AN URBAN DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR
MISSION HILL

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis grew out of a continuing interest in how lower income people fare in the development game as it is played in Boston. History indicates that in the longer run they are more often losers than winners but the struggle to achieve some level of equality in the allocation of city resources will go on. Hopefully this study will make a positive contribution to that struggle and serve as a model for a comprehensive planning approach in similar neighborhoods.

1. INTRODUCTION
SUMMARY

Observations of the recent course of events in both public and private redevelopment activities in Boston suggest that low income people in general and minorities in particular, may be facing a critical juncture in time with respect to efforts to upgrade the physical and social environment in the city. A series of development plans and proposals affecting predominantly low, and lower-middle income, and minority areas of the South End, Roxbury and Jamaica Plain are in various stages of implementation and hold significant implications for the city as a whole as well as for specific neighborhoods. One of the largest of these plans, the Southwest Corridor Project (hereafter referred to as SWC/SWCP), involves the relocation of the MBTA Orange Line rapid transit, improvements to commuter rail service, the building of arterial streets, and other related improvements.

In monetary terms, the costs associated with the construction of the rail facilities and streets alone will amount to over $600 million, not to mention the additional millions that will be generated through the construction of new housing, public facilities and commercial establishments.

The critical point is that the majority of these improvements will be taking place in older neighborhoods with a high proportion of minorities, elderly and lower income people who will have to live with subsequent development, or possibly be forced out by it. Thus it is vital that residents of these areas seize the opportunity to influence the course of change, and that any development that comes as a result of the SWC project be responsive to the needs of current as well as future
residents.

The fact that the SWC project is happening has meant that attention is being focused on what the socio-economic and physical implications of the project are and what development potential lies in particular parcels and sites.

Mission Hill is one of several neighborhoods that is directly affected by the SWC project. For purposes of this study, the Mission Hill neighborhood is defined as the area covered by the planning activities of the Mission Hill Planning Commission with the exception of the medical area. The neighborhood is bounded by the Penn Central Railroad embankment on the east, Huntington Ave. on the west, Ruggles Street on the north and New Heath St. on the south (see map). It includes the Mission Hill Main and Mission Hill Extension public housing, but excludes the Bromley Heath housing on the southern perimeter. Technically Mission Hill is part of Roxbury, but it is recognized both by residents and the City of Boston as being a separate entity and is treated as such in planning and the administration of community development funds. The historic pattern of orientation of the neighborhood has been toward Brigham Circle on the Huntington Ave. side, rather than toward Roxbury Crossing.

Because of the predominance of institutions, public housing, and sharp physical features, the limits of the neighborhood have been fixed fairly rigidly for many years. It is partly for these reasons that the neighborhood has such a distinct identity and has tended to focus on itself rather than outward towards adjacent neighborhoods.

The question of upgrading in this area is one which must be addressed on two levels: first, given the current and historic community context,
what are the relevant planning and development issues, and secondly, what types of physical improvements can take place in specific sub-areas to compliment and reinforce the positive aspects of the neighborhood.

The purpose of this study is to address the range of issues that impinge on a feasible development plan for the neighborhood and to explore alternatives for upgrading. The end product will be a plan for strengthening the physical and social fabric of the neighborhood which can be used by community residents and planners as a strategy for development. The study is also intended to provide a summary of the present dynamics of the neighborhood that relate to community development and an assessment of how the SWC project will impact those dynamics.

1.2 Approach

The assessment of the Mission Hill neighborhood used as the basis for development alternatives in this study is the result of information gathered from a cross-section of residents, community leaders, SWC planners, city officials, representatives of major institutions in the area, and visual surveys. The range of perspectives on important issues have been synthesized into a definition of specific problems and issues, formulation of goals and objectives and identification of strategies for implementation.

The basic viewpoint taken in this study is that in order to be a viable city, Boston must have neighborhoods such as Mission Hill where low and moderate income people can live, work and have access to city services. It takes issue with the notion that displacement and dispersion of lower income people is the price of progress. It is these people who have resided in such neighborhoods consistently over many years that
have a stake in them if less by choice than by virtue of circumstances.

