

SITING AMENITIES AND THE PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS:  
THE KENNEDY LIBRARY IN CAMBRIDGE AND  
NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM IN THE CHARLESTOWN NAVY YARD

by

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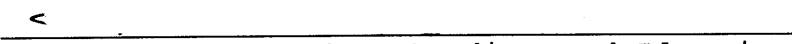
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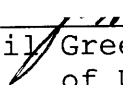
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**ABSTRACT**

In 1964, the Kennedy Library Corporation proposed siting the Kennedy Presidential Library on MBTA yards in Cambridge. Unresolved conflict with local residents drove the Library Corporation to seek an alternative site. A generation later, the New England Aquarium tried to obtain a site for a new facility in the Charlestown Navy Yard. Once again, conflict with local citizens was key in forcing the Aquarium to seek a different location, although at another site still within the Navy Yard.

Each case featured elite, non-profit institutions acting as developers in an effort to site a facility that many abutting residents considered an attractive amenity. Despite offers from the institutions to mitigate and compensate for adverse impacts, opponents concerned about traffic, historic preservation, and quality of life issues mounted a successful campaign against the proposals.

In both cases, citizen review groups were created to distribute information and present community input. In the earlier case, that effort was ad hoc and never succeeded in becoming the central forum for discussion. In Charlestown, the citizen group was more formally integrated into the review process, and participants acknowledged its central position. Some benefits were reaped from this restructuring.

I suggest in this thesis that in both cases other factors combined to outweigh the positive effects of the review processes and produce conflict which stopped short of litigation. These factors derive from internal institutional incapacities and external constraints on participants. One significant factor which affected the outcome of the two cases is the ambivalence of non-profit organizations about playing the role of developer. As entrepreneurs they face the dilemma of how to appropriately dedicate their resources to both their social mission and to institutional growth.

Thesis supervisor: J. Mark Davidson Schuster, Ida and Cecil Green Career Development Associate Professor of Urban Planning

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I deeply appreciate the help of people in Cambridge and Charlestown who agreed to be interviewed for this research, listened patiently to my questions, and gave thoughtful responses.

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Thanks to Anna for her faith in me, which has made the last two years a happy experience.



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Kaufman graduated from the University of Michigan With Distinction in 1970 with a major in Psychology. For several years he lived in Europe where he studied day care centers in Sweden. On returning to the United States, he has worked in education and in research. Kaufman is the Executive Director of a non-profit arts company, Present Stage, Inc., which creates film and theater productions about contemporary social issues. In 1989, his documentary film about a group of homeless men, "Peter, Donald, Willie, Pat," won the New England Film and Video Festival Outstanding Social Documentary Award and a First Prize at the Athens International Film Festival.

James will receive his Master of City Planning Degree with a specialization in community development.

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**THE SITING DILEMMA**

From time to time, a society may require certain facilities which no community wants as a neighbor. Siting these facilities can lead to difficult questions regarding public policy, process, and implementation. A government agency involved in siting often meets local resistance that forces it to seek a different balance between efficiency and equity. What costs can a public authority impose on a host community? Should compensation be offered as an incentive to the host community to accept the facility? If so, how much? What process best enables local communities and authorities to reach agreement concerning these questions?

Although the facility may be widely recognized as necessary for the general welfare of the whole population, no community wants to bear the burden of being host to a prison, a low-level radioactive material dump, or a sewage waste treatment plant. These facilities have been termed "locally unwanted land uses" or LULUs. The reaction from local communities where LULUs are slated to go is often

termed: NIMBY - "Not In My Backyard."

Over the past several decades, one response to community resistance has been to involve the public more explicitly in the process of siting LULUs. Community inclusion is seen as a fairer and more efficient way to reach an amicable outcome.

Despite efforts to include the public in the siting process, however, many cases are still resolved only after a contentious period of debate and litigation. Two Boston area cases faced significant community opposition: the efforts of the Kennedy Library Corporation to build a presidential library on the MBTA yards in Cambridge's Harvard Square; and the New England Aquarium's effort to build a new facility in the Charlestown Navy Yard at Dry Dock #2.

In these cases, sponsors of the new facilities appeared to be in an favorable position to obtain their preferred site, yet each became embroiled in fractious controversy.

Why did events degenerate into confrontation and ill-feeling? The Library and Aquarium projects clearly are not archetypical LULUs because plans for the facilities actually received broad-based political and popular support, much of it local. Also, each project seemed to present substantial amenities to the host community. The Kennedy Library promised to replace an old train yard with park land and open space near the waterfront. Moreover, sponsors of the two projects either agreed to mitigate negative impacts or to offer what appeared to be significant compensation to residents. The Aquarium offered educational programs, jobs, and linkage funding for affordable housing; the Library, programs for local students.

In both cases, the sponsors were powerful non-profit institutions staffed by well-trained professionals and managed by influential boards of trustees. Their proposals were initially greeted with enthusiasm by many residents who believed the proposed facilities could be attractive to neighbors. Mechanisms for citizen input were devised and many participants entered the siting process in a glow of optimism. At first glance, these cases seem to be ones where the typical NIMBY frictions would not be present.

Over the course of siting each of these facilities, however, a small, determined opposition formed which gradually gained in strength. Groups conducting citizen review were incapable of refocusing conflict into productive directions. Negotiation between proponents and opponents of the facilities became so paralyzed that the threat of litigation motivated sponsoring institutions to seek other locations.

Although events in the two cases largely resemble each other, one important difference was the format for citizen review. Community input into the siting process of the Library was ad hoc without a commonly accepted locus for public dialogue; various participants maneuvered independently to reach their objectives.

In the siting case of the New England Aquarium fifteen years later, however, citizen input was more deeply integrated into the development review process. Mayor Raymond Flynn committed his administration to a policy of neighborhood empowerment, in which residents would participate in determining what kinds of development are appropriate in their neighborhood and what measures could equitably mitigate negative impacts or compensate for local costs. To



implement this policy, neighborhood councils sponsor a straightforward, formal process, acknowledged by all participants as an important arena for sharing information and ideas. Considering that the Aquarium offered attractive amenities, I assumed that such a rational, formalized process would be more likely to successfully move participants to an agreeable outcome than the ad hoc process in the Library case. But the outcome was strikingly similar to what happened in the Library case a generation earlier.

The outcomes of the two cases are similar in several respects. First, the cases ended up costing rather than benefiting most participants: they invested years of time and emotional and intellectual effort struggling in dispute. Second, neither institution was able to locate their new facility at the preferred site. Furthermore, the decision to locate elsewhere was motivated more from a fear of litigation than from open and direct bargaining.

And last, a long-term outcome of both cases was the "demoralization"<sup>1</sup> cost to opponents and supporters of the

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<sup>1</sup> Michael O'Hare, Lawrence Bacow, and Debra Sanderson, Facility Siting and Public Opposition (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), p. 80.

facilities. Almost all participants in these cases lost confidence in their community's capacity to create a fair, equitable compromise without reliance on threats or litigation, an indirect but troubling outcome of each case. Because of their ineffectiveness in brokering a compromise, citizen review groups lost stature as a forum for hosting productive dialogue about siting issues. Sponsoring non-profit institutions squandered an initial endowment of good will from residents: the Library will never get a chance to regain that trust in Cambridge; the Aquarium will have to work hard to recover it, according to some Charlestown residents. Citizens in Charlestown and Cambridge supporting the facilities lost an opportunity to receive benefits from development. Furthermore, existing friction between supporters and local opponents was further exacerbated. Even opponents pleased that the sponsors retreated from their original plans now perceive that their worst expectations of the non-profit institutions and citizen review procedures were confirmed; during future negotiations, they will stiffen their resolve to be more distrustful.

Because of the costs they incurred in these cases, participants are more likely in future disputes to choose risk-averse options which they believe will enable them to win even if those options don't use resources in the most efficient way. From my interviews with participants, I observed that the outcomes of these two cases established a precedent which reinforced their expectations that future siting disputes would most likely be played out in a spirit of confrontation and threat, rather than through a fair and efficient process.

I chose to examine these two cases for several reasons. Generally, I wanted to explore the relationship of entrepreneurial non-profit institutions and their public during the process of siting new facilities. Specifically, I wanted to clarify how changes in citizen participation processes affect the outcome of siting cases involving non-profits and local communities.

Institutions like the Library and Aquarium are mandated to serve the public. Because of diminishing government support, however, these institutions are increasingly expected to act more entrepreneurially. As a result of these new pressures,

the relationship between non-profit institutions and the general public is undergoing important changes. First, as I will point out in my description of the Aquarium case, promoters of non-profits in siting cases are more likely than ever before to argue for public support for developing such facilities on the grounds that they are important engines for economic growth in their home region. Sponsors suggest that a new Aquarium in the Navy Yard could draw two million visitors to Boston every year, resulting in significant revenue from tourism. Furthermore, facilities like the Kennedy Library and New England Aquarium are lauded by promoters as amenities which "can be an important tool for maintaining and increasing private investment. Places that are attractive to people will have the competitive edge for job-creating investment."<sup>2</sup>

Can we assume that a non-profit institution engaged in doing good works finds it easier than a typical developer to negotiate a solution to siting problems with local residents? These cases show that the problems of siting facilities are similar across many categories. The process

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. McNulty, The Economics of Amenity: Community Futures and the Quality of Life (Washington D. C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1985), p. 16.

is difficult whether the facility is considered an amenity or noxious; and whether the sponsor is non-profit or for-profit.

Yet, I suggest in this thesis that there are special dilemmas for non-profit institutions cast in the role of developers siting facilities, even those considered amenities. When attempting to site a new facility, non-profits must sometimes pursue goals which bring into relief the incompatibility between developing real estate and traditional relationships with their public.

This thesis also examines if non-profits, accustomed to serving the public, are more adept in negotiating a solution to a siting dispute with local residents. Will adjusting the input of local communities through a formalized review process make the siting process easier for non-profits?

Because these two cases are similar in all major respects except for the formalization of the review process, one might expect that this factor would contribute to a different outcome. However, the outcomes of the two cases resemble each other. Therefore, despite the changes in the review process, there are other factors which, in

combination, have a greater impact on the outcome of the cases. I will point out how inherent organizational qualities of non-profit institutions constrain their capacity to transform themselves into developers and override restructured relationships with the community. As one interviewee said about the Aquarium proposal, non-profit organizations attempting to site new facilities are neither "a down and dirty development nor a noble institution whom everybody loves." This ambiguity about siting facilities can aggravate an already sensitive process. The Kennedy Library and Aquarium cases are an opportunity to observe, within a very focused context, such dilemmas facing non-profit entrepreneurs inventing new relationships with their public.

#### **THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS THESIS**

Chapter Two presents the basic facts of the two cases. In Chapter Three I compare the cases, showing that they are strikingly similar with one exception: the means for involving citizen participation in the review process. Chapter Four examines and compares those review processes to determine if they significantly affected what happened in each case. Chapter Five uses both formal theory from the literature about facility siting and insights from

participants to highlight those other factors which were important in propelling the cases toward their similar outcomes. In the last chapter I present suggestions for non-profit institutions and communities to consider when grappling with the problems of siting new facilities in residential neighborhoods.

## **METHODOLOGY**

I used several sources of information to investigate the history of the two cases and the background context. My primary source was a wide net of face-to-face and telephone interviews. I was able to develop a better understanding of complex issues, events and interactions by asking interviewees a group of standard questions. I encouraged interviewees to interpret what they felt were important dynamics of the case and to analyze the citizen review process. Many of the people I talked to still have strong feelings about what occurred and carry with them a committed sense of what they believe was "right" or "wrong" regarding the outcome of both controversies. This was particularly striking for the Library case which was played out more than fifteen years ago. There is still no consensus among

participants about "what went wrong."

I also consulted professional planners, politicians, and scholars not directly involved in the specific siting controversies to explore broader questions. I attended seven Neighborhood Council meetings and workshops focusing on the master plan for the Navy Yard and Aquarium at Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 to observe Charlestown residents, institutional representatives, and the Council members at work.

I have relied on magazine and newspaper articles to document the media's interpretation of events. I used technical reports and master plans to understand what information was available to residents and planners at various points in the siting process.

Finally, there is a vast body of theoretical literature about the economics of amenity, the process of siting facilities, multi-party and multi-issue negotiation, interest group politics, policy implementation, non-profits and development, feminism, and organizational decision-making which I tapped to establish a conceptual framework for my analysis. The literature about urban renewal, the



EIS, and social movements of the 60s provided important historical background.

I have several other comments about these interviews. The Kennedy Library case in Cambridge was concluded fifteen years ago: many interviewees could not recall exact dates and specific events. On the other hand, controversy about the Aquarium is still so current that some of the participants, especially from the BRA and Aquarium, felt constrained about what they could divulge in interviews. Last, certain participants did not make themselves available for interviews, most notably, decision-makers like Stephen Coyle, Director of the BRA, and John Prescott, Director of the New England Aquarium and trustees of that institution. Clearly, their refusal to be interviewed did not permit me to include their perspective, but I believe my analysis and conclusions are well-supported.

Certain boundaries of my research are worth noting. First, it focuses on events in a unique urban area: Boston-Cambridge. Other cities may process such cases quite differently. Also, I gave much more attention to the controversial debate concerning Dry Dock #2 than recent discussion about Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5.

In this Chapter I recount the histories of the Kennedy Library and Aquarium siting cases. Both cases involve complicated negotiations between individuals from many organizations. Legal and legislative proceedings ran parallel to closed-door bargaining between myriad small groups of professional and citizen participants. Significant interactions took place during informal phone conversations, chatting during pauses at meetings, at community petition drives and demonstrations and both cases received substantial media attention. Yet, it is not possible to reconstruct perfectly the course of events and their relationships. The narratives offered here represent my effort to weave together the many different perspectives presented by proponents and opponents of both projects.

I have found it useful to go far back in time to recount prior development issues and describe citizen-participation in both Cambridge and Charlestown. I pay special attention to the activities of the Harvard Square Development Task Force and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council because they had roughly similar roles in their respective cases in

providing a locus for citizen input. Understanding them is key to understanding the impact that different citizen review processes had and their function is more deeply examined in Chapter Four.

## **THE KENNEDY LIBRARY IN CAMBRIDGE**

President Kennedy initiated plans for a Library early in his administration. During the many years which passed before the Kennedy Presidential Library finally occupied its current home in Dorchester, however, the process of development became more complex than anyone might have imagined, in part, because it coincided with a rise in citizen involvement in development decisions.

### **EARLY PLANS**

On November 10, 1961, the White House announced plans for the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library - a museum and archives - in Cambridge. Please refer to Figure 1 to see a map of Cambridge. It would be the first Presidential Library built in an urban setting. Kennedy was especially interested in 12.2 acres owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority,

bordered by Memorial Drive and the Charles River, Boylston Street and Bennett Street - an area nearly equal in size to all of Harvard Square. Figure 2 is a map showing the Sectors of Harvard Square, including the MBTA yards. Earlier, Harvard University had tried to acquire the site, but the MBTA had not been interested.

When President Kennedy visited potential sites in Cambridge and Boston in October 1963, the media reported that he had selected a 2 acre site next to the Harvard Business School across the Charles River from Harvard Square. The Library would contain an office Kennedy could use after his term expired as well as a small public museum. This initial concept was based on the intimate Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York.

According to John Stewart, current Director of Education at the Kennedy Library, Harvard University still wanted to obtain the MBTA site and had its own agenda. *"Harvard University wanted to get rid of the old subway, tracks, sheds, parking for buses, so it could use this beautiful piece of real estate, ... [the scheme was] to use the Kennedy Library to replace the MBTA."*

Planners were already sensitive to obtaining a site with proper access, size, and proximity to tourist-oriented services. Hal Goyette, planner at Harvard, also remembers that "while Kennedy was alive, we executed a confidential study regarding siting for the Library at 6 sites near Harvard University. Harvard owned Shady Hill on Francis street, but it didn't have adequate public transportation, and presented difficult access by private car. The Business School land was considered a good site as far as access goes, but there was no public transportation. The MBTA yards had all you needed - access, commercial facilities, large enough, public transportation, near Memorial Drive." Figure 3 is an aerial photograph of the MBTA yards. However, Goyette recollects the "word came back, 'it's public land and we can't designate it. We [the Kennedys] need to designate now to start fund raising.' The selected site at the Business School was made always with the understanding that the car barn yard was the best site and continued efforts would be made to secure the site for joint use." Unwittingly, location had already become an issue.

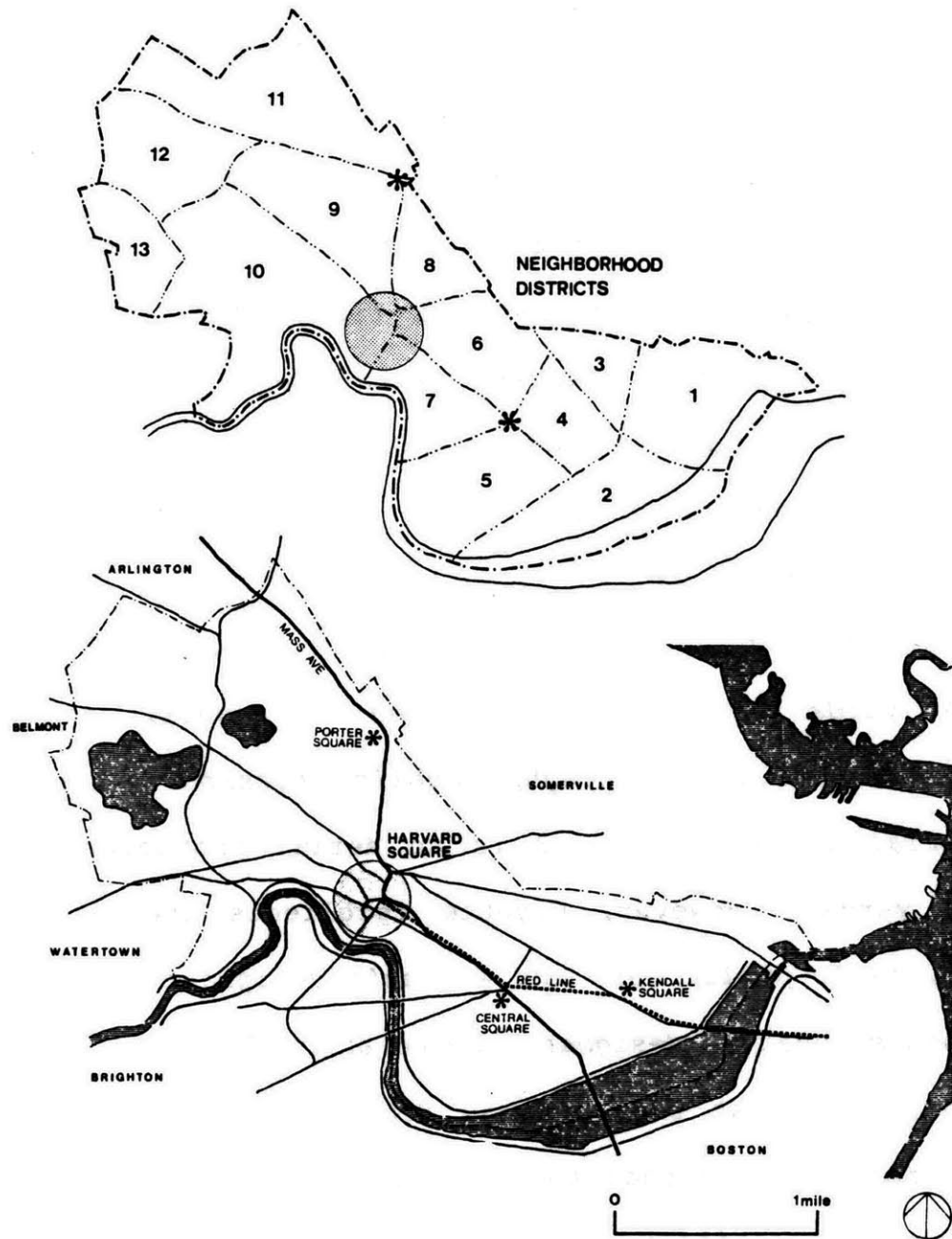


Figure 1: City of Cambridge.

Note that Neighborhood Ten corresponds to District 10. RCCC corresponds roughly with District 7. From Monacelli Associates, Harvard Square Planning and Design Analysis.



Figure 2: Harvard Square Sectors.

from Monacelli Associates



Figure 3: an aerial photo of the MBTA yards in the Southwest Sector of Harvard Square, proposed site for the Kennedy Library. from Monacelli Associates.



## **THE KENNEDY LIBRARY CORPORATION IS FORMED**

On December 5, 1963, several weeks after his assassination, articles of incorporation were filed for the President John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. Robert Kennedy was named President of the Library Corporation and Edward Kennedy Vice-President. An international drive was initiated to raise money from public subscription to fund a Presidential Library. By mid-January, twenty-five mail sacks of contributions had already been received.<sup>1</sup>

In April, a committee of 18 internationally renowned architects was formed to advise the Library Corporation. The committee included Mies Van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Hugh Stubbins, Benjamin Thompson, Pietro Belluschi, Hideo Sasaki, Louis Kahn, and I.M. Pei, among others. The Kennedy Library Corporation selected Pei as project architect in December 1964.

## **EXPANDED CONCEPT FOR THE LIBRARY**

From the original modest idea, a vision for a major

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<sup>1</sup> Boston Traveler, January 16, 1964.

memorial, museum and academic complex began to develop. According to Walter Sullivan, Mayor of Cambridge at that time, Mrs. Kennedy and Pei felt the view of the power plant across the Charles River was not appropriate for a memorial. After assessing a Harvard Business School site plan Study, Pei concluded that "the site was too small for the proposed memorial program."<sup>2</sup> Also, Harvard University, still seeking an alternative use for the MBTA yards, had determined that undergraduates would be reluctant to use a Library situated across the River. As a result, Pei's firm initiated a site analysis of the MBTA yards and contracted with Barton/Ashman Associates to study traffic circulation and parking, problems posed by that site.

According to Ted Musho, the project director of the Library from Pei's firm, *"the spirit of the idea was new and people desperately wanted to make it new... a genuine desire to make it alive, a living memorial: lecture halls, movie theaters, a juncture between the museum and scholarly activities...a community resource."* Such components were

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<sup>2</sup> Draft Environmental Impact Statement: John F. Kennedy Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts (Washington, D.C.: General Services Administration, January 1975), p. 1-20.

seen as making it an even more attractive facility for Cambridge residents. Lengthy negotiations between various government agencies, the Library Corporation, and Harvard University developed an ambitious program for a Library complex that included:

- 5.3 acres for an archive and museum built by the Library Corporation and administered by the National Archives and a Library Corporation-built, Harvard-owned Institute of Politics.
- 2.2 acres for a Harvard-built and operated Kennedy School of Government.
- 3 acres of related facilities, owned by the Corporation for commercial tax-paying development.
- Roughly five acres for a park.
- 1.7 acres for roads.

This program was destined to go through a great deal of change over the next decade. From a total build-out of 225,000 square feet in the year 1964, by 1973 the plan had been scaled down to 140,000 square feet.

## INITIAL DIFFICULTIES OBTAINING THE MBTA YARDS

From 1964 through 1971 the Kennedy Library Corporation was preoccupied with fundraising, legally obtaining the site, and relocating the MBTA yards. The State Legislature agreed to purchase 12.2 acres from the MBTA for \$6 million; 10 acres would be donated, and the remainder sold, to the Library Corporation. The site would be the Commonwealth's memorial for the President. In August, 1966 the United States Congress authorized the General Services Administration (GSA) to accept title to the facilities once erected and equipped by the Library Corporation. The National Archives would ultimately acquire and administer the Library as a gift from the Corporation. The MBTA, GSA, and Library Corporation reached an agreement regarding the deed in April 1967. The land was actually deeded to the GSA and conveyed to the Library Corporation in January 1968.

Over the next several years, the most pressing question for Library sponsors became the relocation of the MBTA yards. In the Boston Globe of September 12, 1970 it was reported that David Powers, curator of the Library, *"disclosed last night that ground for the Library would probably be broken*

by May, 29, 1970 in Cambridge." But this optimism was premature. Efforts to site the yards in Milton, Dorchester, and South Braintree had been met by fierce challenges from local opponents. John Stewart, Director of Education at the Library, says that "people in Dorchester got very upset [about the plan to relocate the yards there]. 'Cambridge gets the goodies and they're giving us the shit.' It was the biggest anti-Kennedy outcry in Boston up to that point, ever." Milton residents actually brought suit in Suffolk Superior Court to block construction of the yards there.

This problem was finally resolved in 1971 when the MBTA reached an agreement with the Penn Central Railroad to obtain one of their properties near South Station as a site for the subway yards. During this period, other important changes were taking place: citizen activists were assuming a greater role in the development process in Cambridge, and very few of the individuals who were involved in the daily planning for the Library had any sense as to how controversial those plans would become.

**AN OVERVIEW OF CAMBRIDGE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN  
DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS**

Seen from a city-wide perspective, the controversy which would surround the proposed library was far from a unique event. Debate about the Library proposal was only one in a series of Cambridge development controversies. Cambridge community activists have long demanded a voice and have intervened in development and siting decisions. Many activists cut their teeth on earlier controversies, and they were ready when the Library plans were unveiled.

Connie Wheeler, city council member and community activist in the Harvard Square area, describes how the level of citizen involvement in government changed over time. According to Wheeler, city politics was dominated by a machine headed by powerful individuals. She says that activists had prompted important change *"in the early forties, when the Cambridge Civic Association rose up in response to corruption in the city. We succeeded in changing the city charter to plan E, with a city manager and a mayor elected by the council."* The goal was to introduce non-political, professional management and planning into the administration of city affairs. Along with other reforms of the forties, neighborhood associations were established to cooperate with city hall in tackling important problems in

the city.

In the 40s and 50s development pressures in Harvard Square were not a great concern for residents. Wheeler describes the area as being a neighborhood place: *"You drove to Harvard Square to do your errands and parked your car... a penny for 5 minutes. There were many more stores of everyday living: plumber, shoes, upholsterer, a 5 and 10, dress shops. It was a crossroads of people from different places, but you always ran into someone you knew."*

However, a period of growth in the 60s brought increased development to Harvard Square and some residents became distressed about traffic congestion and real estate speculation. Wheeler says, *"people were talking about putting things into Harvard Square before the Kennedy Library but didn't get that far."* One proposal involved building two towers for offices and residences which was *"squashed because people threatened lawsuits. People had money enough to raise money to make lawsuits,"* and were committed to stop development they felt was inappropriate.

There was no Cambridge planning agency to deal with these issues. Oliver Brooks, a resident who later had a front row seat to events connected to the Library, describes how Cambridge was one of a few cities in the United States which had its entire urban renewal program cancelled because of the vehement opposition of local residents. *"In the early 60s, the city began an urban renewal effort [with federal money], developed a plan, and brought it before the neighborhoods. But there was so much flack that the City Council got scared and could not approve the contract, and the effort went down the tubes. The feds were sore as hell; so there was nothing going on [in Cambridge]."*

Despite neighborhood resistance to development, some political, academic, and business leaders in the city believed that the coming of the Library to Cambridge could be a good starting point for planning and redevelopment of Harvard Square. What was lacking, they felt, was an organization capable of initiating such a process.

In 1966, Harvard University and MIT formed a non-profit community development corporation, the Cambridge Corporation, governed by a board of academic and business



leaders. Oliver Brooks was hired to be director. The Cambridge Corporation didn't have a carefully defined mandate, according to Brooks, but aimed at helping the town and universities cooperate more effectively on issues like the lack of affordable housing. The Cambridge Corporation initiated a conversation among representatives from Harvard University, private real estate and business groups, and the City of Cambridge to begin a comprehensive urban renewal process for Harvard Square.

A major concern expressed in these conversations was of "undisciplined and uncontrolled speculation in Harvard Square... which will undoubtedly be the pattern of the future unless there is some instrumentality for esthetics (sic) discipline."<sup>3</sup> An important tactical question was how to obtain funding for planning and local grant-in-aid credits which would meet requirements of the Federal urban renewal program.

