely,

Jan Devereux  
255 Lakeview Ave.