Given the historic pattern of displacement of working class people in Boston, and the devastating experience of the Italian West End in particular, we now see the importance of the "turf" issue as it relates to community development in urban neighborhoods. In examining the development in the West End, Government Center, and more recently the South End, the pattern that emerges is that once neighborhoods are singled out for renewal, what gets built rarely, if ever, addresses the needs of those who are displaced. The residential development in the West End that displaced the "slums" is luxury, with the majority of units being studio, one and two bedroom apartments in the $300 to $550 range. In the case of Government Center, housing was replaced by office buildings and slick commercial development. Even though the redevelopment going on in the South End is almost exclusively rehabilitation, much of it is in the same rental range as the West End apartment buildings.

The situation of the public housing at Columbia Point bears particular relevance to Mission Hill. The City has been deliberating for several years on what should be done to improve those buildings, and in the meantime several renewal-type plans have been proposed and implemented, for the most part by institutions. The University of Massachusetts complex has been open since 1974, a nearby site has been chosen for the Kennedy Memorial Library and Massachusetts State Archives complexes. Residents of the housing projects foresee the eviction of lower income people to pave the way for middle and upper income and student housing. Residents such as those in Mission Hill and Columbia Point are becoming increasingly aware that they may live in a "bad" place, but that it will be better for someone else if they leave.
This study considers the current residents of Mission Hill, via the Mission Hill Planning Commission, to be its primary client constituency. The Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility of overall planning for the neighborhood. As such, it must address the development needs of all sub-areas and consider the broader range of problems and issues that extend beyond their immediate interests. Operationally, the Commission must deal with a variety of community organizations representing sub-areas and formulate planning strategies to deal with housing, commercial development, crime, community facilities, etc.

The population that the Commission represents is diverse. For the most part, it is a low and lower-middle income group that is ethnically and racially mixed. Whites form the bulk of the population, but there is a growing Black and Hispanic constituency (see population profile, Chapter 3). The mix of residents is not unlike that of the other neighborhoods affected by the SWCP, but a major factor is the existence of the Mission Hill public housing project where most of the Black and Hispanic families in the neighborhood live. So far their participation in the activities of the Planning Commission has been minimal, but the recent election of two representatives to the Board of Directors indicates the beginning of a greater dialogue between the two.

In a conference sponsored by the Southwest Corridor Coalition (SWCC) in November, 1976, one of the panel discussions dealt with the question of who will benefit in the planning and decision making of the SWCP. The unanimous conclusion of the panel was that the "who" should be the present residents of the neighborhoods that are directly affected by the project. Chuck Turner of the Third World Jobs Clearinghouse framed the "who" in this way:
This is not a racial issue. I think this part of the "who" question as it relates to Boston and other parts of the nation transcends race. I think the question is there and there for all of us. Given the fact that development (urban renewal) occurs in low-income, working-class neighborhoods, whether we're talking about white, black, Spanish-speaking or Chinese, given the fact that these people usually lack the political clout and money to benefit from any progress, what are we doing in fact? Does our development strategy and plan, regardless of which ethnic groups it is proposed to help . . . have as an effect that we are moving a population which is seen as "undesirable"?

In the context of recent racial strife concerning the desegregation of schools, and the general history of ethnic discrimination in the city, crossing these lines to unite the "non-rich" represents a change in strategy that is somewhat difficult, but necessary to the survival of all lower income people. The residents of Mission Hill are aware of how institutions and government have played one group off against another and most do not want to see the neighborhood divided along racial lines. One significant achievement of the SWCC has been the promotion of the understanding of the SWCP as something affecting all residents, regardless of race.

Fortunately the concomitant problems of displacement, disinvestment and blight in Mission Hill have not reached crisis proportions, although the scale of these problems has increased significantly in the last several years. The neighborhood may be seen as being on the threshold -- engaged in a struggle to prevent a tipping of the scales toward those factors which have allowed similar neighborhoods to become ripe for urban renewal and speculative development. The SWC project could be the single most important factor in determining the fate of this neighborhood, depending on how related pressures are controlled.
It is this notion of a "community in balance" that frames the approach to this study. Mission Hill is an economically, racially and ethnically mixed neighborhood, with a distinct identity and image. The strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood, both in a physical and social sense, are fairly evenly distributed among the sub-areas. It has remained in a stand-off position with respect to the institutions surrounding it, with the central issue being that of balancing their interests with those of the community.