Brooks suggested two possible approaches to initiate planning: 1. a "quiet study carried forward with private

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<sup>3</sup> Oliver Brooks, memorandum to the Cambridge Corporation: Harvard Square - Kennedy Library Development Chronology, January 1967, from Brooks' private papers in New Haven.

financing; or 2. application for a Survey and Planning Grant from HUD aimed at doing the research needed to under-gird the activation of a Title I project."<sup>4</sup>

Brooks: *"We settled on applying for Model Cities money to set up a program which eventually became the city's community development department. If it (the renewal program) became viewed as a Harvard/MIT effort, it would be unpopular,"* because residents feared university expansion. The Model Cities program for initiating renewal projects was sufficiently detached from the control of the universities, according to Brooks, and *"ultimately had a tremendous amount of citizen participation. Its program involved a degree of citizen control of destiny - a huge step upward. However, the bureaucracy was very untidy and there was a subagenda of personal aggrandizement."*

An additional impetus for change came from grassroots activists protesting the war in Vietnam and university development in Cambridge. Brooks relates one anecdote he believes is characteristic of the times: *"In 1968, I had spoken to the president of Harvard about parcels of land*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

they owned which might be acceptable sites for affordable housing. However, they weren't interested." After the '69 takeover of University Hall (a student protest), the attitude of Harvard administrators seemed to change. One concern of protesters was the lack of affordable housing. Brooks comments, "They said 'institutions are eating up the town, eroding the inventory of affordable housing. They (the Universities) have to do something.' I received a quick call from the Harvard College Board of Overseers at 1:00 one afternoon asking if I could suggest a plan for affordable housing for a meeting that evening. I got it together in a few hours, presented it, and they accepted it. It was built within 14 months, pretty fast in those days."

Many small activist groups formed to work on specific tasks. One group, Planning For People, formed in a local Unitarian Church to seek to mitigate increasing traffic congestion in Harvard Square. The group set up and maintained a pedestrian zone in the heart of the Square, Brattle Walk.

Another citizen group was an association formed during the 40s, "Neighborhood Ten," which monitored development in an upper-middle class district bordering historic Brattle

Street on the west side of Harvard Square. According to Martha Lawrence, a leader of Neighborhood Ten, the group was concerned with *"stores pushing out from Brattle Street"* into residential blocks and with hospital expansion. It published a newsletter to keep people informed. *"We were conscientious citizens."* Their stated policy toward the Library was *"a goal of welcoming the Library if it was not environmentally too impactful. The group kept focus on that."*

Another group concerned with development in Harvard Square was the Riverside-Cambridgeport Community Corporation, a CDC formed in a working class neighborhood. RCCC took a more radical, aggressive stance against development than did other groups; one of its actions was to demonstrate against University expansion at a Harvard commencement exercise. According to David Clem, a president of RCCC, the organization started with the efforts of neighborhood leaders like Sandra Graham, a black woman who later became a city councillor and state legislator. RCCC consisted of a coalition of working class residents, tenants, students and *"professionals interested in community empowerment, funded by the feds, coming out of Vietnam who considered themselves*

*change agents."*

One goal of RCCC was to safeguard the interests of lower-income homeowners and tenants in a real estate climate dominated by for-profit developers and the universities. Clem describes the attitude of residents toward Harvard University: *"Harvard was considered an ogre when it started moving into the poorest area of Riverside. There was no way that small property owners and tenants could compete with Harvard who could pay high prices."*

Clem says RCCC members perceived the Library as *"another deal struck by Kennedy and Harvard ...Harvard is [sic] going to impose this on Harvard Square without any consideration of impact on neighborhoods."*

The RCCC and Neighborhood Ten eventually formed a coalition, along with Neighborhood Nine and a Harvard faculty group, to monitor the plans for the Library complex.

In the mid-60s, the press began to report increased public scrutiny of Library plans. The Harvard Crimson of February 2, 1967 stated that I. M. Pei suggested a "coordinated

program to protect the Library and cushion the impact on Harvard Square." The article also quotes Connection, a Harvard graduate school architectural journal: "an endless chain of tour buses - 30 to 50 and up to 70" will visit the Library in a single hour during peak periods. On October 26, the Crimson stated that a planning task force was proposed by a city advisory council to "give Harvard Square back to the people, not to the automobiles," a proposal which eventually brought forth the Harvard Square Development Task Force which was to become the key forum for citizens to plan overall development in the Square. The alarm about automobiles became the battle cry of Library foes in the mid-70s.

A number of the people I interviewed claim that a great majority of working-class Cantabridgians - outside of RCCC - supported the Library despite these concerns. Mayor Sullivan believes that many of the supporters of Irish, Italian, and other ethnic extraction who felt an affinity for John Kennedy, were geographically dispersed away from Harvard Square - in East or North Cambridge - and not as mobilized to exert political pressure as were the direct abutters involved in Neighborhood Ten and RCCC. Sullivan believes the

constituency favoring the Library was so involved in making a living that they didn't have time to participate in an activist pro-Library effort. Furthermore, he says that people generally assumed that any disagreements about Library plans could be worked out by staff from the City, Harvard University and the Kennedy Library Corporation with representatives from the neighborhoods. The atmosphere was still genial in the early 70s.

#### CHANGING FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS IN THE LATE 60S AND EARLY 70S REGARDING SITING FACILITIES

But new federal regulations and processes were being created which would affect development of the Library in Cambridge. In January, 1970, President Nixon signed into law the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), aimed at making "federal agencies more responsive to environmental considerations and values, which had been too frequently neglected in governmental decision-making."<sup>5</sup>

Under NEPA, any development proposal by a Federal agency had

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<sup>5</sup> Roger C. Cramton, "Enforcing the National Environmental Policy Act in Federal Agencies," The Practical Lawyer, Vol. 18, No. 5, (May 1972): p. 80.

to "develop and use decision-making procedures that appropriately consider environmental as well as economic and technical factors."<sup>6</sup> The most significant procedural requirement of NEPA was the requirement in section 102(2)(C) that each agency prepare an environmental impact statement to be made available to other federal, state, and local agencies as well as the public and which had to "accompany the proposal through the existing agency review processes."<sup>7</sup> From this requirement was "inferred the concept of the draft impact statement which must be circulated and made public for comment prior to the final agency decision."<sup>8</sup> The preparation and results of the draft EIS for the Cambridge Library site were to eventually be the subject of rancorous debate and the undoing of the Kennedy Library's plan to locate in Cambridge.

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<sup>6</sup> Michael O'Hare, Lawrence Bacow, and Debra Sanderson, Facility Siting and Public Opposition (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Roger C. Cramton, "Enforcing the National Environmental Policy Act in Federal Agencies," *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.



**CAMBRIDGE SETS UP A CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP TO ASSIST  
PLANNING IN HARVARD SQUARE: THE HARVARD SQUARE DEVELOPMENT  
TASK FORCE**

On March 21, 1972, the City Manager appointed a sixteen member citizen group, the Harvard Square Development Task Force, to consider all phases of planning for the Harvard Square area. According to a memorandum from Oliver Brooks, who was later appointed chairperson, an important goal of the Task Force was "to assist in finding the answers to the problems created by the location of the Kennedy Library on the MBTA site and by the expected development pressures that would begin to emerge."<sup>9</sup>

Given that the MBTA yards would be vacated, attention could turn towards planning the growth the Library project was expected to spur. Brooks says in his interview that *"there was tremendous development pressure on Harvard Square with no tools to shape a set of helpful parameters for development.. it [the Task Force] gave us something more positive rather than a negative position regarding the*

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<sup>9</sup> Oliver Brooks, Chronology: Harvard Square Development Task Force and its Relationship to Kennedy Library Development, March, 1972 - Present, July 26, 1973, from Oliver Brooks' private papers.

*Library. Our mandate was to act as a representative of city interests to interface with Board of Trustees of the Kennedy Library Corporation. We also embarked on development of a Harvard Square study - preparation for land use suggestions and limitations which would be helpful for development of Harvard Square."*

*Brooks says, "we [the Task Force] didn't have much of any authority except advisory. It was citizen comment.... not an effort to represent all interest groups. The City Manager put together a group of people with interest in Harvard Square and could contribute. We would vote in new members to recommend to the City Manager."*

*However, underlying the Task Force wasn't really legitimate in the eyes of diverse interest groups in Cambridge. "It was predominately white upper-middle class.... really public service was the agenda, not representation, and that was a weakness. Politicians viewed it as another Brattle Street citizen involvement effort ... advocates for that point of view," which Brooks implies was more focused on protecting the interests of specific groups near Harvard Square than promoting the welfare of all people in Cambridge. The*

relationship with the Library Corporation also wasn't firmly established. Brooks recalls, "*the Library Corporation could have ignored us, and that would have had no legal consequences - just political.*" Rather, the Task Force's natural ally was the city's professional planning staff who were especially concerned about controlling the negative impacts of development.

In June, 1972, the Task Force forwarded a seven-page letter via the City Manager to the Library Corporation outlining its views on various issues related to the City and the Library, including specific recommendation for pedestrian access, widening border streets around the site, preserving sycamore trees along the Charles River, construction of an underground parking structure on the site and 1,000 - 1,500 more spaces nearby, and dedication of the related facilities component of the complex for residences. The Task Force wanted to establish a formal review process with the Library Corporation and initiate a discussion of requirements of the EIS.

Although the Task Force conducted occasional public meetings for citizen input, this wasn't seen as its primary

responsibility. Brooks says, *"at first, nobody calculated how high profile the issue would become."* Brooks remembers that at this time community and institutional representatives still assumed that differences about the Library development could be easily managed through friendly negotiation.

**CONCERN MOUNTS AMONG RESIDENTS ABOUT RELATED DEVELOPMENT IN HARVARD SQUARE AND THE LIBRARY AS A TOURIST INSTITUTION**

The newspaper headlines of the time highlight increasing community concern about speculation in Harvard Square related to the Library. A Harvard Crimson article reporting on the mood in April 1972 was titled, "the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Center and Harvard Square: At the Crossroads of Future Shock". Another article in the April 9, 1972 Boston Globe, "Kennedy Library Neighbors Howl Over Luxury Housing Plan," discusses rumors that the related facilities site might be given over to executive office space and luxury housing. A Harvard Vice President at the time, Hale Champion, was quoted in the article: "whatever is done is going to be worked out with the community, and if what's finally down on paper doesn't satisfy people, then it'll be

done again."

A proposal to build a 19-story Holiday Inn in Harvard Square inflamed resistance to the Library in the fall of 1972. Neighborhood Ten and a group called Human Scale mounted a petition drive to gather 10,000 signatures opposing the building. The Holiday Inn controversy drew the attention of the a New York Times article on September 27, which cited the worry of city planners that "individual developers, attracted by the expected tourist rush, will each go their own way without concern for an overall scheme, for traffic and pedestrian flow, physical problems, and the character of the historic Harvard Square area."

Some residents worried about negative impacts were raising complex questions about the proper scale and function of Presidential Libraries, and according to Oliver Brooks' notes, "the distinction between museum as a traffic generator and other programs."<sup>10</sup> Martha Lawrence, from Neighborhood Ten says, "*I took a trip and saw all the Presidential libraries. I was probably the world's greatest expert on Presidential libraries. Nobody knew much about*

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

them. We began an earnest effort to educate people about these libraries." She is adamant to this day that "presidential libraries were not put on earth to have museums. They were mandated to be scholarly little places." This description did not fit the concept that had evolved for the Kennedy Library.

Proponents of the Library derided Lawrence's point of view. Dan Fenn calls such criticism of the Kennedy Library plan "a piece of elitism... 'the fragility of Harvard Square,' ivy covered buildings and all that crap. They were really worried about Winnebagos and bermuda shorts."

Richard Neustadt defended the concept of a Presidential museum for the public in Harvard Square. "Some of us here (at the Corporation and at Harvard) deeply wanted the tourists. We wanted students to be surrounded by a flow of voters pressing their noses to the glass - a great antidote to Harvard snobbery. But this got no sympathy from the neighbors."

To explore these issues, the Task Force chaired a public meeting in November, 1972 at which Pei and other developers

presented details of their particular proposals. Pei supported an agreement to preserve perimeter land for circulation and traffic improvements to allay fears of residents.

However, solutions to traffic density and lack of parking were not readily at hand. In December, Pei submitted an analysis to the Task Force showing that underground parking on the Library site would be prohibitively expensive. Proposals to jointly construct and operate a parking structure with the City were also deemed impractical by the Library Corporation. Planners started looking at surface parking on the related facilities portion of the site, which could relieve parking problems but not provide the total number of spaces needed.

Another technical issue regarding traffic - estimation of attendance figures - caused much consternation. Musho says that *"one of the greatest mistakes, in retrospect, was conversations about projected visitation. They ranged from 200,000 to 1.5 million per year. For reasons difficult to fix on, 1 million got to be the number. For the life of me I cannot put my hand on why that number stayed emerged*

*(sic). We knew we would get 1% of projected yearly visitation on the highest day. And one half will show up between 11 and 5 p.m. If one million people visit a year, we'll get 10,000 people at that time with 1,700 cars - an unmitigated disaster. That was the hole at the bottom of the shaft and we were falling into it. We had shuttle buses, remote parking, an improved subway service, a taxi cab drop-off... (but) there was no way to solve problems convincingly ... the symbol overrode the facts."*

In 1973, the city administration, the Task Force, and the Library Corporation were enmeshed in the process of constructing a meaningful, mutually accountable relationship. The City Planning and Development Department submitted a memorandum enumerating issues still pending. Several weeks later the City Manager and Task Force "jointly released to newspapers a statement urging the activation of a formal design review process."<sup>11</sup> In April 1973, the City and Library Corporation reached a tentative understanding about a "subsequent effort to develop a document of agreement between the City and the Library, which would give some legal sanction and legal definition to the actual

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



process." <sup>12</sup> Finalizing such an agreement was never achieved, in part, because of the Library Corporation's reluctance to sanction authority to the Task Force, which had slowly solidified in opposition to Library plans.

#### **PEI'S PYRAMID DESIGN REINFORCES FEARS AMONG ACTIVISTS**

In May, 1973 a fateful public event occurred, an event which most of the interviewees note as a pivotal moment in the story. In consultation with leaders of the Library Corporation, Pei had been working in his New York office on the concept of the physical design of the Library. The design consisted of a crescent in a square, wrapped around a large open plaza containing a public pavilion -an 85 foot-high truncated glass pyramid. Figure 4 is a rendering of the original design accompanied by the headline from the Christian Science Monitor. The complex also contained two 400 seat movie theaters.

When Pei publicly displayed the model in Cambridge, community observers were alarmed. The scale and design seemed grandiose and tourist-oriented. Sandra Graham

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

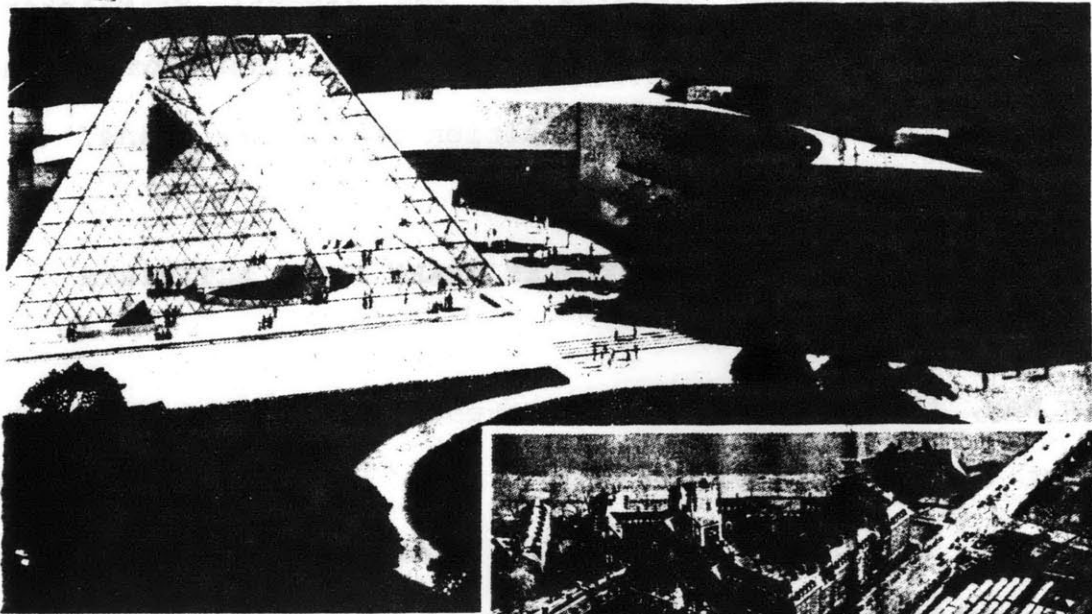
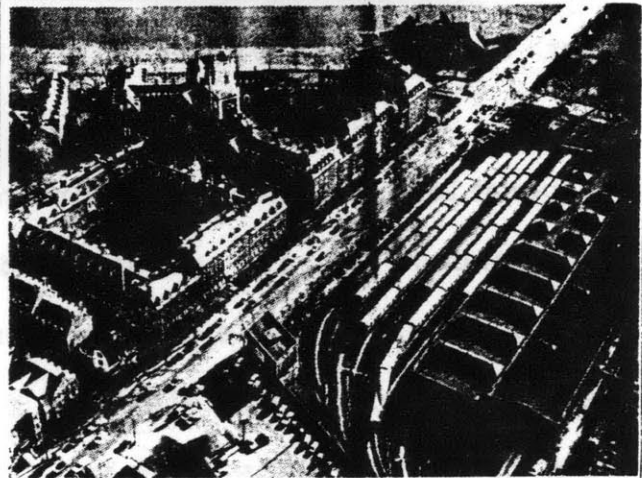


Photo by Barth J. Falkenberg, staff photographer

tomorrow's concept and today's reality

... of Kennedy Memorial Library by I. M. Pei & Partners, architects, features glass pavilion housing museum. But MBTA (right) continues to occupy site as local objections delay of long-planned project.



## Kennedy library controversies swirl

By Stephen Webbe  
Staff writer of  
Christian Science Monitor

Cambridge, Mass.

Opponents forecast hordes of tourists;  
doubts voiced about environmental study

architects, engineers, and plan  
with headquarters in Providence,  
— to prepare an objective EIS in  
wake of allegations that it acted

Figure 4: Pei's original pyramid design for the Library.

from the Christian Science Monitor, March 27, 1974.

strongly objected to the design: "we almost passed out when we saw the model... a glass memorabilia with his (Kennedy's) P.T. boat, with one million people. It was frightening." Ted Musho recalls, "I had to go to D.C. to work on something and I phoned back to find out the reaction (from the public). 'This is not a Library. This is a public monument. You bastards lied to us.' We were looking at a precipice. The next five years we worked on alternative solutions."

Musho believes that fears of opponents were so reinforced by their negative impression of this design, that Pei's earnest attempts to respond were discounted. "We later looked at the Library, only with a simpler glass box as a structure. The community still wouldn't take it. Dave Powers [Director of the Library] said, 'you can put that coconut [upon which Kennedy had written an SOS when he was shipwrecked in World War II] in a room and people would come to see it' So that makes it a museum?"

Oliver Brooks, by then chairperson of the Harvard Square Development Task Force, described in a memorandum the

emerging conviction of some Cambridge residents that the museum should be separated from the Library, an alternative to Pei's concept around which residents increasingly rallied. His notes from May 22 say that a "public meeting of upwards of 200 is held at the St. Paul's Church School....[there is] a rather strong reaction from citizens .... about the Library development. There seems to be substantial sentiment which would favor an excision of the Museum itself ... with the hope that this facility could somehow be relocated into a less-congested and more appropriate area." <sup>13</sup>

It was the surfacing of an actual design that solidified adversarial relationships concerning the Library. Many local residents either supported or were ambivalent about the concept of the Library in Harvard Square. However, the specific form and monumental size of Pei's design stimulated their fears about the Library and pushed those on the fence into the camp of Library opponents. Brooks remembers that even the *"Task Force, originally seen as an intermediary, eventually became an advocate against the Library as proposed. We got into an adversarial relationship with the*

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

*Library because the majority of Task Force members felt the museum was a tourist attraction. We increasingly developed a feeling we weren't being taken seriously."*

Private meetings between Library planners, the Task Force and community groups had been cordial. But by the late spring, 1973, even the Boston Globe which had always strongly supported the Library, criticized Library officials as "evasive" and unwilling to acknowledge "community reaction."<sup>14</sup> The editorial urged more candor. A private meeting with Senator Edward Kennedy and leaders of the opposition was not successful in mending fences. David Clem attended the meeting on behalf of RCCC and says that "*the Senator's office played an uncharacteristic role. Senator Kennedy was extremely put out and condescending, and this galvanized the opposition.*"

#### **THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT BECOMES A NEW FOCUS OF CONTENTION**

Next the Environmental Impact Statement became a new focal point of contentious struggle. The Library Corporation had

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<sup>14</sup> Boston Globe, June 11, 1973.

questioned whether an EIS was even required of them, alienating community activists. Paul Lawrence, a member of Neighborhood Ten, recalls that *"the EIS was a new thing. It was murky as to who had to do it... we had to nudge them [the Library Corporation and General Services Administration who would own the facility upon completion] into recognizing it [the EIS] was their obligation."* Harvard University, the other principal developer, agreed to the need for an EIS. Richard Neustadt says that *"Bok [the Harvard President], who was new, didn't stand firm. He endorsed the need for an EIS, and [introducing this requirement into the process] meant considerable delay."*

In June, 1973 the Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced his conclusion that an EIS was a fundamental requirement for the Kennedy Library development. The General Services Administration would be responsible for preparing the EIS.

Over the summer and into the early fall of 1973, the GSA developed a preliminary draft scope of work for the EIS. After reviewing the scope, in October the Task Force criticized the draft as in "substantial noncompliance" with

NEPA along several dimensions. In their view the scope was incomplete and insufficient, prejudicial, ignored the additional impact of the Museum as a tourist attraction beyond its impact as an academic facility, and failed to provide public hearings.<sup>15</sup>

By December 1973, the GSA rewrote sections of the EIS scope and incorporated recommendations from the Task Force to answer local concerns about the EIS's depth of analysis regarding socio-economic impacts of tourism. These revisions in the scope include:

- a section regarding impact on low-income populations;
- a section on psychological, physical, and sociological impact of visitors on those who live in the area;
- a section on the ecology of the Charles River;
- using unbiased wording, for instance, changing "justification for parking solution" to "parking considerations;"
- adding a broader range of concerned citizen groups whose input would be consulted concerning Library plans;
- adding a section about development on the "related facilities" site which was targeted for eventual commercial

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<sup>15</sup> Harvard Crimson, October 19, 1973.

development;

- omitting mention of the Kennedy Library's relation to public schools to avoid bias toward the Library;
- adding a section analyzing Library's conformance to federal, state, and local land use planning.<sup>16</sup>

In February, 1974, the consulting firm of C.E. Maguire, Inc. was selected by the GSA as a consultant to assist in the preparation of the EIS. The selection of this firm raised another firestorm of disagreement. The Cambridge Chronicle reported that five groups called for an investigation of this firm because of allegations the firm had changed its recommendations in an earlier EIS because of political pressure.<sup>17</sup> These groups accused Maguire, Inc. of being a "highway-oriented, politically staffed firm," implying that the Library Corporation could exert similar political pressure on the company. Although the firm was retained by the GSA, the pitch of distrust heightened.

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<sup>16</sup> Harvard Crimson, December 5, 1973.

<sup>17</sup> Cambridge Chronicle, February, 1974.



**EVEN WITH DESIGN CHANGES FROM PEI, THE POSSIBILITY FOR  
NEGOTIATING A MIDDLE GROUND DIMINISHES**

Responding to negative community reaction and increasing costs of construction, Pei reduced the scale of his original design. On June 7, 1974, a new design was unveiled for the Library. This more modest five-story brick structure was about one-third smaller in bulk and about half the height of the original. The movie theaters were replaced by one 200 seat auditorium. There were nine educational exhibits, including, "A Day in the Life of a President," and "Death and Legacy." The related facilities area was designated for surface parking. Additional parking was planned at a site near the Massachusetts Turnpike exit in Allston.

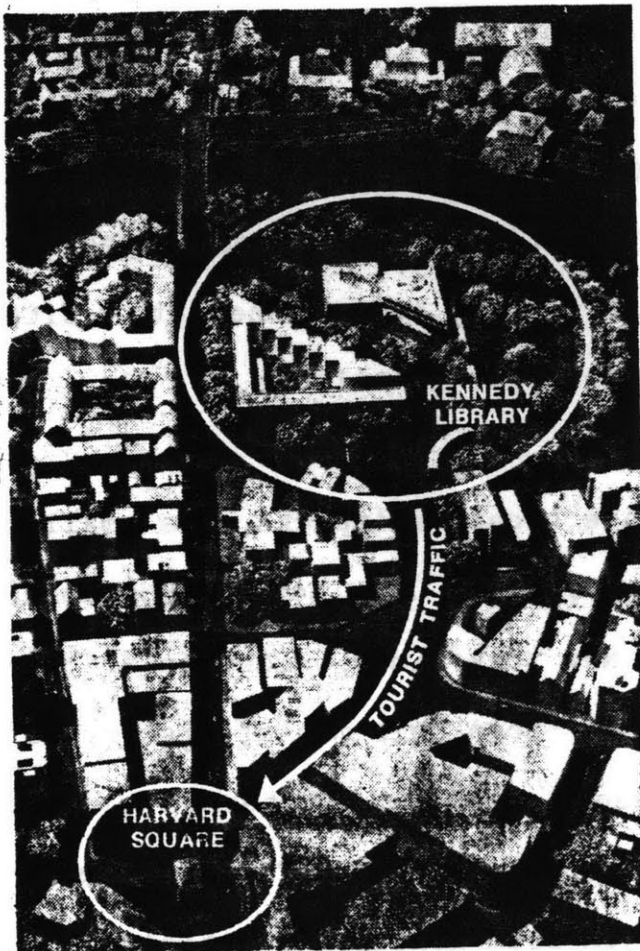
Despite its effort to mitigate negative impacts, the smaller design failed to blunt opposition. Ada Louise Huxtable, architectural critic of the New York Times, wrote an article critical of the whole program: "does this man of history, of grace, wit and tragic legend, need to be turned into a tourist attraction and status sideshow?"<sup>18</sup> Figure 5 is an illustration of the new design from Huxtable's article in

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<sup>18</sup> New York Times, June 16, 1974.

# What's a Tourist Attraction Like The Kennedy Library Doing in a Nice Neighborhood Like This?

Figure 5:  
Pei's reduced design  
from the New York Times  
of June 16, 1974.



*The Kennedy Library may loose a stampede of Middle American tourists in Harvard Square 'like Goths overwhelming the intelligentsia.'*

the New York Times. It's clear that the Library Corporation was trying to honestly mitigate some of the negative impacts of traffic and design. But by this time, the resistance to earlier plans had taken on a momentum of its own that would be difficult to stop.

Two polls were commissioned to take the public pulse, one sponsored by the Library Corporation and the other by opponents. Although neither could claim a high level of scientific accuracy, each indicated ambivalence among Cambridge citizens regarding the Library. A group of Cambridge residents organized themselves as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library Committee to support the Library. Stewart describes the grim determination of Library Corporation members: *"the attitude to 'fight it and we will win.. we will persevere... we'll convince people it's a safe project.'"*

**NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE EIS DRAFT IS IMMEDIATE AND  
OUTSPOKEN**

After several delays, the EIS draft was released on January 6, 1975. The 600 page study stated that the Library would have "negligible impact" on parking, air and noise pollution, and vehicular and pedestrian traffic. A 60 day period was set aside for comment from interested parties. The GSA scheduled a public hearing for February 10.

The EIS had been conducted in a volatile situation where participants in the siting process were not in agreement about the procedures that one was to follow under this new legislation. These doubts combined with the draft's conclusions aroused the wrath of anti-Library residents. Robert Moncrief, active in Cambridge civic affairs during this period and a supporter of the Library, vividly remembers how the draft EIS affected the mood of opponents. *"Shortly after the EIS was published there was a big public meeting at the Peabody School and I was asked to debate a member of the Harvard Law School faculty critical of the project. But it was really in the nature of a lynching. I thought that the EIS met concerns in a persuasive way....but I felt I was*

*the only one in the room who'd actually read it."*

The Task Force also greeted the EIS with skepticism. Brooks was quoted in a Globe article that he would not comment on the report until it "has been evaluated in a very sensible and nonbiased way... we want to get full assurances that a fair study has been done... (but) I don't think any reasonable man will accept that the library will have no impact on Harvard Square." <sup>19</sup>

Events were coming to a swift conclusion in Cambridge. According to the Harvard Crimson of January 13, Neighborhood Ten "requested in federal court a postponement of all proceedings on the draft impact statement until the GSA grants access to the background information of its report.... based on the Freedom of Information Act." A leader of Neighborhood Ten, Paul Lawrence, signals the determination of opponents in this quote from the article: "we think the whole spirit of Environmental Protection Administration procedure is to have the public make the decision." The request for data in court and his militant interpretation of the procedure must surely have

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<sup>19</sup> Boston Globe, January 7, 1975.

demonstrated to Library proponents how resolute their opponents really were.

