



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY COUNCILLOR LELAND CHEUNG

February 24, 2014

Mr. Hugh Russell
Chairman, Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: 40 Thorndike Street (SP #288)

To the members of the Cambridge Planning Board:

I am writing to express my opposition to Leggat-McCall's application for special permit #288. I do not often write to the Cambridge Planning Board because of your judicious and conscientious approach to evaluating cases, but I wanted to be sure to call your attention to the detrimental effects that approving this special permit will have for the residents of East Cambridge.

Based on the input that I have received from constituents in the area and on my personal judgment, I have come to determine that it would not be in the best interest of the neighborhood nor the city to approve this permit.

1. The proposed designs do not conform to the character of the neighborhood. East Cambridge has long been established as a two to four story residential area with many family homes. The proposed development is hugely out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. The contrast of the modern design with the surrounding neighborhood, along with a high rise in a low rise area, causes it to be a continuous eyesore for local residents.
2. The increase in density will have a negative impact on the quality of life in the neighborhood. The change to a private retail/residential/office tower will also increase the number of occupants and foot traffic to the area. As a result, noise and traffic will increase and become an irritant to a community that has historically enjoyed peaceful living. The increase in tourism will also put a stress on parking in the area.
3. It has been expressed that Thorndike Street is a wind tunnel. This is mainly due to the height of the current Courthouse. The developers plan to replace the concrete with a smooth glass surface. It has been voiced, and I have come to agree, that the new glass may exacerbate the wind issue. The current wind situation has already been expressed as intolerable.
4. The new glass design is also a concern. During sunny days, the glare off the glass façade would be a nuisance to surrounding residents whether on the street or on their homes. The

heat generated may even cause damage. During the night, mass lighting from the building would irritate people trying to sleep as it shines through their windows.

The Cambridge Planning board has a long track record of being a responsive and deliberative body that protects the interest of the broader community when considering plans for the future. I trust the Board to exercise the same conscientious consideration in this case as well.

Sincerely,

Leland Cheung