Assuming that this balance is a good thing, the question then becomes how improvements to the fabric of the neighborhood can be made without changing its basic character. The situation is such that residents have the opportunity not only to voice concerns but to engage in a dialogue and process in advance of actual development that can establish parameters and criteria.

In addition to the attitude toward development in Mission Hill previously discussed, there are other assumptions that are part of the approach to the study:

- The SWCP will go for the most part according to schedule, with basic designs developed to date remaining intact;
- There will have to be some accommodation on the part of both area institutions and the community concerning expansion;
- The citizen participation process established for the SWCP will be the primary vehicle for dealing with Corridor-related issues;
- No significant changes in the status of the Mission Hill housing projects will be made in the near future.
1.3 Design Process

In order to deal effectively with the various dimensions of the Mission Hill neighborhood and establish a focus for physical upgrading, this study is shaped around a design process that combines elements of comprehensive planning, as well as physical design. Essentially this process begins with an analysis of the neighborhood as a whole within the Boston context and then identifies a target area and specific sites and parcels for development. Based upon analysis of the socio-economic, political and physical attributes of the neighborhood, goals, objectives and criteria for physical development in the target area can be established. Finally, a conceptual physical design for the target area will be delineated, and strategies for implementation outlined.

The key feature of this process is that it examines the neighborhood as a complex entity, recognizing its strengths and weaknesses and using them as the building blocks of design. The study places emphasis on the careful determination of the criteria that will form the basis of the physical plan. The criteria must not preclude development, but must define desirable types of development and appropriate densities, building scales, etc.

The following diagrams outline the steps of the design process. The first seeks to reduce the process to its most basic elements, while the second establishes the steps of the process in a more definitive way. As indicated in the second diagram, input from the Mission Hill community is an essential feature in identifying current problems and establishing goals and objectives for upgrading.
DESIGN PROCESS

NEIGHBORHOOD SUB-AREAS

TARGET AREA SITES/PARCELS

- CONTEXT
- CHARACTER
- PROBLEMS & POTENTIAL
- ISSUES
- PRESSURES

- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPGRADING
- DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

- DEV. ALT. STRATEGIES
- DEV. ALT. STRATEGIES
- DEV. ALT. STRATEGIES
Identification of the parameters of the problem

City scale  Area scale  Neighborhood scale

Background on the SWC Project

Survey of existing conditions

Sub-area Analysis

Identification of problems and potential for development

Neighborhood Goals & Objectives

Identification of a target Area

Criteria for development of target area sites and parcels

Target area development options

Implementation strategies

Input from residents & community organizations

Physical
- land use
- traffic/circulation
- environmental conditions
- public facilities
- historic structures
- building condition
- external impacts
- zoning
- public transportation

Socio-Economic
- demographic info
- economic base
- ethnic composition
- political characteristics
- attitudes about the neighborhood
- housing market

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2.

OVERVIEW
2.1 Neighborhood Improvement in the Boston...

In recent years Boston has witnessed a number of dramatic changes in the character of many of its neighborhoods. The West End has already been mentioned as a classic example of how entire neighborhoods were destroyed by an insensitive process that declared them "slums" and then systematically replaced them with development that not only bore little or no relationship to what had been there before, but which was also more often than not exclusionary by virtue of its catering to middle and upper income populations. Not all urban renewal projects were this bad, but the city is still suffering from the effects of displacement generated by them. The "total destruction" approach of most urban renewal projects has radically altered the physical and socio-economic composition of both the project areas and other neighborhoods affected by them.