Shortly after the draft was issued, allegations of tampering on the part of the Library Corporation reinforced opponents' suspicions. A local Cambridge firm was subcontracted by C.E. MacGuire, Inc. to complete a study of socio-economic impacts and, I have been told by a number of sources, submitted a draft of 250 pages containing criticisms of the Library project. However, this portion of the draft was boiled down to three pages. Newspaper articles reported that Steve Smith had screened several chapters of the draft EIS before it was published.

David Clem was also quoted in the Crimson article referring to the rumor of tampering: "it's such an obvious whitewash that it boggles the mind." Today, Clem says that *"the Maquire EIS was dubious and it became clear that some results ...had been pre-screened and edited out to prevent damage. It [the draft] was sent for review to Smith and solicited his comments and modified (sic). MacGuire acknowledged this."*

On January 15, the Task Force issued a Comprehensive Policy Plan for Harvard Square which, according to the Cambridge Chronicle, supported the "separation of the John F. Kennedy Library-Museum from the Library archives, the Institute for Politics, and School of Government... developing Harvard Square as 'people-oriented' rather than 'tourist-oriented.'"

Broader public opinion turned against the Library Corporation because of perceived Library machinations and the "negligible impact" judgement of the draft. A Boston Globe editorial of January 21 slammed the draft statement as "contradictory in its facts and clearly slanted toward a pre-ordained conclusion ... [the draft] threatens to discredit the whole process of environmental impact statements and further delay the construction of any memorial to the most charismatic President this country has had in this century."

#### **LEADERS OF THE LIBRARY CORPORATION FACE A CRUCIAL DECISION**

The Library Corporation had to decide whether to fight to keep the whole complex in Cambridge; to keep the archives at Harvard and move the museum elsewhere; or to keep the

Library in one piece and move elsewhere.

Musho recalls that during this period *"the self-examination was a real agony. We felt we couldn't live there [in Harvard Square] because they wouldn't give up. It was an agony chiseling away at somebody's resistance. We sensed, we either jump or see it through. It was slow, agonizing, deliberate."* Dan Fenn described his outrage at that time: *"Opponents wanted to split the archives and museum, but it's not their institution. They're elitist, and this would destroy the institution."*

After this period of deliberation, on February 6, Smith announced, "the museum will not be built in Cambridge." A Boston Globe article on February 7 quotes Smith's statement: "There are people in Cambridge passionately opposed to the library complex. Why build it when certain people will be embittered and resentful? I guess idealism isn't possible anymore... The threat of lawsuits, which could take anywhere from one to five years in court, is not a happy prospect. The draft EIS indicates that the project's negative impacts would be small and manageable.... costs have increased by over 120 percent and each year's delay means an additional



15 percent in escalation of construction costs. We cannot afford any more delays." Yet, a split site was still a "basic alternative," according to Smith.

If the Archives had remained in Cambridge and museum had moved elsewhere, the Library Corporation could have maintained a connection to Harvard University. The University, Task Force, and Neighborhood Ten came out in support of this plan. Musho mentions "*a scheme for D.C., a museum in the lower level of the Kennedy Center [For the Arts]. We were very close to doing so. The archives would stay at Harvard University. It was a hot idea. But at a board meeting it was put down: 'you're going to build in a basement?'*" But those in the Library Corporation wishing to keep the institution intact prevailed and the decision was made to move both Museum and Archives to a site outside of Cambridge.

Representatives from the Library Corporation and other interviewees now suggest that a combination of other reasons also drove the Library Corporation's decision to drop the MBTA site. First, it had been well over a decade since the President had died. It was impossible to tell how long it

would take to resolve Neighborhood Ten's lawsuit or what the outcome would be. Perhaps Steve Smith had interfered with the EIS process in some way and was reluctant to allow his actions to be brought into the public eye. So there was a sense of exhaustion and with no easy relief in sight, given the determination of opponents like the Lawrences. Possibly the fact that Lyndon Johnson's Library in Austin was already built and running irked the Kennedys and influenced them to seek a faster, easier solution.

In addition to being pushed out of Cambridge, the Library was being pulled by new opportunities elsewhere in the state. Stewart says that *"when a decision was made to scrap the site, the Kennedy Library Corporation was flooded with alternative site proposals from all over Massachusetts. Our criteria were that it be a beautiful site, approximately 12 acres, near a university, and accessible to one million people."* Sites were considered at Quincy Market, the Charlestown Navy Yard, Barnstable, in Falmouth, in Amherst, and at Columbia Point in Dorchester.

Musho says, *"when we gave our first presentation in Dorchester they were delighted to see us - a real welcome*

*from the neighborhood..there were virtues we hadn't seen which were extraordinary - the water's edge."* The site at Columbia Point, Dorchester was on the tip of a peninsula with a dramatic view of downtown Boston and the harbor. There was plenty of room for parking. The Archives and Museum were eventually located at this site near the University of Massachusetts, Columbia Point, only about five miles from the former MBTA yards in Cambridge.

In Cambridge, the City Council transferred control of the Harvard Square Development Task Force from the city manager to the Mayor's Office on January 12, a political move to discipline the Task Force which the traditional political establishment believed had ruined the opportunity to have the Library in Cambridge. Mayor Sullivan appointed twelve new members to the Task Force, all proponents of the Library. The Task Force continued to work with professional staff on a plan for Harvard Square and having completed that work, was disbanded later in 1976.

## **CARRYING OVER TO THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM**

In Cambridge, one finds a protracted, complicated struggle the outcome of which really didn't satisfy most of the participants in the process, neither proponents or opponents of the Library. Paul Lawrence, from Neighborhood Ten, still feels a compromise could have been worked out. Sandra Graham felt betrayed by erstwhile ally Neighborhood Ten which supported an alternative site for the Library in Allston, even though traffic at the site near Graham's neighborhood and would have had produced considerable negative impacts. Oliver Brooks regrets that the Harvard Square Development Task Force became so caught up in the controversy that it was never able to broker a compromise. Harvard University lost an opportunity to associate its Kennedy School of Government with a Presidential Library. Library proponents realize that although the current location in Dorchester offers certain advantages, the facility is utilized but a fraction of what would have been possible in the Harvard Square location.

Powerful, non-profit institutions trying to site what many citizens considered an attractive amenity were pushed out of

Cambridge by a small group of opponents. According to Oliver Brooks, the Task Force was created in a genial, rational spirit to coordinate residents, city government, and developers in the review process. However, as debate intensified and positions hardened, negotiations became a free-for-all between participants. The Task Force, itself, became immersed in the schism that engulfed opponents and proponents of the Library. The years of conflict left many people embittered.

Twenty years later, the effort to site the New England Aquarium in Charlestown has encountered many of the same controversies which beset the Kennedy Library in Cambridge. This happened despite the fact that citizen review was a more public, formalized process in which attention was given to avoiding the procedural errors of the past. The next part of Chapter Two examines the important events of the Aquarium siting process in Charlestown.

## **THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM AND THE CHARLESTOWN NAVY YARD**

In this section I begin with an account of the early history of urban renewal on Boston's waterfront and in Charlestown. This section also briefly depicts the establishment of the Aquarium in Boston's inner harbor. In addition, I describe the changing functional and physical environment of the Charlestown Navy Yard. These narratives converge in the story of the New England Aquarium's efforts to site a new facility first at Dry Dock #2 and now at Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

### **EARLY HISTORY OF THE BOSTON WATERFRONT**

Boston's wealth has traditionally been associated with its waterfront. Merchants always created value in the coves, peninsulas, and muddy flats around the harbor. Whether it was fishing or commerce, artisans gathered near industry to provide necessary implements or machinery.<sup>1</sup> Many of the most entrepreneurial merchants moved from trade into banking

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Ferguson and Helen F. Ladd, "Massachusetts: State Economic Resurgence," in The New Economic Role of American States, R. Scott Fosler, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 21.

and manufacturing, accumulating an endowment of capital that could be used in yet other commercial ventures.

Activity around the water was also stimulated by public involvement. The first public pier was constructed in 1631. The Naval Shipyard at Charlestown was founded in 1800 as one of the Federal Government's primary staging areas for naval repair, construction, and technological innovation. Many of the artisans and skilled laborers who serviced the Yard's industries lived in nearby Charlestown. Figure 6 is a location map of the Navy Yard in Boston harbor.

Activity in the harbor peaked about forty years ago. Then it began to decline as older water-oriented industries closed down. The attrition of the Navy Yard after World War II, when many of its functions were moved to other locations, and the trauma of federally-mandated busing to integrate public schools, had such a negative impact on Charlestown that its population dropped from 31,332 in 1950 to about 13,500 today.

The Federal government, recognizing the decline of older parts of cities, passed the National Housing Act in 1949

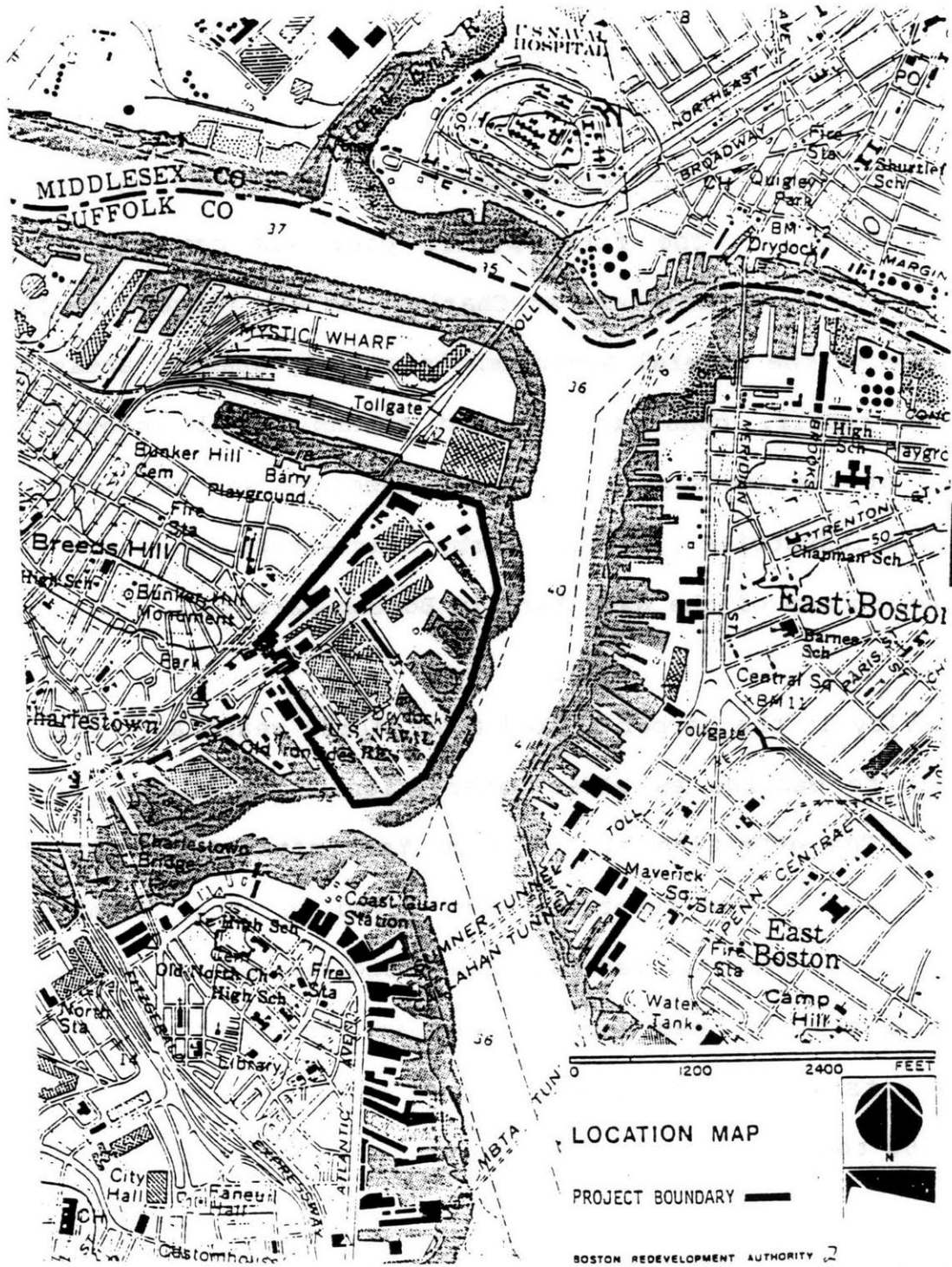


Figure 6: location map of the Navy Yard.



making urban renewal funds available to local communities which, in order to qualify, would have to submit long-term redevelopment plans. The Federal government would supply 2/3 of the cost of site preparation for cities to acquire and clear slum lands. With these slums gone, cities could then provide infrastructure, tax abatements, and whatever else was needed to lure profitable reinvestment. In Massachusetts, the state provided 1/6 of the cost; the city another 1/6th. In 1954, the urban renewal program was changed to also include rehabilitation.

Despite Federal programs supporting renewal, it was difficult to mobilize the city's financial and political capacity to take advantage of urban renewal in the waterfront. No private or public organization yet had the resources to take such a risk. In the private sector, investors were hesitant to get involved because of the expense and danger: thirteen foot tides caused such massive decay of piers and hazardous working conditions that reconstruction was very expensive. Also, explosive growth of Boston suburbs made other investments much more attractive.

John Collins was elected Mayor of Boston in 1960, upsetting a heavily favored candidate. He appointed Ed Logue as Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). These two leaders catalyzed renewal in Boston's waterfront. According to Collins, "nothing had been built in Boston in 35 years. 65% of the housing stock was substandard and the downtown was dilapidated. The waterfront literally was falling into the water and consisted of rotting shacks and wharves. A small railroad blocked downtown from Atlantic Avenue. Scollay Square existed where Government Center is now and consisted of flophouses and cheap show places and was really dirty.

"Ed Logue and I developed a comprehensive plan to redevelop the city which rewrote urban renewal for the whole country. The prevailing law said that you must have total clearance and phased rebuilding like what happened in the West End in '57. They built one building, and when 75% of that was leased they could build another. They tore down a complete neighborhood, and I decided as mayor I could never allow that to happen again." His rather benign interpretation of what happened during renewal isn't really corroborated in the case of Charlestown, where strong local resistance

forced the BRA to scale down the amount of clearance originally proposed for that neighborhood.

Collins' administration initiated changes in the renewal process. *"We rewrote the law from total clearance to a new concept which included rehabilitation, early land acquisition, spot clearance, and clever use of local contribution to costs. We had no money and worked it this way: the only expense for us in government center was substituting long term construction costs for the city's share of the cost... also, building schools in Charlestown and other neighborhoods."*

Plans for the inner harbor were, *"to open and rebuild the waterfront and create public access; and to rebuild government center. I wanted a continuum from the old state house across a relocated Atlantic Avenue to the water always preserved for pedestrians."* Some of the broad objectives of that early plan were:

1. to open the city to the sea,
2. to reinforce neighboring districts,
3. to preserve historic buildings,
4. to create a waterfront residential community,

5. to increase visitor traffic to the city, and
6. to strengthen the city's economy through investment and increased taxes.

These same principles guide the BRA's actions in the Charlestown Navy Yard, today.

#### **THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM IN THE INNER HARBOR**

The City of Boston needed an anchor institution in the waterfront, an attractive destination for the public. Collins: *"you have to realize that nobody was anxious to build anything. I knew we needed something along the [proposed] waterfront which was marine related and people intensive. The trustees of the [New England] Aquarium approached me [around 1965] wanting to build an Aquarium which they would build with privately raised money. I felt this was a good use of public land given appropriate constraints."*

An interviewee formerly associated with the Aquarium related how the non-profit institution originated as the domain of a small group of dynamic hobbyists. *"The early Aquarium was in the building where Bonwit Teller used to be, as part of*

the Natural History Museum. In the 50s the Aquarium moved to City Point where it consisted mainly of little fishbowls. Then in the mid-60s, these five entrepreneurial guys - stockbrokers, venture capitalists, sportsmen - said, 'we've got to have a real Aquarium.' They figured out that Central Wharf was available and struck a deal with the city which became a model for development everywhere. The Aquarium opened in 1969 to one million visitors. It was built to accomodate 600,000. The day it opened the Aquarium was overcrowded." Given this overwhelming success, the Trustees immediately began to think of ways to expand Discovery, a floating exhibit and meeting facility.

Renewal around Boston's inner harbor was very successful. It is a popular mix of tourist destinations, condominiums, and offices. One of the original pioneers on the waterfront, the Aquarium owns Central Wharf, a valuable piece of property. If the Aquarium is able to obtain a site for a new facility in the Charlestown Navy Yard, it must sell this property for funds to capitalize construction.

## URBAN RENEWAL IN CHARLESTOWN

The current effort by the Aquarium to relocate in the Navy Yard fits into a longer, often controversial, history of urban renewal in Charlestown. By looking more closely at past attempts to redevelop Charlestown, we can better understand the debate concerning development in the Yard over the past few years.

People in Charlestown have always had a strong sense of "turf," a strong identification with home. This attachment was powerful thirty years ago when the population consisted primarily of working-class Irish families. The Town is only about a mile square and is separated from the city by roads, water, and industry. In his book about the original urban renewal effort in the 60s, The Rehabilitation Planning Game, Langley Keyes explains that the fundamental motive among Charlestown residents during urban renewal was "*a positive attachment to the Town itself and its way of life*" as an urban enclave.<sup>2</sup> This motive still drives residents in the Town, today.

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<sup>2</sup> Langley Carleton Keyes, Jr., The Rehabilitation Planning Game, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), p. 132.

Because they have seen Charlestown borders encroached upon by public housing and highway construction, many residents are wary about intervention from private developers, politicians, and government professionals. Outside expertise is often greeted with skepticism. One interviewee from Charlestown described the attitude: *"if somebody comes into Charlestown and says 'I'm an expert and I've got a great plan for you' people raise their eyebrows and say, 'Oh, Yeah?'"*

Charlestown residents in the early 60s experienced some of the same impulses for citizen involvement that affected Cambridge. In 1960, a grassroots volunteer group of citizens, Self-Help Organization Charlestown (SHOC), had formed independently of government. SHOC promoted rubbish drives, cleaned up vacant lots, pressured City Hall to provide trucks for hauling away trash, blocked a liquor license, and sponsored teen canteens and block dances. In the beginning of the renewal process, the BRA approached this organization to form a leadership team for discussing details of redevelopment in Charlestown.

The early relationship between planners and residents was marked by an era of good feelings. Despite vociferous debate in public meetings, bargaining between the BRA representative, Dick Green, and residents went forward. Later, as Langley Keyes chronicles, the BRA replaced Green with a more autocratic planner uncomfortable with the aggressive, political Townie style. Furthermore, certain interest groups in Charlestown made it know they did not feel represented by SHOC.

#### **THE ISSUE OF URBAN RENEWAL POLARIZES CHARLESTOWN**

To answer these issues, BRA officials decided to promote an umbrella advisory group, a Federation, a broader cross-section of interest groups in Charlestown. However, a faction of business leaders and clergy gained control of the Federation and cut SHOC out of negotiations with the BRA. In reaction to these tactics, a group of outspoken opponents to BRA plans was able to gain control of SHOC. Moreover, Town residents expressed discontent over the BRA's process for creating plans and presenting them to the community.



A tense period of political maneuvering and highly dramatic public meetings followed. Arthur Walsh, a lifelong resident of Charlestown, remembers a meeting which "became a real screaming contest. One of the women threw her shoe at the stage. A gang formed a car parade blowing their horns on Bunker Hill Street, against urban renewal - 'Remember the West End.' Cousins turned against cousins."

After a number of these confrontational open meetings, the Director of the BRA, Ed Logue, changed BRA tactics in the spring of 1963 in an effort to pick up enough support to override the show of SHOC support at public hearings. During the next two years, the BRA opened up a Home Improvement Center in Charlestown to help residents with rehabilitation, architecture, and financial requirements. The BRA also conducted hundreds of small meetings, block by block.

In the spring of 1965, federal funds were guaranteed from the Urban Renewal Administration for removing an eyesore, the elevated train on Main Street; the Federation had mounted a successful petition drive supporting renewal; and a new multi-service center, the John F. Kennedy Family

Service Center, was about to open. The time seemed right to obtain broader community approval for a renewal plan.

On March 14, a public meeting in the National Guard Armory attracted about 2,800 people. For about an hour the meeting was orderly. Then, after an emotional speech by a SHOC leader, the meeting broke into pandemonium. Despite protests, a hand vote was hurriedly taken to approve or disapprove renewal plans. Estimates from several newspapers claim that renewal proponents triumphed at about a three to one margin.

This conflict between various factions to win the hearts and minds of Charlestown citizens, and the dramatic public meeting which resulted, foreshadows events during the Aquarium's effort to obtain a site at Dry Dock #2 in the same way that development controversies in Cambridge foreshadowed events concerning the Library.

#### **OUTCOMES OF EARLY URBAN RENEWAL IN CHARLESTOWN**

The results of this five-year bargaining process are described by Keyes: "The combination of a vocal, often

scathingly articulate, opposition and of a shaky coalition of proponents, who themselves placed specific demands on the BRA, produced a plan that made a serious effort to preserve the fabric of the entire Charlestown community."<sup>3</sup>

Arthur Walsh recalls an important outcome of renewal. *"They took down the elevated train on Main Street. This eliminated an incredible amount of noise and dirt, a real shot in the arm the Town needed to have. The politicians had promised this in my generation and generations before."*

The BRA also made an important concession regarding redevelopment of land where a prison stood, an institution which had always cast an oppressive shadow on Charlestown because it had been for executions. Walsh recalls how *"the lights went dim in Charlestown when they pulled the switch."* The original renewal plan included tearing down the prison and replacing it with an industrial park. However, after much lobbying by the BRA and Townies, the Bunker Hill Community College was constructed there. In 1973, the College was welcomed as an important resource to the Town's youth. But all these changes were achieved only after long

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 135.

and bitter struggle.

## **NEW GROUPS EMERGE TO REPRESENT VARIOUS INTERESTS IN CHARLESTOWN**

During the late 60s, residents established new organizations to monitor and guide development. Middle-class newcomers were attracted to Charlestown because of its neighborhood feeling, proximity to downtown Boston, and beautiful, relatively cheap housing. Some newcomers became community activists and helped to form the Charlestown Historical Preservation Society. Kathryn Downing, a leader of the Society, points out some of the issues the group confronted. *"The shopping center is a product of urban renewal, but it turns its back on Main Street and looks like a suburban shopping mall. Buildings of architectural merit were there, a Baptist church, which got torn down. In 1967 they [developers] wanted to tear down the Hurd House, Wiley House, Warren Tavern."* The Historical Preservation Society organized residents *"to save buildings, put in benches, trees, gaslights, tying it together so it makes visual, historical sense with respect."*

Townies have been active in lobbying for affordable housing and give heavy support to organizations like the Boys Club. Their interest focuses on building social and cultural networks which maintain Charlestown as a family-centered neighborhood.

In any discussion of the course of urban renewal and development in Charlestown, one must consider the trauma of forced busing in the mid-70s. The era of resistance to busing demonstrated the depth to which a number of people in Charlestown believe in a powerful "group" identity, a neighborhood cohesion difficult for non-residents to understand. This identity often becomes most apparent to outsiders only when residents take action because of a perceived threat against its way of life by forces Charlestown can't control.

#### **THE NAVY YARD: A SOURCE OF JOBS FOR CHARLESTOWN**

An important focus of development in Charlestown today is the Navy Yard. In the past, the Navy Yard was a significant resource to the Charlestown community. At one time many Charlestown residents worked in or derived income from

business related to the Navy Yard. Arthur Walsh remembers the bustle around the Navy Yard, when "City Square [an important commercial and political intersection near the Yard] was once a mecca for the Navy. Chelsea Street [bordering the Yard] was geared to sailors and longshoremen - barrooms, navy stores, cigarette stores, a movie theater "Hollywood," the night club 'Jacks's,' an afterhours place. It was a tough street."

Within the Yard, industrial maritime work was an important source of income but difficult and dangerous. One interviewee told me, "My father worked in Dry Dock 2. He choked down there. If you were in long shore and got stuck in #2 you wondered how to get out."

#### **THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE NAVY YARD**

The Yard has always been physically separated from Charlestown. But in recent decades it has been psychically separated, as well. Bassim Halabi, a BRA architect, describes how the Navy Yard is currently "separated by a wall, and looks upper class, high income. It's intimidating even though there is public access."

This separation is reinforced at the downtown end of the Navy Yard by construction of the Central Artery North Area, a helter-skelter, confusing series of lights and temporary roads nearly impossible to decipher. Also forming a barrier between Charlestown and the Navy Yard are stanchions of the Tobin Memorial Bridge which tower over a no-man's land underneath littered with garbage, weeds, construction materials, and rubble. To reach Gate 4 from Charlestown, one also must cross Chelsea Street, a four lane road down which automobiles and trucks often barrel at high speed. Figure 7 includes an aerial photo of the Navy Yard and a ground level photo of Chelsea Street.

On the other side of Chelsea Street stands the wall Halabi mentions, a 2,400 foot length of granite surrounding the Yard. Within the Yard, the narrow 1,350 foot granite Rope Walk Building, where rope was manufactured for the Navy, runs parallel to the wall. Clearly, the boundary between Yard and Town is not a friendly one to either automobiles or pedestrians and is an obstacle to more intensive development.

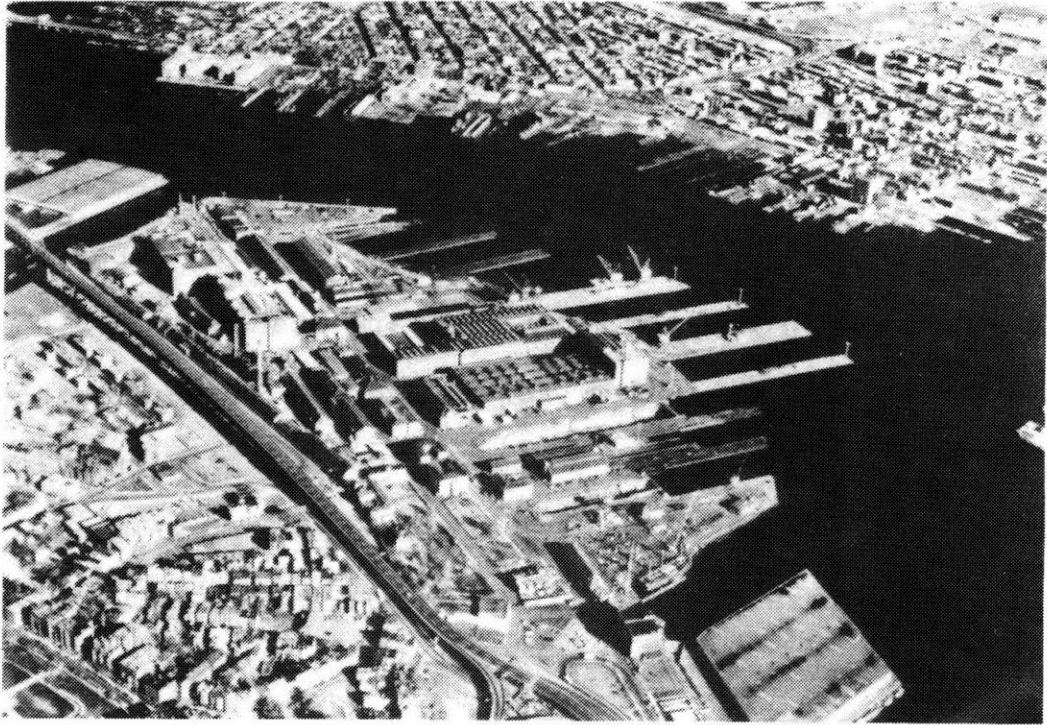


Figure 7: *above*, an aerial photo of the Navy Yard; *below*, a ground-level photo of Chelsea Street, the granite wall, and the Rope Walk Building across from Gate 4.



Today, the atmosphere within the Navy Yard is different from any other in Boston. Entering from Gate 4, it becomes clear how the Yard turns its back to Charlestown, its face basking in light reflected from sky and water. The streets, laid out in a simple grid pattern, are quiet and spacious with little traffic. Carefully manicured lawns and shrubs frame restored buildings of polished brick and granite. Because of rules governing historic preservation, signage is discreet. One can easily imagine how a popular destination like the Aquarium, in combination with other attractions, would radically alter the personality of the Navy Yard, creating a much busier, festive atmosphere. According to the BRA's plans, Second Avenue, a pedestrian axis running from Gate 4 to Yard's End, could some day be developed as a retail/commercial mall similar to Quincy Market, a "festival marketplace" near Boston's inner harbor. Figure 9 includes a photo of the Second Avenue view corridor as it is today and what the BRA imagines it will look like when the Navy Yard is more developed.

As one walks the streets further out towards Yards End in the north, human activity becomes less evident and empty, dilapidated buildings more common. At Dry Dock #5 the



Figure 8: *above*, a photo of Second Avenue today; *below*, a BRA rendering of the view corridor as a pedestrian mall.

concrete pier crumbles and twisted metal structures rust. A few workers sit in parked vehicles, eating their lunch and looking across the water to East Boston.

Finding the water, one comes to a wooden walkway, part of a pedestrian path, Harborwalk, bordering Boston Harbor. This walkway winds around the outer edge of the Navy Yard. Pleasure boats pitch slightly in their moorings. Arriving back near the starting point at Gate 4, one reaches Shipyard Park, a gently sloping meadow leading down to the spacious expanse of flooded Dry Dock #2, the site originally proposed by the Aquarium and BRA for the new Aquarium. Photos of Dry Dock #2 are included in Figure 9. Abutting Dry Dock #2 on the west is the National Park containing Dry Dock #1, one of the two oldest in the country. At berth in #1 near the Park Service museum is the U.S.S. Constitution, and the World War II destroyer Cassin Young. Over a half-million visitors a year visit the National Park.

The Town Landing, also bordering Dry Dock #2, is a public dock with slips for short-term boat mooring, tour boats, and commuter boats. The environment is serene. Surrounded by park and historical buildings, with the Bunker Hill Monument

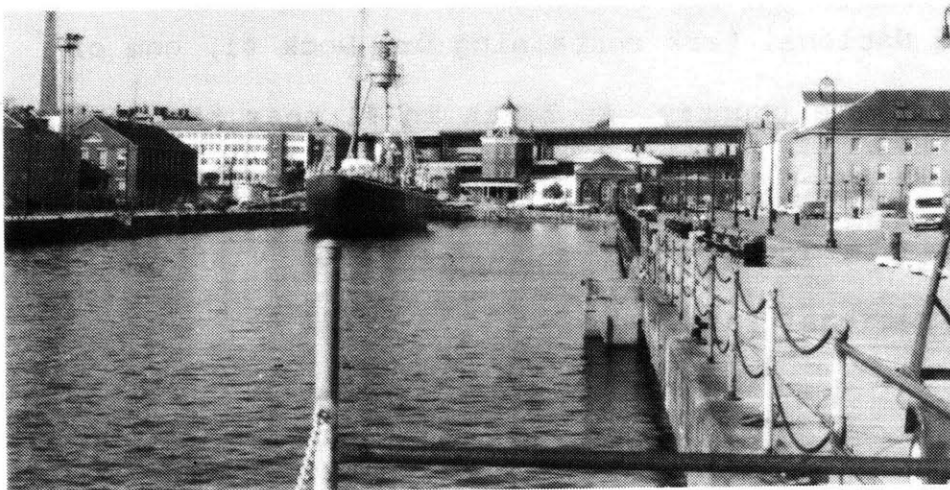


Figure 9: *above*, the view across Dry Dock #2 to the Boston skyline; *middle*, the wooden walkway around the Dry Dock; *below*, a view of the length of the Dry Dock toward Gate 4.

nearby, the Boston skyline glistens across the harbor, only a short water-taxi ride away across the water.

### **THE NAVY YARD HAS A 200 YEAR-OLD HISTORY OF INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY**

This description is a snapshot of the Yard today. If BRA plans are fulfilled, development will multiply the numbers of workers, cars, and residents several-fold, a reflection of the Yard's busy past when it was an important industrial center.

The Navy Yard's venerable history began on June 17, 1800, when the United States purchased 65 acres exclusive of tidal flats as a navy shipbuilding and repair facility. It became the site of a naval training school which formed the model for Annapolis. Over the centuries the Navy purchased more property and constructed a complex marine industrial infrastructure. The Yard was the birthplace of important technological innovation and unique facilities like "shiphouses" which enabled builders to construct vessels undercover for protection. Other products of Navy Yard innovation include the first iron torpedoboat, the Intrepid,

submarines, and other non-military vessels. In addition, the many historically significant buildings date from the 1820s through the early 20th century, representing a number of architectural styles, both residential and industrial. During its World War II peak, almost 50,000 people were employed in the Navy Yard, many of them women who welded, cut sheet metal, and made rope. In 1943, forty-six destroyer escorts were built in the Yard, 44% higher than the Bureau of Shipbuilding quotas.

**WHEN THE NAVY YARD CLOSES IN 1974, THE BRA ASSUMES OWNERSHIP THROUGH A COMPLEX SERIES OF LEGAL TRANSFERS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

After World War II, shipbuilding virtually ceased; the last ship was turned out in 1956. The Navy Yard then began specializing in repair and outfitting, converting the first guided missile destroyer and mounting sonar booms. According to the BRA "in 1971, production ended at the Ropewalk, which had been the sole producer of all of the rope used by the Navy from 1838 to 1955. President Nixon decommissioned the Navy Yard in 1974, ending employment for

5,200 workers." <sup>4</sup> One can imagine the devastating effect closing the Yard had on blue-collar workers who had earned a living wage working there and in nearby businesses.

Several years passed while various agencies, including the Boston Landmarks Commission, National Park Service, the Departments of Defense and Commerce, the General Services Administration, and the BRA, worked out a comprehensive plan for achieving designation of the entire site for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. National Landmark status was achieved in 1977. The City acquired over a hundred acres of the Yard in 1978 and initiated redevelopment in one of the most extensive preservation and reuse efforts in the country.

A novel approach was needed to satisfy the various preservation and deed restrictions placed on the 105 acres transferred to the City from the GSA in 1978. One analysis states that "by dividing the Navy Yard into three distinct components and responding to the special characteristics of each area, many potential development conflicts were more

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<sup>4</sup> Master Plan for the Yard's End, Charlestown Navy Yard, (Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority, March 1990).

easily resolved."<sup>5</sup> This division was meant to encourage development in less historically significant parts of the Navy Yard and to protect historic structures. However, recent conflict over the siting of the Aquarium makes it clear that the assessment of the division's success is premature. Figure 10 is a map of the Navy Yard Parcels.

The BRA designated three parcels for development. For one dollar, the Authority obtained from the GSA a thirty acre Historic Monument District with twenty-two buildings designated for restoration, "contingent upon preservation of the buildings and development and maintenance following strict guidelines."<sup>6</sup> The BRA bought the sixteen acre Recreational Parcel containing Shipyard Park and Dry Dock #2 for one dollar from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The BRA constructed a public park with grassy areas for picnics, a fountain, a play area, and a boat landing, and a wooden deck next to the water. The third parcel, fifty-seven acres of land, piers, and water called the New Development Area

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<sup>5</sup> Douglas M. Wrenn, Urban Waterfront Development, (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1983), p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey B. Brown and Lois Levit Basilio, Redevelopment of the Charlestown Navy Yard, (Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority. 1987).



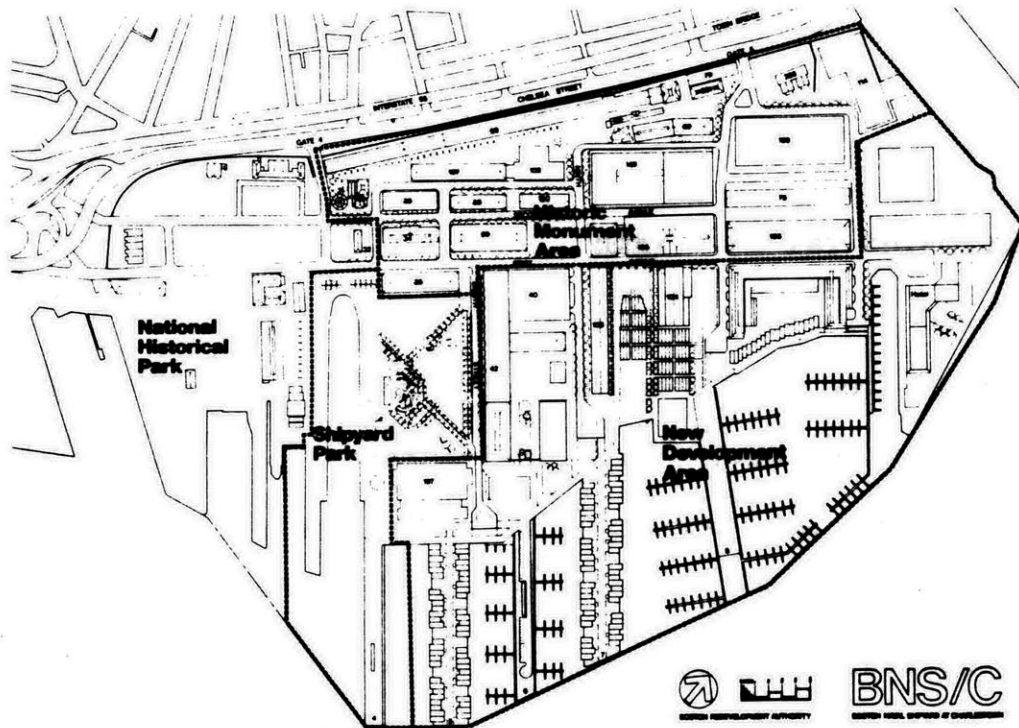


Figure 10: a map of the Navy Yard Parcels. In this map, Shipyard Park includes Dry Dock #2 and a hotel sits on Parcel 5, next to Dry Dock #5.

was bought by the BRA from the GSA for \$1.7 million with the intention of developing it to earn revenue. The BRA is repaying a loan for this amount from the Raymond Group, the designated private developer in the Navy Yard, through long-term leasing (99 years) of parcels of land, the values of which are deducted from the loan.

### **REDEVELOPING THE NAVY YARD**

The BRA has collaborated in complex partnerships to refurbish the Navy Yard environment. \$7 million was obtained from many agencies including the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Coastal Facilities Improvement Program and the City of Boston. A Urban Development Area Grant financed site improvements for streets, sidewalks, lighting and landscaping.

Immobiliare New England (later to become part of the Raymond Group, a development company) was designated by the BRA to develop the entire New Development Area as well as several buildings in the Historic Monument Area. Immobiliare also contributed \$500,000 towards below-market-rate condominiums

in a collaboration with the Bricklayers and Laborers Non-Profit Housing Corporation. Other co-developers include firms from Charlestown. HUD and the Massachusetts Finance Housing Agency aided financing for elderly housing with low-interest loans.

In 1981, the first stage of redevelopment was completed: conversion of a former machine shop complex to 376 residential units, Constitution Quarters. In a 1983 brochure the BRA proposed eventually to build a 1,200 unit residential community as well as commercial offices, retail shops, marine-related light industrial activities, low, moderate, and market-rate residential housing, research laboratories, and tourist attractions.

#### **REDEVELOPMENT IN THE NAVY YARD SINCE THE MID-80S**

Development proceeded slowly in the early 1980s, in part because the BRA was involved with other important projects in the City, but construction intensified in 1985 and 1986. The BRA at that time was earning approximately \$1,172,000 per year at the Navy Yard in lease payments, a percentage of operating revenues on commercial projects, and a percentage

of the sales price on condominiums, a considerable portion of the BRA's total revenue.

Ambitious new projections were announced for the Navy Yard in 1987, when the BRA began drawing up a new development plan doubling the original investment figures, doubling the amount of housing units, encouraging development of new hotels, a conference center, a bio-medical research center, more commercial and research space, marina slips, a swimming pool and 3.3 miles of public walkways.

A report to Mayor Flynn from the BRA says that the Navy Yard's "7,000 or more residents will make the Navy yard larger than half of the towns in Massachusetts, and it will provide more jobs than approximately 70% of the towns in the state, 5,500."<sup>7</sup> Stephen Coyle, Director of the BRA, described a proposed master plan as a "blueprint for a new town in town," a framework for discussions with civic groups and developers.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## THE CHARLESTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL IS ORGANIZED IN 1986

The Charlestown Neighborhood Council was organized concurrent with this new push for development in the Navy Yard in the mid to late 80s. Raymond Flynn, elected Mayor of Boston in 1983, espoused the concept of neighborhood empowerment and vowed his commitment to capture benefits from booming development for Boston residents. In 1986, Flynn's Office of Neighborhood Services helped set up a Neighborhood Council in Charlestown. Its goal, according to a statement from the Office, was "to provide the City of Boston and the Mayor in particular with the views of the Charlestown community on matters of city policy and other activities that affect the neighborhood and its residents."<sup>8</sup>

The statement also says that the Council is designed to represent "a variety of viewpoints to each issue," and "may take up any issue raised by Charlestown citizens relating to the operation of city government," including the BRA's activities. "It cannot force any city agency to do as it says," but can recommend specific actions, press for

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<sup>8</sup> Charlestown Neighborhood Council, (Boston: Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council, 1986).

explanations, and provide information to the community in open meetings. Some members are elected at large, others by precinct, and others selected from well-established Charlestown organizations like the Bunker Hill Community College and the Charlestown Boys and Girls Clubs.

A member of the Council, Nancy Keyes, remembers that before the Council existed, *"in the old days at public meetings, there practically used to be fistfights."* In her opinion, the Council has *"a lot of clout. It's a political body. The recommendations made by the Neighborhood Council are taken seriously. The Council is successful because it does present a place for people to come before a political body in town. Charlestown gets lost because we're so small- such a small population that politicians don't even come here. The Neighborhood Council lets people in town focus attention and brings concerns of Charlestown into City Hall - City Hall pays more attention. People know we exist."*

The 1988 elections indicate that Council elections are taken seriously by Charlestown residents. 1,130 Charlestown residents turned out to elect seven at-large members from among fourteen candidates. Five incumbents were defeated.

According to a Globe article from September 15, 1988, "the election was depicted by some as a referendum on the future course of the community" and evidence of the concern among residents about development in Charlestown and the Navy Yard.

The Neighborhood Council was designed to deal with some of the conflicts involved with development, especially in publicly owned land like the Navy Yard. The 1978 BRA master plan was still the primary reference document.

#### **CONFLICT OVER DEVELOPMENT IN THE NAVY YARD STARTS THE PROCESS OF CREATING A NEW MASTER PLAN**

In 1987, plans for developing Building 197, a condominium development named Flagship Wharf, were met with resistance from Charlestown preservationists even though the Neighborhood Council had approved the proposal. Opponents objected to the lack of traffic plans and the size of the building adjacent to Dry Dock #2. However, at hearings held by the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency, a compromise was reached: Flagship Wharf could be constructed, but no condominiums were to be built on Pier 5 and a new

master plan had to be created. The struggle over Building 197 was a skirmish before the major battle occurred over the Aquarium plan at Dry Dock #2.

The Council set up a Planning and Zoning Committee which began in the late summer of '87 to review another draft Master Plan for the Navy Yard. Phoebe Blake was a Committee member who had previously objected to the original proposal at Building 197. She suggests that some of the conflict concerning Flagship Wharf carried over to the relationship between the Committee and BRA. *"In the summer of 1987, under pressure from the state, the BRA said it could consider no further projects in the Navy Yard until a new master plan was developed. We met with parallel tasks: to create an IPOD [Intermediate Planning Overlay District] for Charlestown and a master plan for the Navy Yard. Our [the committee's] goal was to cut down the commercial aspects of what was proposed: original plans seemed inappropriate, suitable for Toledo, Ohio or Framingham, not water-related, whatever is selling. We met all fall going over zoning and in January 1988, got serious.*



*By May of 1988, there was a lot of pressure to wrap it up. We didn't know why. Steve Coyle presented a new master plan at a Council meeting and said 'this is the best thing you can hope for - it provides jobs, housing.' The Planning and Zoning Committee gave him total build-out [4.6 million gross sq. ft.], mix of use, and we also lowered building heights at the water's edge, created public uses at the water, and ratcheted up [the amount of] affordable housing so it [the Navy Yard] would be a part of Charlestown."*

Linda Smith who works for the Raymond Group attended the Planning and Zoning Committee meetings. She characterizes some of the problems of the Committee differently from Blake. *"We were working on a response to the May master plan...but our process had a poorly defined format. It had no specific time frame and people wandered in from meeting to meeting, asking about previously covered points. There wasn't enough use of our [the Raymond Group's] skills about development. The final product was too specific, trying to answer questions which zoning should cover."*

Phoebe Blake asserts that the committee process was also made more difficult because of pressure from other groups in

Charlestown who were concerned that a window of opportunity was in danger of closing. *"Between May and July there was intense pressure from labor unions and affordable housing advocates at Council meetings [who were saying], 'what's wrong with you people?'* In August of 1988, there was a unanimous vote for the Master Plan from the Council. Usually this process takes a longer period. At that point, the BRA said, *'we'll get back to you in 6 weeks.'*"

Blake surmises that the BRA was slow in acting on the Committee's recommendations because they were waiting for the New England Aquarium to make a decision about building a new facility in the Navy Yard.

**MEANWHILE, THE AQUARIUM AND BRA LOOK AT THE NAVY YARD AS A POTENTIAL SITE FOR A NEW AQUARIUM**

The Aquarium had long sought a new home because of overcrowding at Central Wharf. Bill Whitney, Director of Planning for the Aquarium, characterizes problems with the current site: the structure is *"no longer state of the art. We're turning away people, students. Our education program has no classrooms. Research wanted to do more on whales and*

needed big tanks. The exhibit paths are too narrow and essentially we've got a building with its back to the water. The loading dock is near the snack bar and the facility is too small for retail."

The Aquarium has been looking for a solution to the overcrowding problem almost since the day it opened. An interviewee explains, "the Aquarium had been talking about potential capital development since '69, looking at the space extending to Atlantic Avenue. There were a number of studies to build out from Central Wharf, but the square footage, given construction costs, was too expensive. Discovery [the floating exhibition space] was a creative idea, but they've got to build the Queen Mary II to get space they would get in the Navy Yard."

Whitney gives more detail about the process of looking for a new site: "We [the Aquarium] looked at adding to the Central Wharf building. But Cambridge 7 [the original architects] said that would cost \$35 million. So the trustees said, 'let's move and develop a new facility'. We looked at South Boston, East Boston, Charlestown and out of town at Rockport and Providence."

Victor Karen, a planner with the BRA says, "at this point [1987 and 1988] the city became concerned that the Aquarium not move to Gloucester or somewhere outside of the city. Also, the city wanted to use the Aquarium to leverage other value and development. The Navy Yard was identified as potential site... a back of the envelope thing. It was proposed to the Aquarium that they move to the Navy Yard. Their Trustees came to look at it [the Navy Yard], and fell in love with #2." One imagines that the personal charisma of Directors Prescott (the Aquarium) and Coyle (the BRA) played a crucial part in mobilizing energy toward this proposal - a vision of the world's greatest Aquarium on Dry Dock #2.

The Aquarium completed a feasibility study of the #2 site over the summer of 1988. Meanwhile, the Council Planning and Zoning Committee had been laboring over responses to the master plan without any notion that a large institution was considering a major project in the Navy Yard. According to the BRA, the Aquarium's plans regarding Dry Dock #2 weren't shared with the Council because the Aquarium was looking at a number of sites. The Aquarium and BRA believed that any controversy about a new site would more likely be the result

of heightened expectations and competition among communities vying for attention, not from local opposition to the facility. Instead of notifying communities they were on the short list and provoking a turmoil over which site was best qualified to host a new Aquarium, the Aquarium and BRA decided the most sensible road would be to first allow the Aquarium to select its preference and then announce that choice to the public. However, by privately deciding on Charlestown as the new site and then making a public announcement of the proposal, the Aquarium and BRA put themselves into a classic siting dilemma in which they ultimately had to defend their choice to residents who felt excluded from the decision-making process.

**THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM ANNOUNCES ITS INTENTION TO DEVELOP  
A NEW FACILITY IN THE NAVY YARD**

In September 1988, the Aquarium announced its intention to move to the Navy Yard's Dry Dock #2, upon receiving "city and neighborhood approval."<sup>9</sup> The match seemed eminently workable: Charlestown would have a community-friendly development in the Navy Yard; the Aquarium would get a

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<sup>9</sup> Boston Globe, September 23, 1988.

location and space on which to build a greatly enlarged modern facility.

Aquarium plans proposed that Dry Dock #2 be site of a \$130 million state-of-the-art facility, the largest in the world. A 300,000 sq. foot glass domed building would be constructed over Dry Dock #2 in Shipyard Park, which measured 700 feet by 114 feet, roughly the equivalent of laying a glass skyscraper the size of the Hancock Building in Boston's Back Bay on top of the Dry Dock. Figure 11 includes a photo of the Park from the Dock and a rendering of the Aquarium.

Visitors would descend through enclosed walkways into huge tanks and be completely surrounded by the watery home of pilot whales and dolphins. Figure 12 is an Aquarium illustration of the interior glass ceiling of the structure. The BRA, in principle, had agreed to sell #2 to the Aquarium for one dollar. The funds for construction would come from private and foundation fundraising, as well as from the sale of the original Aquarium on Central Wharf.

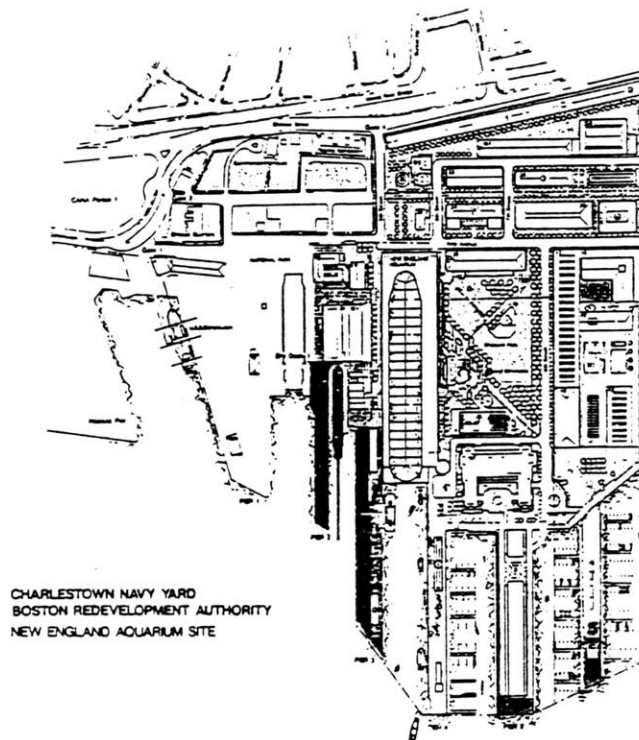


Figure 11: above, a photo of Shipyard Park from the walkway around Dry Dock #2; below, a plan of the Aquarium as it would be sited on the Dry Dock.

**EARLY COMMUNITY REACTION TO THE AQUARIUM'S PLANS SEEM POSITIVE**

The project was revealed rather abruptly to members of the Charlestown Neighborhood Council and other concerned citizens before it was announced to the media. The Boston Herald had floated rumors about possible Aquarium activity in the Navy Yard, but Charlestown residents were unable to get specific information from the BRA and assumed the stories referred to a small satellite facility like a dolphin pool. On the day of the announcement, Council members who were traditionally supporters of the BRA's activities in the Navy Yard were invited to a meeting before the press conference.

But other members of the Council, like Kathryn Downing, were asked to come to the meeting with only a half-hour notice. Katherine McDonough, a Council member says, *"I found out about the Aquarium at a BRA press conference. Shortly thereafter, Prescott made a presentation. They had a last minute meeting with the Council at the Aquarium prior to the media presentation."* Linda Smith of the Raymond Group says, *"the first I heard about it was when I picked up the paper*



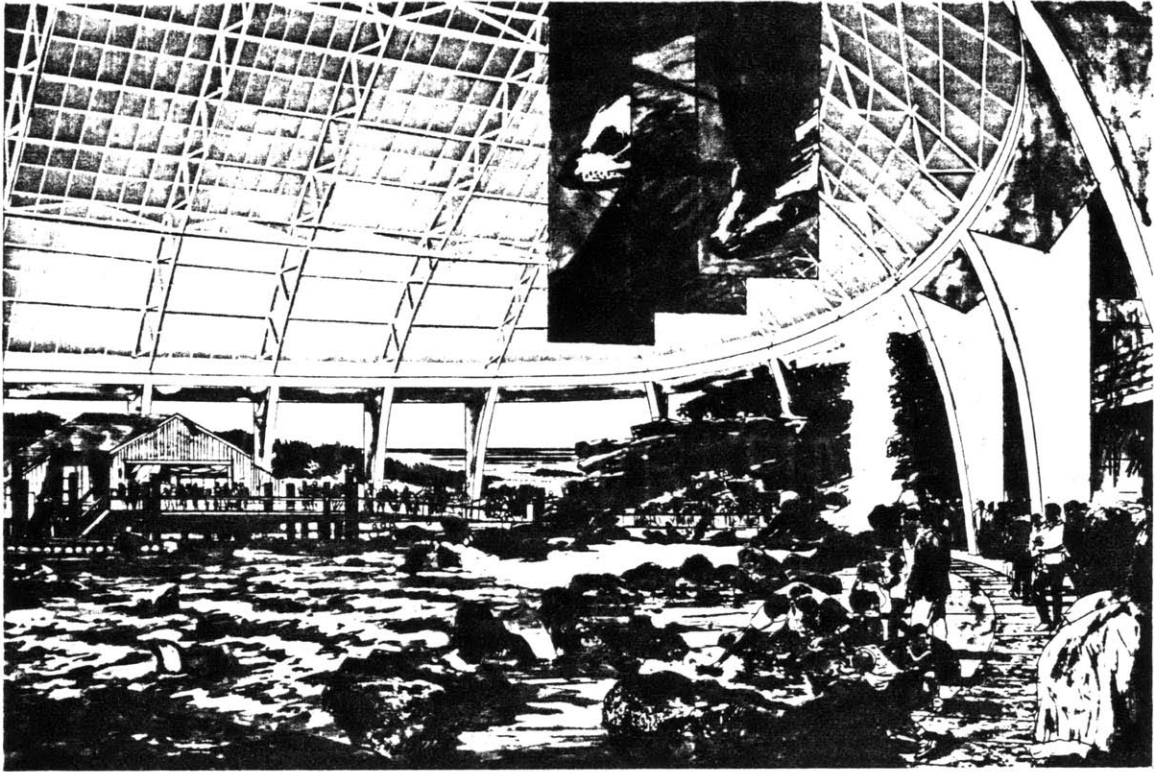


Figure 12: rendering of the interior of the Aquarium.

*that morning."*

Charlestown residents I interviewed say that community response was generally positive to the Aquarium proposal. McDonough says, *"I thought it was pretty exciting because the Aquarium is a wonderful institution."* David Pacifaro, a public relations consultant to the Aquarium from Northeast Management says, *"two polls indicated that Charlestown attitudes were very positive about the Aquarium as a good fit in the Navy Yard. Everybody was very optimistic at first."*

Some members of the Council supported the proposal because they believed that the Aquarium development would result in benefits for Charlestown residents. In the opinion of these supporters, the non-profit institution was an excellent choice as developer for #2 because it provided a public service and would generate even more development in the Navy Yard. Because Dry Dock #2 could not be developed for housing or commercial use, developing the Aquarium there would produce benefits and leave other parts of the Yard available for affordable housing. Dennis McLaughlin, Chairperson of the Neighborhood Council says, *"My*

perspective is from someone who grew up here. You have a hole filled with water. There are two issues for me. The Navy Yard needs a jump-start to generate investment interest. The Aquarium does that. It's cultural but not a heavy duty roller-coaster ride. We all know the Aquarium will revitalize interest. Everyone agrees the need is there, even amongst opponents. My goal is community benefits. Someone suggested # 5 [as an alternative site for the Aquarium]. If the Aquarium is on #2, you can use #5 for housing. I wanted to save #5 for that. My point of view is to leverage benefits: the Townie perspective is that the Navy Yard doesn't mean much except for benefits to Head Start and other groups." Figure 13 is a reproduction of an Aquarium handout listing some of the benefits the facility would bring to Charlestown.