In its heyday urban renewal was concentrated in downtown Boston, with the Prudential Center, the new West End, Government Center and the Waterfront being the models of progress in urban revitalization. Although a number of other neighborhoods were designated project areas, Washington Park was the only large non-downtown project completed prior to the phase-out of urban renewal in favor of Revenue Sharing and the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). As of 1972 approximately $121,000,000 was granted by the federal government for downtown revitalization, compared with $92,000,000 for lower income neighborhoods. Mission Hill had been designated as an urban renewal area, but was eliminated because of community protest (see map).

When added to the number of city residents already trekking to the suburbs in the post-war era, the number of families and individuals
displaced by urban renewal\textsuperscript{6} represented a major disinvestment trend in the city. While much of this disinvestment was the result of decisions made by banks, developers, lending institutions, etc., in many ways urban renewal aggravated the problems of urban neighborhoods by poor planning and the reinforcement of patterns of decline. Once areas were declared "blighted" and slated for renewal, there was no incentive for investment on the part of either businesses or individuals.

At a time when cities look primarily to the federal government for massive aid in a macro-approach to eliminating urban blight, the micro aspects of the fabric of urban communities were largely ignored. The government in effect subsidized displacement through projects that reaped huge profits for developers able to take advantage of cheap land, tax breaks, generous terms, and various government funding mechanisms.

Having learned some painful lessons from urban renewal and suffered the demise of housing and other city-oriented programs under the Nixon and Ford administrations, revitalization in Boston as well as other cities has shifted in scope, orientation and program design. In March of 1978 a President for the first time articulated an "Urban Policy" that examines the problems of cities in relation to each other and to regional and national economic trends. There are several features of this shift as it has developed over the last decade:

- A change in federal funding patterns from large projects and categorical grants to a variety of smaller projects through CDBG funds;
- Targeting of aid to specific areas and types of programs such as rehabilitation of existing housing and jobs for youth;
- Increased emphasis on "neighborhood revitalization" through
upgrading of existing structures, promotion of resident ownership of housing; small business development and reinforcement of community support services;

* An attempt to increase the level of community control in development through more specific guidelines for citizen participation in government-funded programs;

* An attempt to make the private sector an integral part of upgrading by providing financial incentives to building of low and moderate income housing for banks and lending institutions;

* An increased role for mayors by having Federal programs and funding needs developed by city agencies;

* An increased role for state agencies in coordination of development efforts and acting as vehicles for funding through such agencies as the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (M.H.F.A.) and the Massachusetts Home Mortgage Finance Agency (M.H.M.F.A.).

In addition, the jargon of renewal is now framed in terms such as "community development" and "urban homesteading" that convey the notion of reclaiming older neighborhoods through community-based efforts.

While most aspects of these new directions may be laudable, it is not clear that the revitalization now going on will significantly better the lifestyle of lower income people and those on fixed incomes. Much of the upgrading so far has been geared to a young professional market that can cope better with the soaring costs of housing and which has access to private sector funding sources.
Between 1967 and 1976 the median price of new homes sold in the U.S. increased from $24,600 to $48,000, and the median price for existing homes sold rose from $19,350 to $38,100. However, "the increase in the median price of existing homes sold has outpaced median family income as well . . . In fact since 1972 general prices have increased faster than median family income -- 36.1 and 30.6 percent respectively." The consumer price index indicates that the cost of housing occupancy for renters increased by 44.7% and for homeowners by 91.7% over the last decade.

Minorities and low to average income people have suffered disproportionately, as have first-time home buyers who face higher downpayments and interest rates. Given the predominance of housing stock built before 1939 and sturdy but antiquated public facilities, Boston suffered greatly as a result of both local and regional economic problems. One good thing about the new direction of revitalization is that much of the focus is on badly-needed housing. However, because of taxes, fuel costs and land values, the housing market in Boston is squeezed to the point where many potential homeowners cannot bear the basic expenses. Without substantial government subsidies, it is virtually impossible for low and in many cases moderate income families to build or rehab housing.

In Boston the cost of occupying a typical single family house in 1975 was $431 per month, compared to $189 per month in 1965. This necessitated an annual income of $20,688 in 1975 as opposed to $9,072 in 1965.