#### **CONCERNS RISE TO THE SURFACE**

Despite the initial positive response, the Aquarium project faced a number of serious constraints. Karen from the BRA recalls questions about the impact of Aquarium visitors on the Recreational Parcel part of the Navy Yard: "Shipyard Park becoming a front doormat of the Aquarium because it was



**New  
England  
Aquarium**

Central Wharf  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110  
(617) 742-8630

NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM  
BENEFITS FOR CHARLESTOWN

NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM/CURRENT JOBS

- \* Currently employs 250 people/55% Boston Residents
- \* Participation in Boston "Summer Jobs Program"

PROPOSED NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- \* 1360 Construction Jobs
- \* 150 Permanent Jobs
- \* 100 Aquarium-related jobs, i.e., retail

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- \* Each day trip visitor to the New England Aquarium spends approximately \$10.00 in local community
- \* Retail targeted to Charlestown merchants first
- \* Rated top family attraction in City of Boston

CHARLESTOWN OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- \* Free admission for adults and senior citizens from fall to spring each year
- \* Charitable and non-profit groups can apply for free admission
- \* Live animal programs and slide shows presented at:
  - Schools/Day Care Centers
  - Churches
  - Nursing Homes/Senior Centers
  - Hospitals/Health Centers
  - Social Service Agencies
- \* Aquarium educational services to schools:
  - School field trips
  - Curriculum packages
  - Teacher workshops
  - Teacher Resource Center
  - Travelling slide and videotape programs
- \* Aquarium participation in Charlestown community events such as Harborpark Day, Bunker Hill Day

The nonprofit organization was created to establish, maintain and operate a New England public aquarium. Contributions are deductible under federal income tax laws.

Figure 13: an Aquarium leaflet distributed  
to Charlestown residents.

easy to see it with two million people visiting a year...also, sight lines to the city. People who were opposed felt it would destroy the historic aspect of the park." Furthermore, the Aquarium proposal for constructing a large, technologically complex structure in a tight space did not clearly address difficult questions about limited vehicular and pedestrian access and parking. Some residents were frustrated because they felt they could not get specific information about the design of the structure, in particular, its height and volume.

Arthur Walsh was distressed about the project's expense and effect on Shipyard Park. "At first I thought they wanted to go to #5. Then when I heard about Dry Dock #2 in the local papers I couldn't believe it. Here they'd just completed a new wooden walkway with imported wood and antique benches."

In addition, some activists felt that the Council's formal procedures were being manipulated and that they were left out of the decision-making process. Phoebe Blake maintains that specific members of the Planning and Zoning Committee were perceived as potential opponents of the Aquarium project and were not invited to the initial public

announcement in an effort to control reception of the proposal. This perceived effrontery was one in a series of broken promises and blunders made by sponsors of the plan, claim opponents. Blake believes that *"Coyle stated that with the Aquarium, something else would go out, 'off the plate' [other development proposals would be smaller]."* However, *"in the late fall of 1988, it was clear they would try to put the Aquarium on top of everything else,"* which Blake says sabotaged work done by the Council's Planning and Zoning Committee.

Antonia Pollock of the Boston Preservation Alliance points out her organization's concerns about *"siting and loss of open space, the area around the Aquarium used as holding area for buses and traffic."* Moreover, she believes that the BRA and Aquarium failed to follow established procedures for including the Preservation Alliance and other groups in a forthright discussion of plans on Dry Dock #2. Pollack notes a particular instance in the spring of 1989 when a BRA employee *"characterized a note I'd written the Park Service as a letter of support from the Preservation Alliance regarding #2. I was fit to be tied. It came up at a public meeting. The Alliance hadn't even reviewed it [the Aquarium*

proposal].” This flap over the BRA employee’s tactless - some say deceitful - actions caught the media’s attention and sparked increased coverage of the storm gathering over the proposal.

In addition to concerns about traffic, preservation issues, and process, Kathryn Downing points out the significance of *“people issues. The Aquarium didn’t help by talking about whales instead of people. Here you have a grassroots effort to improve a place just to get sidewalks. We felt it was ours.. we had earned it. Where do people go in the summer? The Bunker Hill projects have awful open space. Those kids go to Shipyard Park, the fountain. They have no alternatives. A community is not just a place, it’s people. Talking about displacing kids with marine mammals - it doesn’t play well.”*

#### **AN OPPOSITION BEGINS TO FORM**

Over the fall and winter, certain events galvanized opponents to resist the Dry Dock #2 proposal, a mirror of what happened in Cambridge. Kathryn Downing remembers in Fall 1988, *“a meeting [of concerned people] about a proposed*

parking garage in Hayes Square. The Bunker Hill Task Force [a group representing tenants in the subsidized housing near Chelsea Street] had worked for years with the Preservation Society on open space in Hayes Square. But the BRA proposed to build a parking structure there near the Kent School, outside Gate 4. This galvanized people. The BRA didn't take into account the struggle over this before. It was a focal point in busing. The Kent school was designed to be a fortress. There was a high consciousness of that area for children." A spontaneous protest arose from this meeting and opponents to the Hayes garage presented their objections to local politicians. Downing says, "we formed a group which we nicknamed, 'A Broad Coalition'," in reference to the fact that many of the early opponents of the Dry Dock #2 plan were Charlestown women concerned about their families and children.

Community activists felt their issues weren't receiving serious attention from sponsors of the Aquarium plan. Phoebe Blake says that in the winter, "we [the nascent opposition] started thinking of [Dry Dock] #5 [as an alternative]. By February, 1989 we wrote to the BRA suggesting serious attention should be paid to #5 and Parcel



5 [which adjoined each other]. We had a meeting with John Prescott [Director of the Aquarium] to talk about it...nothing happened."

#### **THE COUNCIL FORMS FOCUS GROUP WORKSHOPS TO DISCUSS QUESTIONS**

The Aquarium presented their design to the Council in December 1988. David Pacifaro, a consultant to the Aquarium from the Northeast Management Group, remembers that Council-led "focus groups began in March [1989] to refine ideas regarding the nature of design, understanding #2 and its preservation value, legal implications, physical constraints -it's a tight fit over water ... how would the building sit on the property? These questions instantly raised questions of impact... #2 abuts a park for kids, there are no existing parking facilities, hard access."

These questions elicited reactions similar to those in the Library case. Neither the Aquarium or the BRA were prepared for the level of sophistication of residents concerning design and traffic issues. Among other objections, opponents believed that the massive bulk of the Aquarium's glass structure was inappropriate in Shipyard Park. Pacifaro

explains. *"In focus groups people raised interesting and direct questions regarding design, the footprint of the building, setbacks, drop off lanes for buses. Very necessary and valid questions. But the development of the plan was not as progressed as questions about it. You had ideas but these were hard operational questions long before the proposal could answer them."*

#### **THE AD HOC COALITION TO SAVE SHIPYARD PARK IS ORGANIZED**

In Spring, 1989, opponents of the Dry Dock #2 Aquarium plan began calling themselves the Ad Hoc Coalition To Save Shipyard Park. They mounted a petition drive collecting 3,000 signatures from all segments of the Charlestown public to show widespread concern in the community about BRA and Aquarium plans. They leafleted door to door several times and also lobbied the media and politicians. Figure 14 is a reproduction of a handout from the Ad Hoc Coalition To Save Shipyard Park which encapsulates arguments they used to reach other residents. The Coalition had allies on the Council and became a vocal and informed presence at Council and focus group sessions.

**A DEED RESTRICTION ON THE TRANSFER OF LAND TO THE CITY CASTS  
UNCERTAINTY ON THE LEGALITY OF THE BRA'S PLAN TO SELL DRY  
DOCK #2 TO THE AQUARIUM FOR ONE DOLLAR**

Underlying the discussion was an important uncertainty regarding the legality of the proposed transaction between the BRA and Aquarium, a deed restriction in the original GSA transfer of the Navy Yard to the BRA. A private organization -even a non-profit Aquarium - could not receive the property at no cost. The restriction could be interpreted to mean that the City could only convey the property to the Aquarium after the Yard had first reverted back to the National Park Service and been transferred to the GSA to see if other federal agencies wanted it. If none did, the city could buy Dry Dock #2 at fair market value and then sell it to the Aquarium.

Peter Steele of the National Park Service says, *"the land use issue was directly raised to the BRA. It came up at Council meetings a number of times. The Park Service wrote a letter concerning the restriction. The BRA said, 'first, we want to get a consensus. Then we'll deal with the deed restriction through technical legislation.'* The only way to

# **DON'T SELL CHARLESTOWN / SAVE SHIPYARD PARK**

For **\$1** (count it!) the BRA wants to sell a "big bite" of Shipyard Park to the New England Aquarium Corporation. Nobody questions the value of the Aquarium but Charlestown loses if it moves to Dry Dock 2. **HERE'S WHY:**

## **WATERFRONT PARK LOST FOREVER**

The proposed Aquarium would "take the waterfront out of our waterfront park." Over 6 stories high and longer than the Prudential Tower is tall, this 4.2 acre astrodome-like structure would overwhelm the rest of the park and box in the green space. With **14,000 visitors daily on summer week-ends**, what remains of our park will become a "lunch room" for tourists.

## **TRAFFIC GRIDLOCK / OVERFLOW PARKING**

Aquarium consultants estimate that during peak summer months up to an **additional 4,400 cars per day** will travel through our streets. They propose to widen Chelsea Street to seven lanes at City Square to handle this traffic. (For comparison, the The Southeast Expressway is six lanes). There is **no concrete plan for the 1,800 paid parking spaces needed during peak days**. Even if there were, there is no way to prevent Aquarium visitors from parking free on our streets.

## **POLLUTION**

MGH studies show that Charlestown residents already suffer from higher rates of respiratory diseases that any other area of the City. With up to **4,400 more cars daily, plus idling diesel buses, vans and service vehicles**, breathing won't be any easier.

## **TAXPAYERS' MONEY WASTED**

To date, **OVER \$8,000,000** has been spent on Shipyard Park. **OUR MONEY!** Should we let the BRA give our waterfront away for **\$1** ?

## **VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW**

If you think this sounds like it should be against the law, you're right.....it is! The federal government transferred Shipyard Park to the BRA in 1977 on the condition that it remain a public park **FOREVER**. Let's keep this law from being changed!

**PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION TO SAVE SHIPYARD PARK/DRY DOCK 2**

AND COME TO THE  
**SPECIAL NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 7:00 PM • CHARLESTOWN HIGH SCHOOL**  
• 240 Medford street

Prepared by the ad hoc coalition to save Shipyard Park  
(over)

Figure 14: a handout from the  
Ad Hoc Coalition To Save Shipyard Park.

*override this regulation was through legislation introduced by a Massachusetts Congressman." Congressman Joseph Kennedy III represented Charlestown in Congress and would most likely be the one to introduce such legislation.*

#### **DEBATE INTENSIFIES AND THE COALITION GAINS STRENGTH**

Among the three hundred people attending a May Council meeting in 1989, many wanted the Aquarium to consider Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 as an alternative site. However, the Aquarium took the position that if #2 wasn't available, the Aquarium couldn't build in the Navy Yard at all. Much of the public testimony at this meeting was opposed to the plan for Dry Dock #2. Kathryn Downing, active in the Ad Hoc Coalition, describes what happened: *"we presented the petition. Sixty people [from the Coalition] stood up to say something smart [knowledgeable about the proposal]. Meanwhile, there wasn't a strong, informed Aquarium showing, mostly a lot of young union apprentices who didn't really understand the specifics of the issues."*

The Coalition was also busy persuading politicians of their determination to stop the Aquarium at Dry Dock #2. Blake:

*"we had mounted an effective letter-writing campaign to Joe Kennedy. He was in a bind. In July he met with the Ad Hoc Coalition. We were hard-line with him and he eventually let it be known he was unwilling to sign [sponsor] legislation [overriding the deed restriction]."*

During the late spring and early summer, the Aquarium made concessions to make the proposal more attractive: a percentage of parking fees would be dedicated to Charlestown youth sports groups; seminars would be conducted for local merchants to help them take advantage of the expected influx of visitors; operation of Shipyard Park would be provided by the Aquarium; teacher training and special programs would be offered to adults and children; a scaled-down design was suggested. Despite these concessions, the Ad Hoc Coalition did not shift its opposition.

The Council met to vote on the proposal on July 11. The Coalition was prepared to lose the vote, but realized they could use the event to mobilize their members and gather support outside of Charlestown. Downing says, *"we knew we had five votes maximum and would lose there.... we called a press conference with a release using very good language on*

the steps of Knights of Columbus [Hall where the meeting was held]. Our prepared statement had sound bites ... all the papers and t.v. stations were there and we did interviews with the press." The vote was taking place inside a "packed hall and we weren't allowed to speak -all in front of the camera [of local television stations]. Pat Ward [one of the activists in the Coalition] stormed the stage and got the focus of cameras, raising hollers and yells. She got kicked out of the meeting. In terms of visuals and text we had it all."

At this meeting, Council members supportive of the Aquarium proposal used the opposition of the Coalition to leverage even more benefits for Charlestown. Downing says, "we pried loose a 'community fund', 2% of the sales price [of the Aquarium at Central Wharf because] the younger guys [on the Council] disliked being pushed around [by the Aquarium and BRA] and the older guys liked it [the community fund]. A Council member proposed: 'we should get more money for it [the Aquarium building at Dry Dock #2].' The Aquarium was really unhappy about what happened."

The Neighborhood Council voted 14 to 5 in favor of the Aquarium relocation. It was now left to the Board of the BRA to approve the Aquarium as developer of the site. Also, a written formal agreement was required between the Aquarium, the BRA, and Neighborhood Council within 60 days of designation. Then the proposal had to go through 63 design and environmental impact reviews taking from 18 to 24 months to complete.

**THE BRA AND AQUARIUM DROP THE PLANS FOR DRY DOCK #2  
AND REEXAMINE DRY DOCK #5 AS A POTENTIAL SITE**

However, the BRA and Aquarium feared that local preservationists, neighborhood activists, and state and federal agencies with oversight on development of historical places might file a lawsuit based on the deed restriction of the original transfer of land if plans for Dry Dock #2 proceeded. The General Counsel from the National Trust for Historic Preservation sent a letter to the BRA indicating concern about the situation. Although no lawsuit was actually threatened, Aquarium sponsors realized that such a lawsuit had the potential to cause great delay, costs, and further embitter feelings in Charlestown.



Meanwhile, several members of the Aquarium board were invited to Charlestown by residents and given a friendly tour of the neighborhood so they could better understand some of the concerns of opponents. Perhaps those Trustees were swayed by that meeting to reconsider their support of Dry Dock #2 as the preferred site for a new Aquarium.

In addition, Mayor Raymond Flynn was influenced by the show of support the Ad Hoc Coalition was attracted in the press. As a politician whose recent career is based on the idea of establishing consensus, he wanted to avoid protracted conflict.

Last, a petition with 3,000 signatures opposing the Aquarium at Dry Dock #2 was presented to Congressman Kennedy and undoubtedly had an effect on his attitude about introducing legislation to override the deed restriction. He also balked at signing because he believed that Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 was a suitable alternative and he wanted a compromise. Nevertheless, an aide to Kennedy made it clear to members of the Ad Hoc Coalition that the Congressman didn't want the Aquarium chased out of Charlestown the same way the Library was chased out of Cambridge.

As a result, the BRA postponed its vote on the Dry Dock #2 proposal and the Aquarium began to back away from its refusal to consider #5/Parcel 5 as an alternative site, stating that the latter had not "been ruled out despite earlier statements that it was not a practical alternative."<sup>10</sup>

The Raymond Group publicly suggested in August, 1989, that they might deed Parcel 5, adjacent to Dry Dock #5, to the Aquarium in exchange for the right to develop other property in the Navy Yard. The Aquarium initiated a new engineering study at Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5, and Dry Dock #2 disappeared as a subject of public debate.

**SEVERAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES PROPOSE WORKING WITH THE AQUARIUM TO DEVELOP A NEW FACILITY ON DRY DOCK #5/PARCEL 5**

With attention now focused on Dry Dock #5 and Parcel 5, developers became interested in working out a transaction with the Aquarium for its current property on Central Wharf. In October 1989, the Raymond Group joined another development firm, Cabot Cabot and Forbes, to propose building a new facility on #5/Parcel 5 in exchange for the

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<sup>10</sup> Boston Globe, July 29, 1989.

Aquarium's present site at Central Wharf. Other developers, the Beacon Companies and the JMB/Urban Development Company also hinted that they would submit proposals.

A variety of ideas were floated about what project could be developed at the old site: suggestions included a luxury hotel and condominiums, and an office tower. The Boston Harbor Association, according to a Boston Globe article from October 29, 1989, was "urging city planners to consider converting Central Wharf into a marine transportation terminal. Others say they want to see a park on the wharf."

Former Mayor Collins also wrote an op ed piece for the Globe, reminding readers of the original Central Wharf agreement which included the legal obligations of the BRA and Aquarium to maintain height restrictions and a public/maritime use at the Central Wharf site.

On November 21, 1989, an article in the Boston Herald reported that "engineering studies show that the New England Aquarium can build its 'world class' facility at Dry Dock #5." An Aquarium foe is quoted as saying they want to see this plan: "naturally, people are suspicious." In January

1990, the board of trustees of the Aquarium voted to pursue Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 as a site for relocation. Figure 15 includes a photo of Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 as it appears today and a rendering of the Aquarium on the site.

Over the winter of 1990, Charlestown residents participated in a new round of Council focus group presentations and discussions about a new Navy Yard master plan featuring the Aquarium at Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5. During these meetings Aquarium representatives sat discreetly in the background, in contrast to their conduct during the previous year when they were conducting many meetings and sponsoring public relations events. A March vote of the Council was nearly unanimous in support of a new Navy Yard master plan including the Aquarium proposal at Dry Dock #5. The Council also supported new zoning specifications, placing the plan within a legal framework.

During the focus group and Council meetings before the vote, residents expressed concerns about discrepancies between the zoning and the master plan, the lack of parking, traffic congestion, preservation of historic structures, and the ambiguity of the linkage program. Peter Steele of the

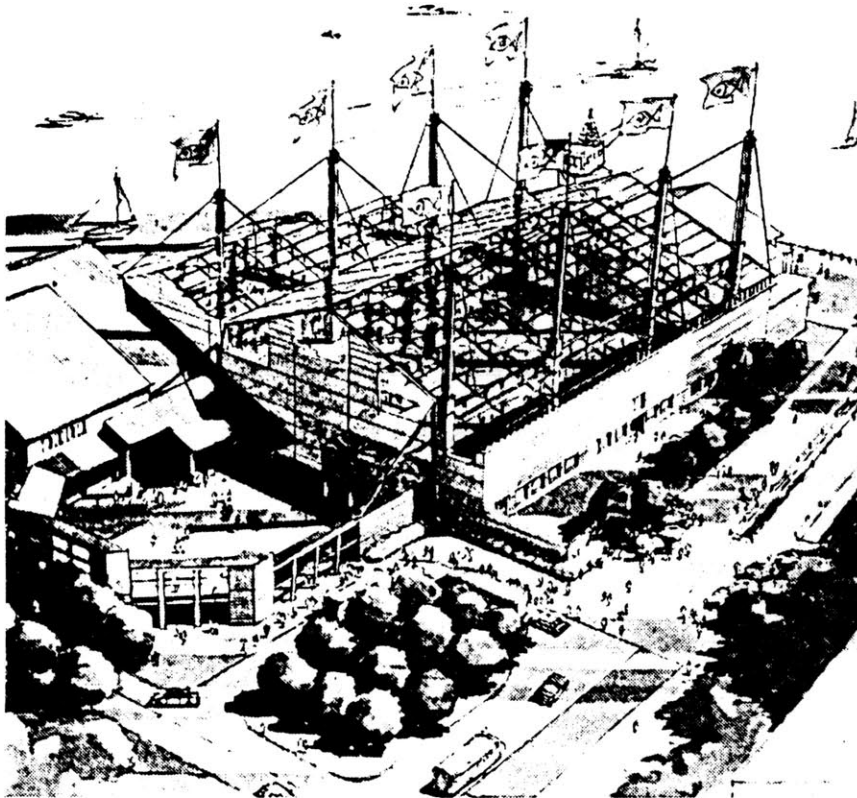


Figure 15: *above*, a photo of Dry Dock #5;  
*below*, a BRA rendering of the Aquarium at that site.

National Park Service says that the "master plan has substantial preservation impacts on monument structures and contains a parking proposal which we don't think meets needs" projected for visitors to the Navy Yard. "But they're [BRA] just going ahead like the last time. We told them they'll have to drastically revise until they're in conformance with the law."

I observed that the Council endorsed the plan, including the Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 proposal as a way of seeking relief from further conflict, as if to say to developers and the BRA: "we're tired of this mess; let's go ahead on development in the Navy Yard. See what you can do with it."

In early May 1990, the BRA board tentatively designated the Aquarium as developer of Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 in the Navy Yard, pending solutions to parking and traffic problems. Figure 16 is a BRA rendering of the Navy Yard master plan. However, because of these unresolved issues, opponents have given only qualified support.

If the plan passes that hurdle, then the zoning department must approve the zoning plan. This legal document defines

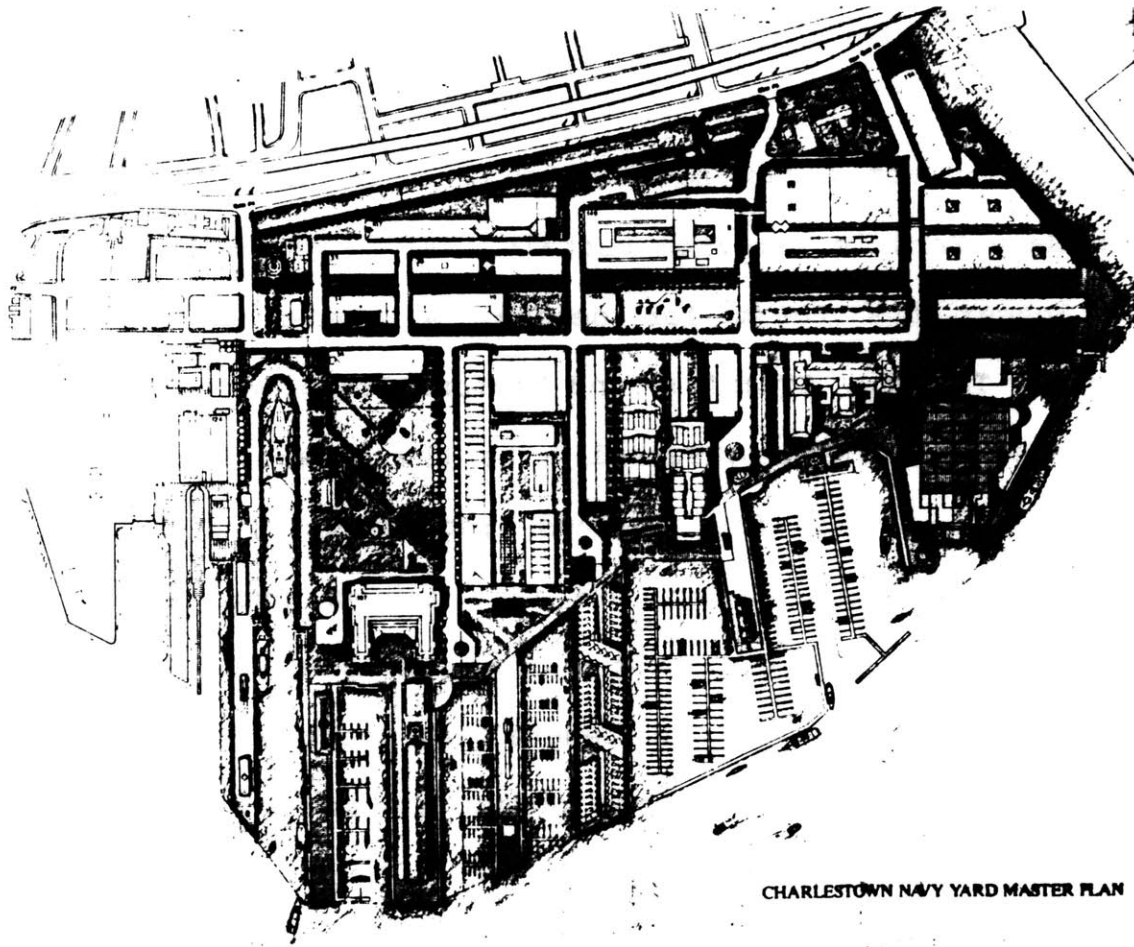


Figure 16: BRA rendering of the spring, 1990 master plan for the Charlestown Navy Yard.

what heights, densities and uses are either permissible or conditional in development. After the zoning is approved, the Aquarium still has several years of permits and reviews to undergo before it can break ground.

Whether or not a new Aquarium will eventually be built in the Navy Yard is far from certain. Although the Council is no longer the forum for debate, a number of obstacles remain. The BRA, Aquarium, and Raymond Group must work out an agreement for deeding Parcel 5 to the Aquarium. Abutters may still press for changes regarding traffic/parking proposals during one of the many review processes still remaining. Preservationist organizations who monitor development or state and federal agencies with oversight regarding historic sites may object to changes planned for some of the buildings in the Navy Yard. Indeed, all development is currently jeopardized because of the economic slow-down in the Boston real estate market; it may not be possible for the Aquarium to earn sufficient revenue from the sale of Central Wharf to build the new facility. At the moment, resistance from Charlestown residents is quieter. The Aquarium can now proceed with its fund-raising drive and begin detailed architectural plans. The new site offers a



flexibility that than Dry Dock #2 didn't possess: it contains more dry land and its configuration is less tight and constricted. Yet, the prospect of siting the Aquarium anywhere in the Navy Yard still faces many problems.

#### **EVENTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE TWO CASES ARE STRIKINGLY SIMILAR**

In many ways, the Aquarium's experience at Dry Dock #2 resembles what happened to the Library in Cambridge. An elite non-profit institution proposed to site a facility that appeared to offer many benefits to the local community. As in Cambridge, Charlestown residents had a long history of involvement in development issues; sophisticated opponents emerged with concerns about impacts on historic preservation, traffic, and quality of life. The citizen review group in Charlestown, the Neighborhood Council, was incapable of brokering a compromise between sponsors and opponents. Facing the prospect of prolonged resistance and litigation, the institution withdrew its proposal, similar to what had happened with the Kennedy Library a generation earlier.

Neither facility was able to locate at its preferred site. The Aquarium, however, has accepted a fall-back option in the Navy Yard at Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5, although it is far from certain that the new plan can be realized for reasons given above. Still, the conflict was time-consuming, costly, and disappointing for participants in both cases. Moreover, the demoralization of participants as a result of such conflict reinforces the likelihood of confrontation and mutual suspicion in future siting cases.

In Chapter Three, I will compare the circumstances, events, and players in the two cases to isolate what variables are different from case to case. A significant way in which the two cases do differ is that the authority of the Charlestown Neighborhood Council was formally recognized by all participants as the arena for gathering community opinion and making recommendations, whereas the Task Force never achieved that kind of status. In Chapter Four, I take a closer look at the two review groups to understand how their performance affected the course of events in the two cases.

My original premise was that if the difference in citizen review was truly significant, then the outcomes should be

different. However, despite the difference in citizen review, the outcomes are actually similar. Establishing what other factors common to these two cases outweighed the differences in participation and influenced events in both cases is the goal of Chapter Five.

Like first cousins, the Library and Aquarium siting cases closely resemble one another despite being separated by a generation. This chapter maps out the similarities of conflicts, processes, decisions, and events in the two cases as well as important factors which could have had a significant impact on the outcome of the two cases. Through such comparison I will pinpoint divergences between the two cases and analyze which differences seem to be more pronounced.

In my analysis, I assume that similar factors will create a similar effect in both cases, i.e., they cancel each other out when we attempt to explain the outcomes of the cases. The important factors are the dissimilar ones. In this chapter I establish that one of the most important differences between the two cases is that citizen participation is much more formalized and integrated into the Aquarium review process than in the Library case. In later chapters, I investigate whether this difference has had a significant effect on the outcome of the two case.

## **MAPPING THE SIMILARITIES**

### **Direct links connect the two cases.**

Both Cambridge and Charlestown share specific historical experiences which relate to the Kennedy family. For instance, according to popular legend, John Kennedy gained his first major political support from Townies. The Navy Yard became a candidate to receive the Museum, in part, because of that association. Another Kennedy link is suggested by Richard Neustadt, who told me that the Navy Yard alternative for the Museum wasn't pursued in the mid-70s because Edward Kennedy's support of busing made him persona non grata in Charlestown. Years later, in the Aquarium case, another Kennedy family member, Congressman Joseph Kennedy III, became a center of attention when he was lobbied by both opponents and proponents regarding legislation to override deed restrictions in the original Navy Yard transfer between the GSA and BRA. Kennedy balked at signing the legislation because he understood that Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5 was a suitable alternative to opponents and he wanted a compromise, yet he didn't want the Aquarium chased out of Charlestown as the Library had been chased out of Cambridge.

**The unfolding of events in the both cases is strikingly similar.**

As Chapter 2 illustrates, an ongoing thread of citizen activism in the development process is present in both Charlestown and Cambridge. The cases are similar in that each development was initially greeted with much good will by residents, setting them apart from typical siting controversies. However, in both cases, questions were soon raised about design, traffic, parking and other impacts. During this period of dialogue, opposition leaders and their supporters emerged. Bargaining on issues took place in conversations before and after public meetings, at small group meetings, within open forums, and through the press. In both cases, positions eventually hardened and interaction became marked by accusations of deceit and selfishness.

In both cases, dramatic confrontations took place: for example, Ted Kennedy's private meeting with Neighborhood Ten and RCCC representatives; I. M. Pei's unveiling the glass pyramid; debate between opponents and proponents of the Aquarium proposal during the May 1989 Council meeting.

Very specific events were turning points in each case: for the Library case, the issuance of the long-awaited draft EIS and the ensuing reaction; for the Aquarium it was the vote of the Charlestown Neighborhood Council approving the Aquarium proposal and the Ad Hoc Coalition's press conference on the steps of the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Although neither case was decided by court action, the shadow of potential litigation clearly moved proponents to alter plans and examine the feasibility of other sites. Leaders from both the Kennedy Library and New England Aquarium now say that new locations offered attractive advantages which weren't initially apparent.

**The non-profit institutions which participated in these cases bear a family resemblance.**

The key institutions are large, non-profit institutions pursuing a set of complex goals. The Kennedy Library Corporation, Harvard University, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the New England Aquarium are altruistic, yet elite, organizations, the leaders of which presume that by serving their own needs they also create an important

amenity for a constituency well beyond their immediate institutional or geographic boundaries.

The Kennedy Library Corporation and Harvard University embraced one another for a number of reasons. Harvard sought a suitable partner to help replace the MBTA yards. They also benefited from receiving the Institute of Politics. The Kennedy Library pursued a relationship with Harvard to fulfill the late President's wishes and to take advantage of being associated with a major university. The physical site by the Charles River was also full of promise because of convenient access to highways and public transportation.

Likewise, the New England Aquarium and the Boston Redevelopment Authority appear to be compatible partners. The Aquarium's history of anchoring a revitalized harbor holds out the promise of similar results for the Navy Yard from which the BRA could derive substantial revenue. In addition to stimulating other development, the Aquarium is an important amenity to the city as a place for recreation and education. The historic waterfront setting in the Navy Yard presented the Aquarium with great opportunity to construct an expanded, modern facility.



The professional staff of these four institutions perceive themselves as among the best in the country, with unique and important missions to fulfill. One remark characterizing Aquarium staff - *"people at the Aquarium are major creative consultants in the United States and on the international scene regarding Aquariums"* - would be a generous description of staff at the other three institutions. Opponents of the institutions might add that this elite esprit de corp is also marked by a good share of arrogance.

**Such complex transactions include other partnerships with many other public and private stakeholder institutions.**

The Library was involved in sensitive negotiations with the National Archives, the State Legislature, City of Cambridge, and MBTA. The New England Aquarium must work with the National Park Service, the Massachusetts Landmarks Commission, and the MBTA.

Private companies have direct stake in the outcomes of each case, either as developers of adjacent property or as direct partners. Outcry over nearby hotel development set the stage for further protest regarding the size of the proposed

Library. In the more recent case, the Raymond Group is negotiating a complex arrangement to transfer Parcel 5 to the Aquarium as a site for a new facility. Given this new opportunity, Aquarium developers were more easily able to shift their attention away from Dry Dock #2.

**Legislative leaders and the court system are involved in both cases.**

In both cases, environmental regulations and reviews derived from federal and state legislation shaped plans. Local and national politicians, including Senator Edward Kennedy and Congressman Joseph Kennedy III, are also players in the two cases. Potential litigation in the courts hovers in the background despite the formalization of the citizen review process.

**Diversity of abutting neighborhoods in Charlestown and Cambridge is another important similarity.**

In the Riverside section of Cambridge were many working-class residents, long-time homeowners and tenants, whose concerns about gentrification reflect those of Townies in

Charlestown. There were a number of middle-class newcomers in Riverside involved as community activists who have counterparts in Charlestown.

Some abutters were also upper-middle class, white, well-educated residents, derisively nicknamed "Brattle Street silk-stocking types" in Cambridge and "toonies" in Charlestown.

But it is impossible to characterize with exact precision proponents and opponents of the Library and Aquarium. In both cases coalitions to resist proposed projects formed across socio-economic lines. In Cambridge, a coalition formed among the RCCC, Neighborhood Ten, and Neighborhood Nine; preservationists and Bunker Hill public housing tenants joined to form the Ad Hoc Coalition To Save Shipyard Park. Many of the participants in these coalitions already had years of experience as neighborhood activists.

Both opponents and proponents of each facility in the two cases argued their claims on the basis of preserving or creating amenities which served the local community. Benefits for young people were foremost in the minds of all

participants. Opponents of the facilities asserted they were preventing dangerous traffic conditions, or were defending a neighborhood park and preserving a family-oriented, neighborhood environment by diverting mass tourism. Proponents of the proposals argued that, in addition to constructing a facility which would be a resource to the local community, they were also creating an opportunity for job training, unique educational programs, or affordable housing.

**Both cases drew the attention of a national as well as a local constituency.**

In both cases, the institutions were confronted with trying to balance the demands of a national constituency with those from the local community.

To deal with local needs, city government set up advisory groups to monitor development activity. The Harvard Square Development Task Force and Charlestown Neighborhood Council were established to provide citizens with a better connection to each other, the developers and city planners. Although both groups shared similar tasks, the concluding

portion of this Chapter points to major differences between them.

Many residents were involved directly in these cases. Opinion polling and petition drives were used by opponents and proponents. Each case featured open meetings to distribute information and promote dialogue. Interviewees in both cases also describe confrontational public meetings attended by hundreds of residents, representatives of institutions, and the press.

Both cases involved large pools of potential constituents. Planners estimated that more than a million people would visit a Kennedy Library constructed in Cambridge. Over a million people visit the Aquarium at its current site each year.

A regional and national audience was particularly involved in the saga of the Kennedy Library, followed with great interest by reports in Time, Newsweek, the Washington Post, the New York Times and in small-town newspapers all over the United States. Oliver Brooks remembers coming home from a meeting about the Library and being informed by his wife

that reporters from all three major television networks had called to get his comments.

Although the Aquarium case has not attracted that kind of national notoriety, the case has been covered extensively by the regional press. Council meetings are videotaped by cable television so there is an instantaneous documentation of events not present in the earlier case. Neighborhood Ten had an effective outreach program and published an informative newsletter; fifteen years later, Kathryn Downing used television jargon - "sound bites and visuals" - to describe the Ad Hoc Coalition's sophisticated press campaign which captured the attention of thousands of television viewers.

**In these two cases key individuals had a disproportionate impact on their outcomes.**

In talking about the Kennedy Library, Dan Fenn pointed out the necessity of understanding how *"the individuals involved are also very important determinants. There are crucial points where persons either say yes or no and the thing gets shaped because of it. We can often wash individuals out of*

*stories - that it's great forces, trends, mass emotions.. but it's more complex."*

Certain public figures were powerful decision-makers who pursued a goal and mobilized the weight of an established institution behind their decision. Other actors not in the public light had central roles as leaders of activist organizations or on professional staffs. They, too, were determined to achieve a certain outcome.

**In both cases, non-profit institutions were trying to obtain publicly owned land.**

Both cases involved the transfer of public land and the construction of public buildings, economic transactions which typically undergo special scrutiny. In both cases, non-profit institutions were receiving donations of valuable property and had to deal with competing public uses: the MBTA yards and Shipyard Park. Participants were aware that the proposed transaction would inevitably draw such scrutiny. Kathryn Downing characterized the objection of some Charlestown residents about the proposal at Dry Dock #2, *"The Aquarium said, 'we're good people. We'll take it*

*for a dollar.' When the BRA said they were going to sell #2 for a dollar, it provoked a general outrage." David Pacifaro says, "there are always complicated legal issues with public lands -it wasn't shocking we needed a consensus... this happens all the time with public land." Musho concurs, "public buildings are lightning rods. It's the nature of the business."*

Non-profit projects such as these are often characterized as generators for economic growth. Robert McNulty in The Economics of Amenity, summarizes current thinking that "urban amenities may be a cause... of economic vitality and ... contribute significantly to its development strategy."<sup>1</sup> By suggesting that the "related facilities" component would produce considerable tax revenue, sponsors of the original Kennedy Library plan gained the support from many business and political leaders in Cambridge. Proponents of the original Aquarium at Central Wharf and proposed Aquarium at Dry Dock #2 used this rationale to gain support for their plans. John Prescott, the Director of the Aquarium, heralds

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<sup>1</sup> Robert H. McNulty, The Economics of Amenity: Community Futures and the Quality of Life (Washington, D.C.: Partners For Livable Places, 1985), p. 4.



aquariums as a key factor in revitalizing waterfronts, an urban boon bringing millions of tourist dollars to local economies. The BRA's March 1990 master plan document states that the expansion of the Aquarium will increase "spending by Aquarium visitors from \$6,500,000 to \$9,000,000,"<sup>2</sup> much of this going to Charlestown non-profits and businesses given "priority in the creation of a festival marketplace in a relocated Building 75"<sup>3</sup> in the Navy Yard.

**Both cases involved complex real estate transfers and emerging partnerships engineered over a long time period in a first-of-a-kind transaction, making the whole arrangement especially fragile.**

Development climates changed dramatically over the years during which these cases were played out. Rapidly changing property values and construction costs can be hard to handle for non-profit institutions dependent on the public for financial support. To be effective, public fund-raising usually requires certainty about acquisition of the site and

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<sup>2</sup> Master Plan for the Yard's End, Charlestown Navy Yard, (Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority, January 1990), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

about the feasibility of the design. The Library Corporation gained millions of dollars through a public fund-raising effort at its peak during the years after the President died. By 1970, seven years after the President's death, inflation had eaten away at the initial endowment and donors had become less interested in the cause. Because of a real estate market gone flat, the Aquarium currently faces the disappointing prospect of diminished revenues from the potential sale of Central Wharf. John Wiegel, Vice President of the Raymond Group, makes this observation about the effect of changing market conditions. Several years ago *"Boston was such a hot market that developers were willing and able to accomodate a public benefits package. Today it's not such a hot market and there's a downside -much more equity is demanded from developers, tenants need to be signed earlier, banks are more restrictive in loans. The Aquarium won't sell the Central Wharf site now for what it could have six months ago and won't get what it could now in six months."*

How do local communities perceive the economics of these cases? Sandra Graham from RCCC said, *"Brattle Street felt the value of their property would decrease [because of the*

*increased traffic]. We felt value of our property would increase [because of speculation]" to the point where the traditional community couldn't afford to live in Riverside. Similar concerns motivated opponents to the Aquarium in Charlestown. Would residents be less contentious during a siting process if other opportunities for development were less available?*

**Each project was promoted as an architectural and programming tour de force.**

Ted Musho, the project manager from I.M. Pei's office, describes the templates for memorials from which the Library architects drew their inspiration. *"We don't have the model of a Greek temple to fall back on. The latent image in the soul of every American is really the Lincoln Memorial. I.M. is emotionally carried away with that memorial." Pei's creation was the glass pyramid, the ancestor of the one he finally built at the Louvre in Paris. "It's an analogy of a 'non-memorial' symbol, the New England lighthouse: an ideated sentinel, focus, reminder in the storm. It suggests the Boston Irish coming into the territory guided by a lighthouse," an image "also profoundly relatable to the*

*Chinese and Mr. Pei." By using the "space frame of Buckminster Fuller - an enclosed space in a web of structure, combined with clear glass," the architects intended to "create a sense of place without presumption... it would have been sensational."*

The Aquarium at Dry Dock #2 was described as suggesting "the rhythmic repetition and gestures of detail both grand and intimate which characterize the Navy Yard buildings, and 'industrial strength' buildings of the period(s)."<sup>4</sup> According to its literature, the Aquarium will be "the most spectacular and most technologically advanced in the world."<sup>5</sup>

Such elevated, auteur notions about design heightened the intensity of what was already a charged debate about the facilities. In fact, neighbors often become wary precisely because a design is labeled a "tour de force.

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<sup>4</sup> The New England Aquarium: A Report To Charlestown Community, (Boston: New England Aquarium, June 1989,) p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

In both cases, there was heated controversy on the relationship of the design to the historical, visual, and psychological characteristics of the surrounding environment.

Participants disagreed about whether the design was historically appropriate. In interviews, Library proponents scathingly described the presumptions of preservationist opponents. Chuck Daley, a Vice President of Harvard at the time, says *"Pei showing his beautiful model frightened those who wanted to keep their world the way it was... or the way it never was."* Richard Neustadt claims that by "'65, Harvard Square was already appalling, overcrowded, not beautiful, the traffic pattern already terrible. It was already headed toward boutiques for suburbanites. We never did understand what the other side was preserving."

A Council member and supporter of the Aquarium proposal at #2, Nancy Keyes comments in a similar way about the Navy Yard, *"is it really so historic? Most people remember it as a bad place.. and the Navy Yard was never a place for kids anyway. All they do is run around those vacant buildings."*

However, critics of both developments disagreed with those ideas, claiming that such facilities would interfere with the "human scale" or historical continuity of the neighborhood. Sandra Graham's horror at the "glass pyramid" Pei proposed for the Library eerily augurs Arthur Walsh's derision of the first Aquarium plan: *"it's like taking the Hancock building and laying it down on Dry Dock #2."* (Ironically the Hancock building was designed by one of Pei's partners.)

**Both projects were discussed within the framework of master plans and zoning aimed at controlling growth and tackling difficult environmental problems. Yet, in both cases, critics of the projects worried that developers would attempt to bypass the limits of the plans or that the plan's limits would not be sufficient.**

In Cambridge and Charlestown most residents were delighted with the prospect of recycling older structures or replacing inappropriate or ruined ones. But the plans to build the facility raised serious technical and environmental problems. Searching for an alternative site for the MBTA yards delayed the Library for years. The Aquarium proposal

at #2 required construction of a long, narrow building crowding a recently refurbished park.

Another major issue at both sites was access and parking. How to get automobile and bus traffic in and out of the Library site and Navy Yard was subject to endless debate. Plans for an underground garage for the Library were scotched because the soil was judged too soft to support such a structure. Ad Hoc Coalition members first gathered to raise an alarm because of a rumor that a garage was planned for open space **outside** the Navy Yard.

**In both cases, some participants on each side accused their counterparts of being a "tyrannous minority," behaving with arrogance and deceit.**

**In both cases, the actual time expended in conflict in the siting debate ranged between two to four years.**

In all these dimensions, these two cases are strikingly similar despite their separation by 15 to 20 years. There are differences between the two cases, but one difference seems most important. First, I'll enumerate the more

moderate ones.

### **MAPPING THE DIFFERENCES**

The impact of the death of President Kennedy had a profound affect on the urgency and concept of the Library project; the Aquarium case wasn't propelled by such a powerful factor.

Also, the Aquarium saga hasn't yet become so protracted as the experience of the Library which dragged on for well over a decade.

Another difference is that in the Aquarium case, some residents had already claimed Shipyard Park as a recreational area for families. They considered the site - its view of Boston, the Bunker Hill Memorial, and the water - a special amenity, preserved from development. Other residents claimed the Navy Yard's value was in what secondary benefits could be derived from its development. In the Library case, the community had made no such previous claim on the site of the MBTA yards: the site was not yet "owned" by the community.



In Boston today, the principle of linkage is so well established that neighborhood residents expect compensation for negative impacts of development in the form of jobs or a community fund. This expectation was not present for Cantabridgians during the Library case but was an important impetus for residents of Charlestown.

Another difference in the economics of the two cases was that the real estate market in Harvard Square was already well-established whereas the Navy Yard is still a beachhead for potential investment.

Community activists in the Library case worked at saving several sycamore trees threatened by construction of a small road nearby. That the Navy Yard is a registered historical site brings a complexity to the Aquarium case which far transcends the task of rescuing a few trees by the Charles. The fate of Building 105 is an example. Navy Yard technicians invented an important innovation, the chain link forge in 105. Today, the building contains huge metal machines. The structure is also filled with asbestos that is difficult to remove. The original BRA plan was to convert the headhouse of 105 into an art auction house, demolish the

remaining portion, and leave the machines remaining as exhibits in an outdoor sculpture garden. In contrast, the Preservation Society and National Park Service want to renovate the building so it can contain a museum focusing on technological innovation, a small restaurant, and local businesses. In neither case has a successful solution been devised for dealing with the asbestos.

Another difference is that local preservationists in Charlestown and Boston gained the support of the National Trust for the Preservation of Historic Sites, a well-funded national lobby group. Opponents of the Library did not have a connection to that kind of organization.

**A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE: A FORMALIZED CITIZEN REVIEW PROCESS**

All of these variations look important to the casual observer and one might expect them to lead to different outcomes in the two cases. But one critical difference stands out from all the others: the manner in which citizens participated in the decision-making process changed significantly in the period between the two cases. If one

were pressed to find similarities in the citizen review process one would point to the Harvard Square Development Task Force and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council as analogous groups for comparison.

But there are important differences between these two. In Cambridge, the Task Force was appointed by the city manager to study design, to make recommendations about the Library and related development in Harvard Square, and to "serve as the focus for the participation of various organized groups in Cambridge in the process."<sup>6</sup> However, the Task Force never really got to take center stage, nor perhaps was it intended to.

From the inception of the Library in 1963 to the denouement of the Aquarium case at Dry Dock #2 in 1989, activists and developers accumulated much experience with development processes, including procedures for environmental review. One significant response to past conflicts was the formal inclusion of citizens during the Aquarium case: a

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<sup>6</sup> City of Cambridge, "Draft of Memorandum of Understanding on Project Review Process for Development of Kennedy Library Site," addressed to the Kennedy Library Corporation (April 1973), from Oliver Brooks' private papers.

representative Neighborhood Council voted recommendations about development on publicly owned land. Moreover, Boston Mayor Flynn initiated the neighborhood council structure to give residents a means of defining what benefits should flow from linkage, a function very different from the Task Force's role in the Library case. But what effect did the formalization of the public input process actually have on the outcome of the second case? I turn to this question in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR      EXPLAINING OUTCOMES: CITIZEN REVIEW

This Chapter compares the Harvard Square Development Task Force and the Charlestown Neighborhood Council and tests whether the differences between the two significantly affected events and the outcomes of the two cases. In addition, the Chapter presents observations from participants as a means of exploring if the groups' performances were congruent with their prescribed missions.

In his interview, David Clem, a leader of RCCC, presents this insight about the Library case and how similar siting questions are treated today. *"The 70s were the beginning of change in how large organizations interact with neighborhoods to do business. If the Kennedy Library Corporation would repeat the story today they would handle it differently.*

- they'd find out about the concerns of community;*
- attempt to answer them;*
- and put a proposal out as a result of a process of soliciting neighborhood input, not as a fait accompli."*

However, the outcomes of the two cases were similar. Negotiation became a time-consuming, costly, and rancorous conflict involving many people. Decisions derived more from a fear of litigation rather than a positive compromise worked out within the community forum. Neither facility was sited at the preferred location. At its site in Dorchester, the Library never really achieved its potential as an educational and cultural center. Cantabridgians never enjoyed the benefits the Library might have brought to their community. If the Aquarium is unable to move to the Navy Yard's Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5, a possible result of the conflict, residents would forfeit potential benefits derived from siting the facility nearby. The demoralization costs in both cases are high for all participants, diminishing the potential of achieving efficiency in future siting efforts.

If Clem is right about the current generation of developers handling such controversies differently, why weren't the standards he described applied to the process in the Aquarium case? Perhaps the answer is as simple as one institution not learning from another's experience. Yet, one might argue that the Aquarium developers more carefully

followed Clem's dictum because, on the whole, they behaved as though the Council was the main stage for public discussion. Yet, Library proponents said to me that they were astonished that the Aquarium proponents had learned so little from what happened to the Library and other similar controversies. This suggests that the answer is more complex.

#### **UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AD HOC AND FORMAL REVIEW: THREE CRITERIA**

To establish similarities and contrasts between the Task Force and Council, I sought guidelines which could serve as a basis for comparison. As a starting point, I selected HUD guidelines designed by the Federal government in the mid-60s to insure a greater opportunity for citizens to participate in urban renewal and Model Cities programs. I compare the formal mission statements of the groups and how they actually performed against these criteria.

- 1. The group is to be chosen democratically and represents the community.** "The citizens advisory committee should

include a cross-section of all elements in the community."<sup>1</sup>  
How this committee should be appointed or elected is left up  
to the municipality.

This guideline brings up a number of questions which  
participants in both cases had to face. Who in the community  
is best qualified to "advise" developers? Is there a  
difference if representatives are popularly elected, self-  
selected, or selected by some other authority? What should  
their relationship be with non-profit organizations?

Although non-profits may want to serve their host community  
in some way, its staff and trustees may not necessarily want  
to relinquish control over the siting process to a resident  
group.

#### THE TASK FORCE

One Task Force goal was to channel input from Cambridge  
citizens to the city manager and Library Corporation, a

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1 Department of Housing and Urban Development, Workable Program  
for Community Improvement - Answers on Citizen Participation,  
Program Guide No. 7 (Washington D.C.: February 1966), in Citizen  
Participation In Urban Development, H. B. C. Spiegel, ed.,  
(Washington D.C.: NTL Institute for Applied Behavior, 1968) p.  
26.



difficult function to fulfill considering the Task Force did not represent a diverse base of Cantabridgians. According to Chairperson Oliver Brooks, the Harvard Square Development Task Force was appointed by the Cambridge City Manager from candidates nominated by the Task Force on the basis of expertise in politics, architecture and business. Members had Harvard Square connections through business, residence, politics, or the University, but did not necessarily reside in Cambridge. In terms of race and income, the Task Force did not represent a cross-section of residents in Harvard Square and adjoining neighborhoods. Rather, the Task Force consisted of upper-middle class people, serving their community from a sense of noblesse oblige. In this regard, they were not unlike the Library board, or Harvard's.

Brooks also said that the Task Force was not formally connected to traditional Cambridge political leaders. After the Library decided to move out of Cambridge, these leaders showed their displeasure with the Task Force by taking control of the group from the city manager and appointing new members who supported a pro-development policy. Because the Task Force was perceived as one interest group among many, it became isolated from the larger Cambridge

community.

#### THE COUNCIL

The Charlestown Neighborhood Council was originally created by Mayor Flynn's Office for Neighborhood Services and appointed by the Mayor. Elections were phased in within a year. One representative is elected from each precinct in Charlestown. Seven are elected at large. Other members are representatives from organizations in Charlestown recognized as stable, ongoing contributors to the community. Council membership appears to represent a cross-section of the Town, clearly different from the Task Force: professionals and blue-collar workers, young and elderly, women and men, preservationists and businesspeople, newcomers and long-time residents.

Although members are elected by Charlestown residents, does such a political process insure that representatives will objectively serve the interests of all groups in the community? Or do such elections serve the needs of vested interests? There are a wide range of answers to these questions in Charlestown, usually corresponding to

resident's feelings about the Aquarium.

But first, it might be useful to consider the thinking of theorist Lawrence Susskind. He is skeptical that such representative groups can effectively resolve siting controversies. He suggests that even elected individuals usually represent interest groups and begin their terms of duty determined to "use meetings as a platform...and as a way to generate support,"<sup>2</sup> for their organization, rather than as an occasion to really create new solutions to development issues.

Comments from opponents of the Aquarium reinforce Susskind's notion, claiming that the Council as currently constituted is actually a platform from which political allies of City Hall can better pursue mutual interests. Arthur Walsh says that he *"was infuriated at the meetings. Most of the votes [from members] were from people connected to the City of Boston, either through their own job or their wife's job. It was like a rubber stamp."*

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<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Susskind, The Importance of Citizen Participation and Consensus-Building in the Land Use Planning Process, (Cambridge: prepared for the Lincoln Land Use Symposium, MIT, October 1977), p. 30.

Dennis McLaughlin, Chairperson of the Council, disputes Walsh's claim. He explains that the Town is such a tightly knit place that these cross-cutting allegiances naturally occur. *"How do you disperse it [political power]? It's tough because Charlestown is so small; a lot of interests are interconnected. Everybody knows everybody's business in Charlestown."*

Moreover, other Charlestown observers commented to me that Charlestown's political environment is very competitive, and representation sometimes takes a back seat to inter-Town rivalries. Debate between Council members about an issue like the Aquarium is sometimes shaped by other political or personal agendas. Langley Keyes' remarks about the struggle of early urban renewal ring true in 1990: "the impact of the Townie game of knocking the leader from the top....and the Townie characteristics of social equality and love of political infighting"<sup>3</sup> creates a hot political milieu which makes the planning process much more complicated.

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<sup>3</sup> Langley Carleton Keyes, Jr., The Rehabilitation Planning Game (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), p. 101.

Other critics say that Council representatives are actually a buffer between politicians and people already active in well-organized interest groups. Antonia Pollack, of the Boston Preservation Alliance believes that *"there are enough organizations that have an interest [like] the Charlestown Preservation Society and unions"* and should deal directly with development issues rather than through an intermediary group.

David Pacifaro, management consultant to the Aquarium, disagrees with Pollack, stating that the Council is a good starting point for forming consensus. *"Charlestown's Council is good news because all the associations in town had representation. There is a constituency underneath that. If there are a lot of loosely knitted civic groups, you might have little coalition building"* to form a framework for making decisions, and the Town would spin its wheels on development issues.

At one point in the negotiations, members of the Council suggested that several Charlestown residents serve on the Board of Trustees of the Aquarium. This idea was rejected by the Aquarium Board as being premature. Carrying the idea of

advising on development to actually participating in governing the institution makes sense for Charlestown activists, but was rejected by Aquarium officials.

The Council, despite theoretically being more representative, is a politicized alternative to the non-representative Task Force, an arena where individuals and interest groups in the Council jockey for higher position. The Council serves a useful purpose by becoming a place where representatives from different interest groups meet together, face to face, in the same room and it is clear it is the locus of such communication.

**2. The group deliberates issues in an orderly fashion using pertinent information provided by developers and professional planners. Information and decisions are shared with the wider community.** "The neighborhood citizen participation structure must have sufficient information about any matter to be decided for a sufficient period of time so that it can initiate proposals and react

knowledgeably to proposals from others."<sup>4</sup> To properly obtain information and deliberate in an orderly fashion, the group must be able to "set policy, develop rules and by-laws."<sup>5</sup>

One of the most sensitive tasks for developers is picking the correct time for sharing information with the public. Before financing and feasibility are assured, developers may want to keep information closely guarded. Sometimes, information is shared only to satisfy legal requirements. In other cases, developers may make dramatic public announcements to create excitement and headlines. It is typical in siting cases that residents and sponsors of facilities disagree about the control and meaning of information, and tensions result. Citizen review groups are organized to better manage the flow of information. Poorly timed or worded public announcements can exacerbate that disagreement. Non-profit institutions have the additional problem of wanting to announce early and with certainty

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development, Workable Program for Community Improvement - Answers on Citizen Participation, Program Guide No. 7 (Washington D.C.: February 1966), in H. B. C. Spiegel, ed., op. cit. p 33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 31.

about design and site, so they can begin fundraising for the facility.

#### THE TASK FORCE

Oliver Brooks stated that the Task Force was a seat-of-our-pants operation without by-laws. However, Brooks' records indicate that the Task Force followed a formal protocol during meetings featuring debate, votes, and minutes. Committee reports and Task Force memoranda show a sophisticated analysis of issues.