What we may see happening is a widening of the gap between the high and low to moderate income brackets, with housing becoming the most visible and critical expression of that phenomenon. More and more the government is being forced to take up the slack that the private sector fails to deal with in improving conditions for the masses of people. Low and moderate income people in many inner city neighborhoods have also by and
large been excluded from the conventional financing mechanisms by lack of knowledge, as well as through discriminatory practices such as red-lining. In a study of mortgage lending patterns in 84 communities in the Boston metropolitan area between July, 1975 and June, 1977, it was concluded that: "A much lower proportion of the Boston banks' savings deposits are reinvested in urban mortgages than in suburban areas . . . Comparing the number of home sales with the number of bank mortgages granted in each community clearly indicates that suburban areas received more bank mortgages relative to the number of home sales than most urban areas . . . As of the most recent disclosure directive, many urban communities still received only 3 to 33 percent reinvestment in mortgages of savings dollars deposited."11 Furthermore, "Bank home mortgage lending appears racially discriminatory in effect, if not intent."12

And so it is that for the most part only the "gentry" are able to buy into the present housing market in Boston. But the major difference in this newer generation of home buyers is that they are choosing to settle in urban rather than suburban neighborhoods, thus increasing the competition for inner-city housing. Moreover, because of their ability to leverage private financing, they are less constrained in their choices of which neighborhoods to buy in. In summing up the current revitalization scene in Boston, a report by the Parkman Center for Urban Affairs states:

No one who has looked into the young professional phenomenon can help but notice that public policies and public sector activity have had relatively little to do with it. While redevelopment has been a factor in some cases, in many others, settlement has occurred in areas untouched by urban renewal. This would suggest that fairly powerful forces are at work. Furthermore, these forces may be only marginally susceptible to conscious public action, whatever its social goals.13
If in fact this "gentrification" movement is an increasing and sizeable trend, this implies that those with the means to flex their economic muscle will predominate since the government will have to respond to market pressures and the demand they create for inner-city housing.

The Mission Hill neighborhood is a prime candidate for such reclamation by virtue of its proximity to downtown, the medical area and other institutions, and the improvements to be generated by the SWCP. Already adjacent neighborhoods such as Highland Park and Jamaica Plain are feeling the pressure of housing demand by professionals, and there is ample reason to believe that Mission Hill will be susceptible to those same pressures. Some of this has begun, but not yet accelerated to the level that it has in these other areas. In Highland Park the average value of homes has increased steadily over the last several years, rising from $4,000 in 1974 to $7,000 in 1978. Depending on size, condition, and ownership (government versus private), properties have been sold for as little as $500 and as much as $35,000.14 (Specific information on real estate transactions in Mission Hill is contained in Chapter 3).

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from redevelopment in the Boston context is that lower income residents cannot look solely to the government for support of redevelopment efforts, and that ways must be found to leverage the private sector to their benefit. If present nation-wide trends in increasing costs for housing, fuel and land continue, there will be definite limitations on the range of alternatives for development in neighborhoods such as Mission Hill. However, to the extent that the public and private sector create mechanisms for addressing these problems, community development organizations must take advantage of them before it becomes any more difficult to manipulate them to the
benefit of the neighborhood.

2.2. BACKGROUND ON SWCP

In 1966 the Massachusetts Department of Public Works began clearing land for the construction of a 10-mile-long, 8-lane highway that would bisect several inner city neighborhoods in Boston. Plans for the highway had originally been developed in 1948 as part of a development agenda that was focused on suburban sprawl and providing the fastest means possible for suburbanites to get to and through the city. Public outcry against the highway in the form of protests and demonstrations mounted for three years, and in 1970 culminated in the declaration of a moratorium on highway construction by Governor Sargent. In 1972 the Governor made a final decision to halt construction of the Southwest Expressway, allowing the transfer of funds to mass transit and land development within the area designated for the highway. However, by this time a 3-1/2 mile strip comprising 120 acres of land had been cleared, destroying 500 residences and 160 commercial properties in what were largely low-income and minority neighborhoods. The coalition of planners, activists, residents and organizations that created the Operation Stop I-95 movement evolved into the Southwest Corridor Land Development Coalition, commonly called the Southwest Corridor Coalition (SWCC). The initial thrust of the SWCC was to convince government officials that funds should be diverted from highway construction to mass transit to assure that current Corridor residents would benefit from any development that took place in conjunction with the SWCP.