Brooks' records make it clear that the Task Force was constantly seeking a means of formalizing a relationship with the Library Corporation. However, Brooks believed that the Task Force was not taken seriously by Library planners, and information and collaboration with developers flowed irregularly, at best. On the other hand, the Task Force consulted closely with the city manager and its work was promoted by the city as an important part of the review process.



Brooks remembers that the Task Force called "public meetings occasionally which we didn't do a great deal to publicize...no public workshops, more than occasionally, but they often didn't get much turnout." Library Corporation officials often directly approached members of Neighborhood Ten with plans rather than work through the Task Force. Indeed, there was some overlap of membership of Neighborhood Ten and the Task Force.

The Task Force never took center stage when bargaining took place because participants didn't acknowledge it had that role. Paul Lawrence from Neighborhood Ten, David Clem from RCCC, and, on the other side, Dan Fenn from the Kennedy Library agree about the lack of a formal public meeting place where representatives really sat down to listen to one another. Fenn says, "There were a lot of meetings, smaller ones. But I don't remember a meeting where Steve [Smith, Director of the Library Corporation], I.M. [Pei, the architect] and I said, 'ok, everybody, come Tuesday night.' There was no open public meeting where everything was on the table, where we were much other than combative in our own thinking. We were listening to them more in the sense of buying them off - not thinking that they live here and have

*a right to say what they want."*

Lawrence describes the effect of a lack of a neutral public forum. *"I wish I could have known how to go about having a calm discussion at key points. I never felt I could initiate conversations. We felt out of touch with the decision-makers.. They said, 'we can't understand that - we made presentations.' I literally didn't know who to talk to."* Clem concurs: *"there were no formal mechanisms for public discussion. The idea was that none of the individual organizations had capacity to hold such a meeting, although there were lots of meetings between leadership."*

Therefore, despite the expertise and good will of individual Task Force members, the Task Force was not collectively defined as the center for conducting an orderly public dialogue employing commonly acknowledged processes for sharing information and debate.

#### THE COUNCIL

The Charlestown Neighborhood Council is governed by a set of by-laws outlining its role, organization, and process.

Council by-law Article 8 defines the extent of public access: "all meetings of the Council, Council Committees and the Annual Convention will be open to the public... and advertised to insure the broadest possible participation." The Neighborhood Council conducts a regularly scheduled public meeting each month during which Charlestown residents can introduce community issues they feel aren't getting significant attention through other channels.

Article I also defines the Council's role to "increase communication between the neighborhood and city departments and agencies and to provide structured participation in city government decisions affecting land use, development, service delivery.... related to Charlestown."

An important task for the Council has been to create an environment where citizens could gain access to and discuss information about development plans. Chairperson Dennis McLaughlin says that *"previously [before the Council], people would attend a meeting and come loaded for bear and would yell at an official, yelling at neighbors - we don't want that yelling from an audience. We want it more formal - they gave me a gavel."* McLaughlin says a difficult job has

been "setting ground rules to respect a process -closing times, respect for everybody's voice" in the charged environment of Charlestown politics.

David Pacifaro uses an "argument from social necessity" to describe how the process of Council meetings is important. By gaining access to information and having an opportunity to speak at regularly scheduled meetings, residents become integrated into the processes of planning development as a practical means of ensuring their success.<sup>6</sup> Pacifaro says that "the Council gives processes an orderly fashion. I don't have to broker consensus - you have a forum to do it in." The BRA, New England Aquarium, and private developers also participated in the forum and consulted with Council committees.

Between 30 and 150 people attended the meetings I observed. At special meetings called by the Council, representatives of the BRA outlined the grand scope of their thinking. In addition, the Council and the BRA sponsored a series of

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<sup>6</sup> Harold Goldblatt, "Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal" (Washington D.C.: Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area, January 1966), in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, H.B.C. Spiegel, ed., op. cit., p. 31.

focus groups open to the general public during which presentations were made by planners about specific issues, questions were asked, and some debate took place. The Council also held open meetings where citizens spoke out about development issues, particularly the Aquarium.

Council meetings were conducted through a parliamentary procedure, and members deftly used those rules to steer the debate to their advantage. These meetings were sometimes very heated, pugnacious events during which residents would verbally pummel the BRA, other officials, members of the Council, and each other. Much of the debate was well-informed. At other meetings open to the public, Council members debated development proposals and then voted a recommendation.

Experienced observers could accurately predict how members would vote on issues. Yet, a number of the meetings I attended had an air of high drama about them: how members and residents debated and interacted with each other during meetings had nearly as much symbolic meaning as results of the Council vote.

Who controls information is a crucial concern of community participants. From listening to discussion at meetings, it was clear that certain members had greater access to important information from the Aquarium and BRA than others, a condition which led to open tension among members. The logistics of keeping 28 people equally informed is difficult. However, it's undoubtedly true that developers are selective about divulging information to particular members when it lends some advantage. Despite a formalized process in meetings, therefore, residents and Council members struggled with each other and the BRA and Aquarium over control of information.

If the struggle to obtain crucial information is just as difficult during the Aquarium review as the Library case, a formalized process will be just as unlikely to lead to significantly different outcomes as an informal one. The announcement of the Aquarium's intentions to move to the Navy Yard is a prime example of many Council members being informed only at the last moment. Interviewees are divided as to whether the timing and style of the announcement was a tactical ploy to divert potential opponents, a sensible decision, or just a hurried public expression of pure joy,

as one interviewee characterized how the mood of the BRA and Aquarium might have been: *"oh, mygod, we can do this - someone's gonna let us have our dream."*

When information was accessible, the Council became involved in considering a broad range of issues, some which were technically complex. BRA professionals felt the Council worked best as a listening post to neighborhood concerns. BRA architect Bassim Halabi explains that in *"meetings with the Council you hear about the deep problems in the neighborhood - what's wrong, what they think should be done."* Victor Karen concurs with his colleague that the BRA seriously considers the Council's consultation on *"a benefits package, a sense of what will make this [the Aquarium] more connected to the community in terms of recreation, business, affordable housing, and jobs."*

Participants had different viewpoints about the capacity of Council members to deal with technical issues of development: architectural design, economics, and traffic. Linda Smith from the Raymond Group says that micro-management of development decisions taking place in Council committees hindered effective planning -- better to leave it

up to professionals. McLaughlin also points out the limitations the Council has in dealing with data. *"We have accomplished getting dialogue out in public now so we can't bring things to premature conclusions.... [but] we have to recognize that we go from plateau to plateau, and acknowledge our limitations, technical and especially environmental and legal - the community isn't qualified."*

The view that Council members should concentrate on advising professionals about linkage packages is quite different from that of other residents and Council members who want to study and debate implications of technical data. At meetings I observed, members of the Council and attending residents made very astute comments on BRA estimations of traffic density, for example. During the struggle over urban renewal in the early 60s, Charlestown residents also feared they weren't getting enough information. Therefore, how information was generated, interpreted, and distributed seems to be a recurring source of conflict in development debates in Charlestown. Formalizing the review process doesn't completely alleviate tensions which result from disagreements over who controls information and what information is relevant.



3. **The citizen group has meaningful authority in determining the outcome of development issues.** "Opportunities should be afforded area residents to participate actively in planning and carrying out the demonstration." <sup>7</sup>

#### THE TASK FORCE

Brooks points out in his interview that the Task Force was formed to *"assist in finding answers to questions.... to be helpful...to prepare land-use suggestions and limitations which would be helpful.... citizen comment, yes, but no sign-off."* The Library Corporation and Harvard University were not answerable to the Task Force in any way. However, Brooks says, *"we quickly became so well informed that the (City) Manager by-and-large took our recommendations unless it was politically off-the-wall. Our only leverage was being appointed by the city manager."*

Representatives of the Library Corporation and Harvard University never formally recognized the Task Force's

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<sup>7</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development Model Cities Administration, CDA Letter No. 3, (Washington D.C.: , October 30, 1967), in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, H. B. C. Spiegel, ed., op. cit.. p. 30.

authority, in part because the Task Force was seen as part of the opposition's camp. Neighborhood Ten and RCCC preferred to operate independently. No matter how informed Task Force members were, the group was never seen as a neutral body and, consequentially, lost authority.

#### THE COUNCIL

The Charlestown Neighborhood Council has a clearer official mandate of authority than the Task Force. A statement from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, the "Charlestown Neighborhood Council," defines this authority: "the Council cannot force any city agency to do as it says, but it can inform the Mayor of Charlestown's feelings on any subject and recommend that they take specific actions. When its recommendations are not followed, the Council can and does press for explanations."

The formal, explicit expression of the Council's authority is a vote. Yet, it's not clear what voting majority is necessary to recommend or stop a development proposal from going forward to the BRA Board hearing. McLaughlin says about the vote on the original Aquarium plan: "*The support*

for Dry Dock #2 was two to one [actually, 14 to 5] but that wasn't enough, if the level of opposition is that great." What numbers deter the BRA and Aquarium from going forward with a proposal? Such parameters are only vaguely defined: whether or not the Council has a veto power hasn't yet been tested, although it became clear during the Aquarium vote on #2 that 14 to 5 in favor is considered only borderline support. Rather, a Council vote on recommendations indicates to developers and the BRA the depth of support and resistance - the level of risk - facing a project in Charlestown. Given the fact that the Aquarium proposal was approved by the Council yet dropped by the BRA, I conclude that the Council's approval of a development proposal is probably less meaningful in getting a project done than their disapproval is in stopping it.

Beside the explicit authority of its vote, the Council is endowed with implicit powers. Some residents see the Council as a means of becoming empowered, an "argument for democracy ... where citizen participation is considered to be nothing less than democratic procedure and hence, a self-justifying end in itself."<sup>8</sup> McLaughlin says, "it's not a

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<sup>8</sup> Harold Goldblatt, op. cit., p. 34.

*case of criticizing for the sake of criticizing. It's learning how to politic, a discipline. This process gets me into the ballgame. There's a way to address my stuff, too."*

A member of the Ad Hoc Coalition, Arthur Walsh, expresses a similar, yet more minimalist, rationale for the importance of the Council: *"at least you're aware of what's going on - in meetings and minutes. Before we were just told the BRA voted to do this or that. Now you can get up and say something.. there is a record of what goes on."*

Some of the Council's strength comes from collaboration between moderate members and the loyal opposition in leveraging benefits out of developers. Kathryn Downing believes that the previous Kevin White administration had the practice of *"giving land to a connected developer;"* now the Council and loyal opposition (i.e., the Ad Hoc Coalition) can work together to get higher value returned to Charlestown for development there. That the Aquarium did make concessions in their proposal over the course of debate supports her thinking. McLaughlin agrees: *"Kathryn and I form a check and balance. People get something - the balance does get struck."*

Yet, McLaughlin also cautions that *"there is a danger in too much empowerment. Some faith has to be given to the system. it gets to be a problem when community debate goes on too long - it effectively stops development."*

Now that the Council mechanism has been invented and residents have gotten a taste of power, it's difficult for institutions like the BRA to limit how people use the opportunity. Robert Seaver wrote in the early 60s: "A reality is that, once begun, engagement is not something that can readily be turned off or manipulated to some predetermined end. Its initiation represents a commitment on the part of local government and its professional establishment to let the people have their say and to respond reasonably to their expressions. Failure to fulfill the commitment will not end the process, only escalate it via other channels." <sup>9</sup>

Developers and the BRA may see the Council's realm as advisory and hope to use the Council to more effectively guide the development process. However, planners cannot

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<sup>9</sup> Robert C. Seaver, "Pratt Planning Papers, 4" ( New York City: The Pratt Institute, 1960-65), in Citizen Participation in Urban Development , H. B. C. Spiegel, ed., op. cit., p. 67.

dominate a citizen review group if they want it to be considered legitimate by the community. Antonia Pollack of the Preservation Society believes that the recommendations of the Council are *"incredibly structured... decisions had already been made. Its too well orchestrated. They listen to Coyle [the BRA Director]."* Yet, she thinks that *"Coyle has empowered the public [through the review process] and now he has to live with it,"* meaning that opponents will use the Council forum, and other available arenas, to pursue their goals.

The level of Council authority is continuously being defined. I suggest this ambiguity serves activists on both sides of an issue. Because the authority of the Council recommendation is ambiguous, opponents felt hopeful about entering the debate. It is precisely because interest groups sense they can slow the process of development through Council deliberations that residents have room to maneuver, organize, and make adjustments - and for proponents to respond.

The ambiguity of the Council's authority also serves the developer's and BRA's ends, as well. Peter Steele from the

National Park Service describes how the ambiguity of Council authority is a means of achieving a flexible balance of power between Charlestown residents and the City administration: *"the Council gives the city a way to involve neighborhoods without losing complete control."* Smart developers can find a way to maneuver fluidly within the Council's less than air-tight process and ability to resolve issues.

Planner Victor Karen sees it as a learning process. *"It sort of works. Maybe they and we get better at it. The time frame will get shorter. They'll learn a vocabulary and it'll be easier to get things done. The BRA and developers will learn, also."*

**DESPITE THESE DIFFERENCES IN THE CITIZEN REVIEW PROCESS, THE OUTCOMES OF THE CASES ARE SIMILAR**

The major difference between the two cases, a formalized citizen participation process, has brought changes. Formalizing the review process has empowered some residents who might earlier have been left out of the loop and made representatives of institutions more accountable to the

public record. Also, it enables residents to strategize more effectively to leverage benefits out of development.

However, my original theory was that if the difference in the formalization of citizen review was a significant factor, it would lead to different outcomes. However, even with the benefits from the Council, the outcomes are similar. Original plans were dropped after long, difficult debate, in part, because of the potential delays and costs of litigation. Also, both cases left a residue of uncertainty and continued distrust among participants. If the Aquarium case is an indicator, the Council forum has not been a place where exceptional solutions have been created to solve development conflicts.

Therefore, there must be other factors that outweigh the effect that a formalized citizen review process generated, and cause such cases to have such similar outcomes. In the next chapter, I will present factors common to each case which I believe account for the similar outcomes.



## CHAPTER FIVE      EXPLAINING OUTCOMES: BEYOND CITIZEN REVIEW

Initially, the Aquarium was in a favorable position in Charlestown. Many residents perceived the proposed facility as an amenity. The formalized citizen review process seemed capable of bringing together all stakeholders, including those concerned about the impacts of the facility. Yet, the outcome at Dry Dock #2 closely resembles the outcome of the Library's effort in Cambridge: the non-profit institutions were unable to site their facility at their preferred locations, a decision largely prompted by the threat of litigation. Saying that the similar outcome happened despite the difference in processes is, of course, not an explanation of why it happened. In this Chapter I'll draw out other factors common to the two cases which, taken together, drove events to a parallel outcome. Some of these factors are typical to all siting cases; others are particular to non-profit institutions.

I observed that in both cases participants expressed four kinds of concerns about the impact of the proposed facilities. Although presented separately, these concerns are often connected and compound each other. If they are

present, outcomes will more likely be similar no matter how citizen input is structured.

1. The design of the physical structure and layout is a matter of conflict. Critics say, "this building is ugly/the wrong material" or "there isn't enough open space next to the building." Proponents claim the building is beautiful.

2. Participants disagree about impact on the local environment. "These trees/historic buildings will be destroyed. Traffic congestion will turn the streets into one big parking lot." Sponsors say that "shuttle buses will mitigate traffic congestion."

3. There is disagreement over priorities and values. Local residents claim that "if all these tourists come here, the play areas for children will be taken over." Non-profit institutions like the Aquarium and Kennedy Library have a more broad-based public interest orientation. They say, "this facility is necessary because it serves a regional public need."

4. Participants envision themselves as engaged in a David and Goliath confrontation: "Those big guys think they can just come into our territory and take what they want;" or, "That little group of elitist fanatics thinks it can tell everybody else what to do."

## A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

A complete map of explanations considers all of these concerns. I want to move to the theories about the outcomes of the two cases formulated by individuals who actually participated in them. But let me begin with several theories about siting controversy which come from literature in planning and economics. Three theories, in particular, would predict similar outcomes in these two cases.

1. Lawrence Susskind focuses on the difficult process of negotiation among multiple parties dealing with multiple issues. He believes that "the forms of traditional participatory efforts are, for the most part, inadequate to the task of bargaining or conflict mediation which is, in fact, what land use planning ought to be about."<sup>1</sup> He disparages traditional efforts to involve citizens in facility siting as inadequate. Elected or appointed blue-ribbon panels like the Task Force or Council, he says, typically present fixed choices that have previously been

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Susskind, The Importance Of Citizen Participation and Consensus-Building in the Land Use Planning Process (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute Land Use Institute Symposium, M.I.T., October 1977), p. 31.

made. He suggests that these groups have little capacity to create new solutions. Therefore, such outcomes like the ones we find in the Library and Aquarium cases are to be expected.

2. Instead of focusing on transforming the process of bargaining, Richard Andrews looks at the deep strata beneath the concerns I have outlined. Without resolution of conflict over these concerns, participants in the debate fear they will lose economic and psychological control of their environments. "We must recognize the real issues underlying the apparent ones...There may be much more deep-set questions of autonomy, of culture, of peer approval of positions."<sup>2</sup> He would claim that the outcomes of the cases are similar because participants don't pay enough attention to these buried concerns.

3. O'Hare, Bacow, and Sanderson suggest that siting conflicts occur because of inherent positions separating developers and community residents. Sponsors of projects expect their property development rights to be upheld if

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<sup>2</sup> David Laws, "Case Studies and Questions" (October 27, 1983), in unpublished notes from discussions at The National Workshop on Facility Siting, p. 3.

technical procedures demonstrate that the development would not be detrimental to the public as a whole. "In addition, they expect development of facilities to be beneficial to the local community, and expect the community to perceive this,"<sup>3</sup> even more for non-profit institutions developing amenities. However, many communities are distrustful of developers because they've been misled in the past. Residents believe that "property development rights take a back seat to the community's right to 'control its own destiny.'"<sup>4</sup> Such differing perceptions lead to a direct clash of expectations among community and developers. The siting process itself is adversarial and most efforts for reform through increased public participation has "done little more than increase public access to courts."<sup>5</sup>

By superimposing these formal theories onto events in the two cases we can begin to better understand what occurs in facility siting cases. It is also useful to sort through the

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<sup>3</sup> Michael O'Hare, Lawrence Bacow, and Debra Sanderson, Facility Siting and Public Opposition (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 44.

observations of individuals who actually participated in the cases to uncover other factors, some of which highlight dilemmas facing non-profit institutions in such cases.

### **EIGHT ROBUST 'FOLK THEORIES' EXPLAIN THE SIMILAR OUTCOMES**

Many interviewees presented informal "folk theories" to explain events in these two cases. What was striking to me is that interviewees in the two cases developed the same list independently. This robustness indicates that we should consider whether they are significant factors in explaining why the cases had such similar outcomes. These theories all deal with the interplay between the internal predispositions of participating institutions and external constraints affecting the actions of participants. I will also comment on how these theories apply to non-profit institutions, in particular.

#### 1. INDIVIDUALS ARE DECISION-MAKERS AND SET EXPECTATIONS

**The outcome is the result of one or two powerful individuals.**

Dan Fenn pointed out that individuals create certain outcomes. Many of the interviewees depicted individual participant's styles and choices as crucial factors determining the course of events. Leaders like Stephen Coyle and Steve Smith were often characterized as dictating events. One observer said about John Prescott: *"Prescott came from Marineland in San Diego. Prescott is central... he wants to make the world's greatest Aquarium - a tremendous ambition to do something great."*

Certainly, leaders can create a long-term vision and a climate for negotiation. But if powerful individuals are the most important factor in determining siting outcomes, why didn't they get their way in these two cases?

Especially because they work in non-profit institutions, these entrepreneurial leaders have a more limited repertoire of options for taking risks necessary to fulfill their visions. Not only must they cope with stringent governmental restrictions on their activities, but they are less flexible in shifting their institution's financial resources into new ventures. Leaders in a private firm can more easily "select market niches that allow them to avoid heavy governmental

entanglement."<sup>6</sup> Not having this flexibility, leaders of non-profit institutions are more dependent on the generosity of donors. The vision of a charismatic, entrepreneurial leader like John Prescott is bounded by these limitations.

Furthermore, organizations like the BRA, Aquarium and Kennedy Library Corporation are not monolithic institutions following the dictates of one person. Many subgroups, inside and outside of the organization, promote contradictory views of what the organization should produce.<sup>7</sup> Such tension within the BRA was reported by Kathryn Downing. BRA staff had diverse ideas about which options were best concerning the Dry Dock #2 proposal. Indeed, moles within the BRA actually lent valuable assistance to the efforts of the Ad Hoc Coalition's efforts. Clearly, the "individual as decision-maker" theory isn't sufficient to explain the similar outcome of the two cases.

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<sup>6</sup>Dennis Young, "Executive Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations" in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter W. Powell, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> Rosabeth Moss Kanter and David V. Summers, "Doing Well while Doing Good: Dilemmas of Performance Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations and the Need for a Multiple-Constituency Approach," in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter W. Powell, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 137.



2. NON-PROFITS ARE INEXPERIENCED AND SOMETIMES AMBIVALENT  
ABOUT PLANNING REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

**Some interviewees claimed that these institutions, in particular the Aquarium, simply didn't have the capacity to be real estate developers.**

Siting facilities entails unpredictable costs for any developer. Non-profit institutions, in particular, are often neither capable nor willing to enter the risky waters of real estate development. Non-profits are not internally self-sufficient because their options for shifting resources are more limited than those of private-sector firms. As a result, they are less capable of using debt financing to fund real-estate development, and become dependent on key funding sources and the good will of the public for financial support.<sup>8</sup> Both the Kennedy Library and Aquarium could proceed with their plans only after receiving donations of property.

Furthermore, because they must pay careful attention to

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<sup>8</sup> Walter W. Powell and Rebecca Friedkin, "Organizational Change in Nonprofit Organizations" in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter Powell, ed., op. cit., p. 183.

cultivating their image as socially responsible organizations to ensure this stream of support,<sup>9</sup> organizations like the Aquarium and Library are less likely to resort to litigation to pursue their real estate ambitions because of potential damage to their public persona as a "good" institution.

Bill Whitney, planner at the Aquarium, explains the institution's limitations this way: *"The Aquarium is very good at what it knows but isn't very good at doing what they don't know how to do. It's a hard thing - as much as you want this to be a museum... it's not a down and dirty development nor is it a noble institution whom everybody loves. The Aquarium needs to be more sanguine about all that, understand we are a developer."*

In addition, there are often tensions within non-profit organizations concerning priorities: should scarce resources be dedicated toward the mission to serve the public (and which public?) or toward institutional growth? These

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<sup>9</sup>Dennis Young, "Executive Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations" in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter W. Powell, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 177.

tensions make it more likely that such organizations will be ambivalent about acting in the role of developer.

Moreover, Middleton notes that a high-status, non-profit board like the Aquarium's offers such important social benefits to its members that they are loath to disrupt their relationships with each other by tackling controversial issues, like a public conflict over siting a new facility. "It appears that the board structure of many of the most enduring and stable organizations leads them to emphasize the status quo."<sup>10</sup>

One observer of the Aquarium confirms these theoretical speculations in this description of its Board: "*The Aquarium is not a private corporation with merger and acquisitions [departments]. Even internally there was some opposition to expansion on the Board, members who don't want change and think things now are fine. They're on the Board for all sorts of reasons. People are stakeholders, not shareholders. They do what they can.*"

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<sup>10</sup> Melissa Middleton, "Nonprofit Boards of Directors: Beyond the Governance Function", in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter Powell, ed., op. cit., p. 147.

Such internal frictions make it less likely that the organization will have the combined skill and drive required to make a real estate deal of the kind attempted at Dry Dock #2 in Charlestown.

That the Aquarium, in particular, experienced difficulty transforming itself from a beloved non-profit organization into a developer is predictable; this factor significantly affected the outcome of that case.

The Kennedy Library Corporation was also bound by the difficulty of reconciling its entrepreneurial goals with its social mission, only from a slightly different angle. Another trap for non-profits is that they tend to believe so strongly in their mission that "failure to achieve goals is taken not as a sign of weakness in the organization but as a sign that efforts should be intensified."<sup>11</sup> The sort of gritty, can-do attitude of Library Corporation leaders described by John Stewart suggests that the obstacles blocking them actually reinforced their determination to

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<sup>11</sup> Rosabeth Kanter and David V. Summers, "Doing Well While Doing Good: Dilemmas of Performance Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations and the Need for a Multiple-Constituency Approach," in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter W. Powell, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 164.

forge ahead, despite clear signals that they should reevaluate.

Harvard University, in contrast, is an experienced developer. Yet it was also constrained by its need to be perceived as a good neighbor by abutters, since its home is in Cambridge.

### 3. THE RATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF TRUST BREAKS DOWN DURING DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, INCREASING THE POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICT.

Conflicts such as these involve large sets of players working within complex institutions operating according to standard procedures. Such procedures often function poorly in times of conflict. "Particularly critical (situations) that typically do not have 'standard' characteristics are often handled sluggishly or inappropriately."<sup>12</sup> As a result, the potential for mistrust is reinforced.

In both cases, participants described their feeling of not

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<sup>12</sup> Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 89.

really being listened to, not knowing how to initiate conversations, never being clear about what the other side actually needed. Throughout these two cases, individuals often blamed each other's arrogance for damaging communication when negotiations were arduous. Perhaps, the more profound problem was to create better internal guidelines for resolving crisis.

Because the Task Force and Council formats failed to successfully resolve smaller, earlier conflicts, breakdowns occurred over the Aquarium. David Pacifaro, a consultant to the Aquarium, dispassionately describes how trust dissolved and led to the controversy at Dry Dock #2. *"In a feasibility study you need trust built up to say 'I don't have answers now. Therefore we need to work together, a leap of faith.' The leap of faith never occurred because the group [the Council Planning and Zoning Committee] felt they'd been burned on the master plan by the BRA. They [the Committee] thought the BRA had betrayed them on the master plan in May, '88 - that's in terms of bringing the Aquarium in, among other things. 'You knew about the Aquarium and let us pass it [the master plan] even though you knew it [the plan] would be junked?'"* Early conflict over smaller issues

led to a breakdown which the Council was not capable of mending, in part, because the various parties lacked that capability.

Allies in a project can also lose trust with one another. Although the National Park Service supported the Aquarium proposal, Peter Steele became disenchanted with the principle sponsors because they simply failed to communicate their intentions in a timely fashion. *"The vote was in favor of #2 but the BRA and Aquarium -without notifying us - said 'we can't go to #2.' Then their [the Aquarium and BRA] story changed regarding #5, 'we'll go to #5'... which they had previously said was impossible. The ending left a sour taste to those of us who were supportive. They walked away from #2... not even a word to us. And we'd spent money, time, energy on this."* Why weren't the BRA and Aquarium organizations more effective in maintaining communication with the Park Service? One reason could be that, given the crisis, their internal processes broke down and were unable to cover all the important bases.

Non-profit organizations provide services which are intangible and hard to measure,<sup>13</sup> whereas firms in the private sector can more easily measure success by the level of profit achieved. Thus, given such ambiguous operating objectives, non-profits experience a loose coupling between official mission and operative goals. As a result, rational planning in non-profits can be quite difficult and "signals indicating unacceptable goals are less effective and take longer to come."<sup>14</sup> Given this built-in inefficiency in the standard operating procedures of organizations, non-profits like the Library Corporation or Aquarium might have more difficulty finding their way out of particularly critical situations during conflicts over siting facilities.

Ted Musho, architect with I. M. Pei, reflects on the inadequacy of normal procedures when issues have become intensely controversial. *"I was a professional so couldn't really be an advocate. There was such baiting - it was a*

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<sup>13</sup> Rosabeth Moss Kanter and David V. Summers, "Doing Well while Doing Good: Dilemmas of Performance Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations and the Need for a Multiple-Constituency Approach," in The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook, Walter W. Powell, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 163.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 163.



*part of the problem...no leap of faith, always adversarial. Smith's [President of the Library Corporation] presentation during the EIS was well-primed, rehearsed. But the situation was always confrontational. We do more studies to understand what we're doing than anybody could imagine. That's how Mr. Pei is."*

Taken alone, however, technical studies cannot substitute for astute management of conflict during siting controversies. The procedures of the large institutions did not sufficiently direct a way out of crisis. For instance, the Aquarium claimed it was either Dry Dock #2, or nothing, a tactic which Bill Whitney described as an "egocentric attitude about being sure of things." The Ad Hoc Coalition seemed to work more efficiently. Even though some of its members opposed any plan for an Aquarium in the Navy Yard, the Coalition compromised among themselves to present an alternative option - the site at Dry Dock #5 - to sponsors of the Aquarium. Perhaps the Coalition's smaller size and narrow focus enabled it to deal more flexibly with conflict than the large institutions.

4. BAD OUTCOMES OCCUR BECAUSE PROFESSIONALS AND LAYPEOPLE  
DISTRUST EACH OTHER AND MAKE DECISIONS DIFFERENTLY.

**Professionals are involved in creative and technical operations that are incompatible with the demands and process of working with communities.**

Michael O'Hare theorizes about why distrust exists between communities and professionals, and scolds both groups. "People have withdrawn authority from experts and government. The reason is not that technocrats are wrong-headed or hold illegitimate values or serve an oppressor class, but that we [technocrats] haven't been doing our job. Answering the wrong questions, and multiplying the wrong numbers, analysts, facility developers, and even opponents have consistently looked in the wrong places."<sup>15</sup> In Charlestown and Cambridge, laypeople have traditionally been distrustful of expert opinion. Where do experts and laypeople look when seeking such answers?

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<sup>15</sup> Michael O'Hare, "Risk Anticipation As a Social Cost," (Cambridge: an unpublished paper presented at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Roundtable, August 1989), p. 2.

Perhaps citizens and experts have clashing work styles and define their missions quite differently. On the level of simply managing time, it's difficult for public forums like the Council to mesh the schedules and styles of laypeople and professionals. Architects and laypeople work according to different rhythms. Dan Fenn describes how conflict results from this difference. *"I.M. Pei doesn't want someone screwing around with his plan. I objected to the pyramid. They [Pei's firm] said, 'it's too late. We have to push the model as is.' It's [architecture] a creative process. You write until the night before and there's an unfolding internally, even if Pei were disposed to negotiate with the community. The process by which these things get negotiated goes against that."*

In addition, there are always some professionals and citizens who are such true believers in their own viewpoints, that they don't look towards compromise as a place for answers. Musho expresses his perspective as an architect: *"To do a piece of architecture is a love affair. The architect is by definition self-serving, and you can't overcome that dilemma with the community."*

Furthermore, some professionals believe that laypeople overestimate their own expertise, rendering the process inefficient. Linda Smith suggests that: *"Flagship Wharf [a condominium development in the Navy Yard] operated on a very narrow margin of profit. They [the neighborhood] don't understand or choose to understand the economics. The work on the master plan allowed a group of people to be architects without any education or understanding about the technical aspects."*

Some community participants, on the other hand, believe that professionals performed poorly in designing the building Smith mentions. The Council format actually encourages laypeople to contribute to decisions despite their lack of specialized training. And residents can be just as insistent as professionals about the correctness of their own opinions: after all, they consider it "their" neighborhood. Council member Kate McDonough says, *"I remember being angry with the BRA and Aquarium who wanted to see it happen in #2 and laughed at #5 as an idea."*

Bassim Halabi from the BRA believes that the conflict between laypeople and professional staff always exists:

"You're [the professional] always in default. You have to be very careful to make clear it's not final, you're sharing. They sometimes ask, 'why weren't we included from the start?' But when is the beginning?"

Halabi implies that professionals and laypeople typically have difficulty achieving a happy collaboration, a problem built into the complexity of their mutual task. This gulf between the two groups is an important factor contributing to the similar outcome of such cases.

5. BOTH CASES HAD SIMILAR OUTCOMES BECAUSE OF THE INCAPACITY OF THE INSTITUTIONS TO CORRECTLY ASSESS COMMUNITY INPUT ABOUT THE PROJECTS.

**Institutions and residents lacked necessary information about each other, leading to misunderstanding and conflict.**

Some interviewees suggested that conflicts arose because technical aspects of the project were not effectively presented and residents didn't have adequate information for making a "better" decision. Ted Musho says: "we didn't make a large enough context model [a model of the site within the

*neighborhood]. 'let's look at this in context.' [as it relates to a much larger geographical area]."*

Pacifaro, consultant to the Aquarium, claims that the Aquarium had not developed the technical data which the community wanted to have regarding Dry Dock #2 because the process was in such an early stage. "The Aquarium was saying, 'we want your ok to study this site.' The opponents were saying [during the debate on Dry Dock #2], 'Nothing till you guarantee me the outcomes will be ok.' We [Aquarium sponsors] can't go in with immature proposals to mature questions. Now, the proposal [Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5] has flesh on its bones - traffic count, number of visitors, water shuttle routes, costs, sources of money, footprint." He maintains that community demands for precise information were out of synch with what sponsors were capable of producing. In both cases, proponents and opponents disagreed about whether sponsors were incapable or unwilling to produce data.

In addition to the difficulty of appropriately sequencing information, non-profit developers can easily misinterpret how local communities perceive the costs of accepting their

proposals. The likelihood of this misinterpretation increases when the plan is greeted by an initial blast of public and media enthusiasm, and when the proposed facility is an amenity that pleases a broad geographical reach of people.

It is no guarantee that a proposed facility will be accepted even if diffuse benefits exceed local costs.<sup>16</sup> One could stretch that idea: the community may harbor good will towards a non-profit institution that fosters widely diffused benefits; but that goodwill may not necessarily convey local acceptance of the costs of development. In the Kennedy Library and Aquarium cases, the non-profit institutions confused the community's goodwill for approval of the development. Sandra Graham, from RCCC describes the dynamic: *"John Kennedy was well liked and going against him was like going against the most popular President in our times. But going against that and living with [the Library] are two different things. We love Kennedy. We were 'anti' that kind of development."* David Pacifaro shared an identical insight about the Aquarium case: *"It's damn near impossible to transfer this goodwill to a development*

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<sup>16</sup> O'Hare, Bacow, and Sanderson. op. cit., p. 68.

*project and have that goodwill carry the day. Everybody loves the Aquarium. The members of the AD Hoc Coalition are fans of the Aquarium but not Aquarium development fans."*

Accurately assessing these costs and benefits, and determining exactly whom to satisfy, is a difficult task for non-profits juggling demands from both local residents and a more distant constituency. Chuck Daly, Vice-President of Harvard University, expressed how perplexed he was in attempting that calculation. *"If you'd cast it [the Library proposal] to a vote to the people of Cambridge, it [the vote in favor] would have been a landslide. How wide should the community be? Just the neighbors? We listened to all the players but the 80% to 90% of Cambridge that supported the Library were difficult to mobilize. People have to make a living -they don't have the time [to be active on these issues]."*

What Daley and other sponsors didn't understand is that abutters believe that their per capita costs will be great if the facility is sited; whereas more numerous, scattered supporters perceive that their per capita benefit will not be so significant. Therefore, it is often easier for



opponents to mobilize popular resistance among abutters against a facility than it is for sponsors to mobilize support from allies who are geographically widely distributed. Supporters of proposals who live in a distant suburb look at powerful institutions like Harvard University and the Aquarium and say, "I like the idea of a new Aquarium at that site. But I have more important issues closer to home. Let them take care of it. They can handle it."

6. CASES LIKE THIS END IN CLASS CONFLICT LEADING TO DECISIONS UNDESIRE BY EITHER SIDE.

**Opponents criticized each other on the basis of perceived class distinctions.**

In these two cases, many interviewees suggested that the conflict was rooted in class differences; curiously, though, the different coalitions supporting and opposing the facilities were fairly heterogeneous in terms of class.

The upper-middle class received the most bashing. Richard Neustadt belittled Neighborhood Ten resistance to the Library: "it was an "upper-middle class thing. Too many

tourists and swelling congestion. 'keep the hoi polloi out of here.' It rallied enough people on Brattle Street to involve the courts." Dan Fenn also chided Library opponents in a similar class-critical way: "You [the sponsors of the Library] deal with a station wagon set. For them, this is the only thing [resisting the Library] they're doing. They have access, they're sophisticated and wealthy, committed, and single-minded."

Saundra Graham also takes a shot at upper-middle class participants, only in her view they are supporters of development like the Library. "Harvard Square has changed. It's filled with Phds and architects and consultants and it's a shopping mall for their lifestyle. It's no longer an all-kinds of people community. When I was a kid, you knew who lived next door. But now you have a bunch of individuals who don't want to be bothered. You need a PHD to get into the door for jobs. A neighborhood person gets a job as a maid or janitor or a word processor."

The Ad Hoc Coalition was criticized for being elitist and for using scare tactics to involve public housing tenants. Kathryn Downing acknowledges that "we were called a bunch of

elitists and were successfully discredited in the beginning. But we succeeded in developing a broad range of supporters." She, in turn, aims the class argument at trustees of the Aquarium, pointing out that the Aquarium rejected the Neighborhood Council's proposal to seat Charlestown residents on their Board. "It's also a cultural thing- the Board of Directors [of the Aquarium] are from Weston and Wellsley and felt entitled to tell Charlestown what to do: 'this is what you need.' So a full-blown plan was visited upon us. Earlier, the Council had proposed that the Aquarium have three trustees from Charlestown to combat the fact the trustees were from out of town. The Aquarium board didn't want to agree to that.... Today, we have Paul Barrett [from the BRA working on the project] from South Boston. He knows how Charlestown works and has political clout the others didn't. He has more class affiliation with Charlestown." Barrett is better to negotiate with, according to Downing, because he can grasp from experience what concerns Charlestown residents and speak languages that both Townies and Aquarium trustees understand.

Few interviewees felt comfortable criticizing the foibles of working-class participants in the conflicts. One respondent

said about working-class opponents of the Library, "if it weren't for Harvard being nearby, Cambridge would be like Somerville - nothing would be there [except a working-class suburb]." He also roundly criticized those he considered upper-middle class opponents of the Library, as well. One person told me about opponents to the Aquarium in Charlestown: "Working-class Irish love to fight with each other. That's what they do...I should know, I'm Irish, myself." None of them wanted their comments to be on the public record.

In both cases, the initial opponents to the facilities were middle-class residents who later formed coalitions with working-class people. This fact belies the observation of theorists like Robert Q. Wilson who has hypothesized that upper-middle class residents are more likely to support urban renewal because they "think of the community as a whole and long term benefits even when that might involve immediate costs to themselves."<sup>17</sup> In these cases, middle-class residents actually opposed development that some

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<sup>17</sup> James Q. Wilson, "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. XXIX, No. 4 (November 1963), p. 247 in Langley Carleton Keyes, Jr., The Rehabilitation Planning Game (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969) p. 9.

working-class residents considered an amenity. Although it was not possible to line people up according to class on the issue of the Library or Aquarium, participants still used class arguments, perhaps because it's a traditional currency of political struggle in Cambridge and Charlestown.

7. COMPETITION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN LEADS TO A FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT ABOUT PRIORITIES IN SITING CASES.

**In these two cases, opposition often started among a group of women alarmed that their neighborhood might become unsuitable for family life. On the other side were men directing large institutions, who believed they understood what decisions were best.**

Some interviewees made pejorative statements about how "men" or "women" were involved in the siting conflict, comments like these: "uneducated women with kids out of wedlock are trying to tell me what to do!" And "these guys think they can push us 'little women' around!" Most interviewees, mainly men, requested that I keep such comments confidential, clearly indicating that they don't want to be held publicly responsible for such opinions.

Underneath these gender attacks, I perceived that conflict over these facilities resulted from two perspectives about how to plan a community. The large institutions were guided by men directing technically proficient, bureaucratic, top-down organizations. Their goal was global: to create a "world-class" facility and create benefits for Boston. In opposition was an informal, spontaneous, neighborhood-based group often led by women who knew what they wanted from a street-level perspective: for example, nice parks for their children, good schools and public services, not too much traffic, clean light and air. Martha A. Ackelsberg describes how women become activists in a way that is apropos: "Many women who become activists on the local scene do so not because they have been called out by unions, by political parties, or even by formally structured community organizations. Instead, they respond to the issues which come before them as members of households and, importantly, of the *communities* in which those households are embedded." <sup>18</sup>

Kathryn Downing described this perspective about planning and how she feels development can be accomplished. "You talk

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<sup>18</sup> Martha A. Ackelsberg, "Women's Collaborative Activities and City Life: Politics and Policy," in Political Women, Janet A. Flammang, ed., (New York: Sage Publications, 1984) p. 255.

about building concrete and brick projects but you need to engage in another dialogue. [Downing then describes a public planning process she believes is a good model] The traditional community wanted affordable housing. Breeds Hill [an area where newcomers who are preservationists, many of them women, live] wanted good design. The new housing on Main Street is a sensitive treatment. We went door to door to get what people wanted to see and discovered they wanted: off-street parking, mixed family housing and private yards." In this case, union members, mainly men, shared leadership with preservationists, many of them women, in working on the Main Street Housing. The results of the collaboration, according to Downing, were successful.

She points to the presence of grassroots women's activism elsewhere in the Boston area. She attended the same law school as a woman who led opposition to the Kennedy Library; they were inspired by similar political influences. Another woman who lives in the North End has been an important leader in monitoring the Aquarium's plans for expansion on the waterfront. Downing says these women share a common vision about planning which often sets them in opposition to the big institutions. I wonder how these activists would

negotiate a conflict in which their communities were at odds.

8. ANY FLAWS IN THE PROCESS ARE MAGNIFIED BY TIME AND COST PRESSURES AND MAKE ACHIEVING A HARMONIOUS OUTCOME DIFFICULT

The internal process is difficult to manage because so many external factors which influence options are in flux, for example, the changing real estate market, the skills and needs of new participants, and political and bureaucratic shifts of policy.

Decisions being deliberated by the Council often move out of the control of planners and citizens. BRA planner Victor Karen says, "You can't say in six months what will be easier to give up - because of other things changing. For example, we initially looked at #5 as a dry dock only. Then with more land [Parcel 5], siting the Aquarium becomes a different problem. We own the land and [the] Raymond [Group] has development rights. We'll have to get the Aquarium, Massachusetts General Hospital and the Raymond Group satisfied. It will be a complicated financial deal to accomplish."



Non-profit developers depend on public support to develop their facilities. But that support can dwindle rapidly. About the mood of the public concerning the Kennedy Library, Richard Neustadt said, *"if it had been possible to move fast it would have happened within the mood of elegy for JFK."*

Also, changing regulations which increase the costs of development are another wild card which can provide an additional wedge for opponents to create expensive delay. Goyette says that the Library case happened *"at a time of burgeoning rules and regulations, legislation dealing with environmental impact. Every year there would be new guidelines. With very little money they [opponents] could keep throwing up roadblocks. After the EIS, the Kennedy Library Corporation just said, 'the hell with it' and pulled out. They would have won in court; but, worried about money, they [the Library Corporation] decided to pull out and avoid two or three years of litigation."*

Opponents to facilities are sophisticated about using the pressures of time and cost to stop sitings. In the Aquarium case, opponents understood well that if they lost in the Council forum, it was possible to delay the project in one

of over sixty other review processes: that by delaying the process, they could kill the project. It turns out to be just as easy to do this within a formalized process as in an ad hoc process.

All of these factors combine to drive a facility siting process towards a greater likelihood of breaking down, no matter how citizen review is structured. Indeed, as I've pointed out, some theorists suggest that measures to increase citizen participation have actually accentuated the problems of facility siting. Moreover, the fragile relationship between non-profit institutions and the public makes it especially difficult for them to perform effectively as developers. If participants in the siting process were aware of these sources of conflict, then it might be easier to anticipate them and deal with issues more effectively. What do the theories I've discussed suggest about how the siting process could be changed?

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE FACILITY SITING PROCESS**

Conflicts between opponents and sponsors of facilities commonly occur in such siting cases, despite the best intentions of participants. Non-profit institutions siting new facilities, even those considered amenities, are not exempt from conflicts with local residents. I suggested in Chapter Five that such cases present special conundrums.

How can siting processes be improved? First, let us consider generic siting controversies. Susskind, Andrews, and O'Hare, Bacow and Sanderson suggest deep, structural interventions which require changing institutional relationships and customary ways of behaving.

#### **A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

1. According to Susskind, routine forms of citizen participation like the Task Force or Council often lead to deadlock of the kind in the Library and Aquarium case. He suggests that professionals must create theories of bargaining that transform typical debate into "occasions to help residents 'get better' at community problem-solving or

collective decision-making...as opportunities to build the capacity of contending groups to work together more effectively."<sup>1</sup>

How to re-socialize participants? Susskind believes that "any and all groups and individuals willing to persist throughout the process" ought to participate and "be given a substantial, if not deciding, role in the bargaining process."<sup>2</sup> Instead of ritualized voting and formal rules, a process of working together should be developed by the group. Straw votes, for instance, indicate preferences but don't lock participants into positions. This theorist also advocates the use of charettes, brainstorming sessions, role playing, and collective image building. The result will be an agreement that everyone has collectively created and forms the basis for a similar process on future projects. However, there are nagging problems with achieving the process he suggests. Susskind acknowledges that it is difficult to motivate all interested groups, including

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Susskind, The Importance Of Citizen Participation and Consensus-Building in the Land Use Planning Process (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute Land Use Institute Symposium, M.I.T., October 1977) p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

elected officials, to participate in this process and abide by such negotiations. In addition, who would pay for the process?

2. Richard Andrews says that in a typical siting case, developers complete a risk assessment of negative impacts and then try to mitigate the impacts or compensate the local community for costs due to the impacts. Andrews suggests that "framing in terms of risk may be going down the wrong track."<sup>3</sup> Rather, Andrews suggests, "we should aim toward positive visions of the future we are trying to get to...attractive options for how we will invent the future of human-environment relationships."<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, the BRA and Aquarium tried to paint a very positive image of the future at Dry Dock #2. However, they discovered that concerns like "loss of autonomy" are not fungible. The Ad Hoc Coalition refused to believe that another park in the Navy Yard could adequately replace Shipyard Park, a place which had the kind of symbolic and emotional value that

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<sup>3</sup> David Laws, "Case Studies and Questions," (October 27, 1989), in an unpublished notes from discussions at The National Workshop on Facility Siting, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

Andrews describes.

3. O'Hare, Bacow, and Sanderson suggest that a more formal process be created whereby communities receive compensation for development impacts. Facilities would be "'auctioned' off to the one community among several candidates whose bid for compensation, added to construction and operation costs on that site, gives the lowest costs for the project."<sup>5</sup> However some communities which would be technically superior sites for certain facilities might not have the staffing and financial resources to participate in an auction.

**OTHER GUIDELINES, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO NON-PROFIT DEVELOPERS SITING AMENITIES**

The suggestions above are valuable contributions toward improving the siting process. I also see more modest steps that developers and residents can take to avoid conflict. The following guidelines have been developed from my research and analysis of the two cases. I address my comments first to project proponents outside the local

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<sup>5</sup> Michael O'Hare, Lawrence Bacow, and Debra Sanderson, Facility Siting and Public Opposition (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983), p. 84.

community, including the developer-institutions and sponsoring city agencies; then to community residents. Although all of these guidelines are intended to be useful to participants in any siting facility process, certain ones are especially germane for non-profit organizations acting as entrepreneurial developers.

#### **TO PROPONENTS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY**

1. Learn about the history of development in the community where you plan to site a facility to better understand people's expectations and behavior.

Members of the community see your effort as one of a series of development events on their turf. Research on what has gone on in the past is a good forecast of what to expect from residents today. For instance, the Aquarium proposal met similar resistance in public meetings from an organized minority that urban renewal faced in the mid-60s. David Pacifaro, consultant to the Aquarium from Northeast Management, says the Aquarium underestimated *"how quickly and effectively the AD Hoc group organized without money. On a daily basis they garnered new members. The cause was*

*an emotional quality of life issue which brought people out of the woodwork into overnight activism."* Yet, this activism is certainly not uncharacteristic of Charlestown residents: a fervent "people's" organization fights to derail the intentions of powerful institutions.

I believe that if these developers had more carefully studied the history of development in those areas, they would have been better prepared to act appropriately before conflict occurred. Learning this history requires walking around in the neighborhoods of the community, looking at past development, and really listening to what residents say about antecedent experiences and current needs.

Learning from history cuts across boundaries of geography, as well as time. The New England Aquarium could have studied the Kennedy Library case in Cambridge as a means of better understanding how to proceed in the Navy Yard.

2. Don't confuse support in the community for the good works of the non-profit institution with endorsement of development plans.



The Aquarium is a popular Boston cultural/educational institution. John F. Kennedy was a popular President whom many Cantabridgians wanted to memorialize. Both developments were greeted with enthusiasm until residents started to think more carefully about potential costs. Non-profit developers, in particular, can be "true believers" about their mission. Sometimes the public's general good will towards an institution skews a "true believer's" perception of the extent of civic support for a specific project. That the facility is an amenity also encourages developers to believe their proposal will receive the local community's support.

A related issue is how non-profits view themselves. I suggested in Chapter 5 that incongruities between a non-profit's social and entrepreneurial missions can lead to problems in sorting out signals about their own performance. Kanter and Summers suggest that non-profit institutions have many constituencies and must develop appropriate standards for measuring performance which take these diverse groups into account. By framing the expectations of the local community, the broader public, donors, trustees and staff, such standards would clarify how a non-profit could best

achieve the delicate task of doing good and developing a new facility .

3. Consider carefully the effect of dramatic public announcements about plans on the attitudes of the local host community.

Because non-profit institutions are especially dependent on donors for contributions, well-timed and executed public announcements about siting proposals are important tools in gaining public support; a misstep can seriously jeopardize fundraising efforts.

The Kennedy Library and Aquarium successfully gained attention from a broad constituency by effectively using the media to announce plans. However, another crucial public relations effort has to concentrate on winning the support of nearby abutters. Local residents will feel alienated if not brought into the process at an early stage, especially if a public announcement is made without the community's prior knowledge and involvement. Local apprehensions often increase in direct proportion to the specificity of design proposals in the announcement, which was true about Pei's

original design.

Yet, an announcement that is too ambiguous can also encourage rumors: some residents in Charlestown were frustrated because they felt they could not get enough information about the Aquarium design at Dry Dock #2. It is a difficult balance to strike. Therefore, having substantive input from a cross-section of a community will help shape how information is shared with the public.

4. Be prepared for a neighborhood review process much more complex than just a technical procedure for studying and commenting on plans.

The siting issue is only part of a community council's intent. The community empowerment aspect of citizen review can give the process a significance which is not necessarily included in the developer's agenda and can affect the emotional tone of negotiation. Personal and political rivalries also influence debate about siting and can slow the process down considerably. Furthermore, there may be disagreement in the group about goals, whether the task is to invent a linkage package or to comment in depth on design

and technical plans. Finally, council members are volunteers and might not be able to work at the pace or on the schedule which professionals expect.

How the citizen group is composed is another factor. If members are elected, it is more likely that the forum will be a political entity where individuals are competing to support positions they perceive are the in the best interests of a particular group.

5. Be prepared for the difficulty of predicting exactly how residents will react to the economic aspects of development, whether they'll feel their economic well-being is threatened or improved.

If the proposed facility is 'noxious', it is more likely that local residents will oppose it. If the facility is an amenity proposed by a non-profit institution, then the task of assessing how the local community will calculate costs and benefits becomes much more complex.

Nancy Keyes says about the Navy Yard: *"initially you'd think newcomers would want development to build up their own*

*investment. Members of the Ad Hoc Coalition bought prime pieces of property. But they're opposed [to the Aquarium]."*

Anticipation of changed property values and volume of commercial business is only part of the bundle of calculations residents ponder when thinking about a new neighbor. Other variables include the kind of benefits from linkage as well as impacts on traffic density, open space, and historic preservation.

Although the developer may offer what appears to be effective mitigation or equitable compensation, opponents to a facility often do not feel that what they are protecting has a "price" and can be bartered. It is best to prepare for a dialogue where people talk about social values as well as economic costs and benefits.

6. If possible, invite community members to participate in workshops on design-making.

Residents know their neighborhood well and can give excellent suggestions about problems with the site and what design is appropriate. In a siting case involving public land and a facility which will be used by the public,

advocating a design which is a "tour de force" will be more difficult unless public participation is meaningful. If possible, use both static renderings and more advanced technological tools - video or computer rendering - to demonstrate what the facility will look like at the site and within the larger physical context of the community.

Technical data about the impact of design is best supplied by an impartial expert appointed by both community and developer, so there can be no question of bias and residents have an opportunity to seek information they think is important.

7. Prepare for the "worst case scenario" by realizing that there are other opportunities which may open up if this location is unavailable.

Try to avoid getting addicted to the idea of one particular site as being the only option because it appears to be the best. Other sites which seem less attractive actually offer advantages over the "best" site when one takes a closer view. In both cases, sponsors of facilities told me that the new sites - Columbia Point in Dorchester and Dry Dock

#5/Parcel 5 in the Navy Yard offered opportunities which only became clear after deeper study.

#### **TO RESIDENTS**

1. Share the history of your community with facility developers and sponsors.

Drive and walk with them around the community, in the site where they want to build the facility and in adjacent neighborhoods so they can get a more complete sense of the area. Share an oral, written, and photographic history of how the community dealt with other development issues in the past.

2. Understand that although the institutions you're dealing with may have big budgets and a professional staff, it may be inexperienced with the process of siting a facility in your community. Make it clear from the beginning that colorful brochures and public relations events are less important than substantive conversations about important issues.

3. The citizen advisory group/neighborhood council and developers should create a procedure for discussing the content of upcoming public announcements about the facility and its potential effects on attitudes in the local community.

4. Members of a community council should arrive at a clear understanding with each other and the community about expectations of the tasks and authority of the council.

Is the council primarily involved with bargaining for linkage benefits? Are members expected to make substantive contributions about design and technical decisions? Does the citizen group have the means to implement its decisions? Not getting consistent answers about those questions will confuse participants. If residents believe the council needs more authority to make meaningful decisions about development, political leadership needs to be involved in clarifying such issues.

5. Understand constraints on developers and that benefits from development your community expected six months ago may be an inappropriate expectation today.



Today the Boston real estate market is not booming as it was a few years ago when residents received linkage in addition to traditional benefits derived from development, like jobs and tax revenue. A local community's expectations about benefits were set by earlier precedent: sometimes there is a lag between these expectations and what developers can currently afford.

6. Work out a way to collaborate with professionals who can share expertise regarding legal, architectural, and technical issues where you feel limited.

In this society architects are often regarded as artists, creating an individualistic oeuvre which the public usually responds to after the concept has been completed. This order of doing things can lead to conflict. On the other hand, architecture can be more than just be an imitation of past designs. If you are a resident, encourage the neighborhood council to sponsor a process where residents can interact productively with architects and planners before the concept for a site has been completed.

Also insist on having input about which neutral expert should be selected to gather and analyze technical data concerning traffic, for instance. You will be able to more easily direct their efforts and trust the information they provide.

7. The demoralization costs of long-term conflict are great. To avoid protracted polarized conflict consider reasonable alternatives to offer proponents (and opponents) of the facility.

Developers sometimes offer compensation to local opponents to ameliorate social costs. Residents opposing siting an amenity at a proposed location can also offer reasonable alternatives as compensation to developers so that participants don't find themselves in an "all or nothing" situation. They may be willing to compromise if the site is at another nearby location or if the size of the original plan is reduced. Groups like a neighborhood council can work with the loyal opposition to discover these trade-offs. In the case of the Aquarium, developers decided, short of litigation, to pursue a nearby alternative, Dry Dock #5/Parcel 5. In the case of the Kennedy Library, developers

found a solution which they preferred over adjudication or alternatives of opponents.

Residents who are divided by a siting controversy will still be neighbors whether or not that facility is ever built. Such relationships can be permanently damaged by actions taken in the heat of debate, and the whole community could suffer as a result.

#### **CONCLUSION**

One might assume that negotiations with a local community about siting an amenity would be an easier task than siting a noxious facility. However, as I've demonstrated, typical siting conflicts still rise to the surface; indeed, that the facility is perceived as an attractive amenity with some adverse impacts can cloud calculations which sponsors and community make about the potential costs and benefits of locating the facility at that site.

These two facility siting cases also underline the special dilemma confronting non-profit institutions trying to balance social and entrepreneurial missions. Combined with

conflicts characteristically inherent in siting facilities, the ambivalence of non-profit institutions about performing in the role of developer can outweigh efforts to more formally integrate citizen participation in the siting process.

If non-profit institutions must act more and more as entrepreneurs to earn revenue, as I've suggested, then their already sensitive relationship with their public and local communities will become more complex. It remains to be seen if that phenomenon, combined with the growing movement for community participation in making decisions about development issues, will compel non-profit institutions, city agencies, and community activists to better clarify their relationships and invent improved strategies for negotiating more efficient and equitable outcomes to siting disputes.

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