Since 1972 the SWCC has been engaged in land use studies, working with government agencies responsible for SWCP planning in implementing a
citizen participation process; assessing the environmental impact of the project on neighborhoods, and exploring the development possibilities of parcels of land left vacant by demolition. Presently a cadre of planners, architects and engineers are engaged in advanced design phases for transit stops on the re-routed Orange Line and working with residents through Station Area Task Forces (SATF's) to define what type of development is most appropriate for the land around and between these stops.

The plan for the SWCP has several essential elements: (1) relocation of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Orange Line along the present Penn Central Railroad right-of-way and the construction of nine new transit stops; (2) demolition of a three-mile section of the Penn Central embankment and replacement by five sets of depressed tracks including two for transit and three for Amtrak and commuter rail; (3) the construction of a traffic artery from central Boston to Jamaica Plain which would divert traffic from residential areas and provide access to early development parcels; (4) demolition of the existing Orange Line elevated tracks and the provision of a replacement transit service; (5) extension of existing transit lines to outlying communities; and (6) improvements to commuter rail service.

The following chronology outlines the evolution of the SWCP to date and what is planned for the future.

1948 Eastern Massachusetts Master Transportation Plan developed (Southwest Expressway, Inner Belt).
1966-69 Land clearance for Southwest Expressway takes place in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.
1969-72 Construction of South Cove Tunnel shell.
1970 Governor Sargent declares a moratorium on highway construction within Route 128.
1971
(Aug.) Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) created by Governor Sargent to (1) make a full-scale review of highway and transit plans and decide which should be emphasized; (2) respond to a mandate for citizen participation in the planning process; and (3) study the no-highway alternative and land development potential within Roxbury and Jamaica Plain.

1971
(Sept.) Southwest Corridor Coalition formed; corridor land use study initiated; Jamaica Plain and South End included in study.

1971
(Dec.) Cities, Inc. retained as a consultant to work with SWCC on the mass transit option and land development within the Corridor.

1972
(Jan.) The Coalition's consultants begin working with affected neighborhoods and BTPR to create a land development strategy.

• Professional firms and Model Cities Administration donate funds for SWCC land use study.

1972
(Nov.) Final decision by Governor Sargent to halt construction of the SW Expressway, allowing diversion of highway funds to intracity transit and land development.

1973
(July) Governor Sargent appoints Anthony Pangaro as SWC Development Coordinator to manage the state agencies involved in the project and to insure citizen participation in planning.

• SWCP planning begins

1974
(May) Memorandum of Agreement between SWCC and the state is signed.

1974 Southwest Expressway officially dropped from the Federal Interstate Highway System plans; allocated funds transferred to transit construction under the 1973 Federal Highway Act.


1976
(June) SWCC urges postponement of the public hearing on the EIA to give the community time to review a new lower cost alternative introduced in the last month of the study; strike by state workers forces hearing postponement before agreement is reached.

1976
(July) EIA public hearing held; compromises made in transit design to reflect community concerns; amended EIA and project application submitted to the federal government.

1977
(Jan-April) Secretary of Transportation William Coleman commits $300 million of Urban Mass Transit Administration funds for the construction of the SWC Orange Line.

• Federal government releases funds for advanced engineering and design of corridor transit.
• Draft EIS published and circulated for public discussion and review.

• Bonding authorization for $10 million Community Development Finance Corporation approved by the state legislature; Board of Directors chosen.

• Contract for South End, Dorchester and Mattapan replacement service let.

• Community Development Corporation of Boston designated as development of the $12 million Cross-Town Industrial Park in Lower Roxbury.

1977-79 Completion of the South Cove Tunnel Extension.

1978 Arterial street construction to begin.

1979 Orange Line construction to begin.

1982 Replacement Service construction to begin.

1983 Washington St. elevated tracks to be removed.

1985 Projected completion of Orange Line transit and rail improvements.

The neighborhoods most directly affected by the SWCP are the South End, the Lower Roxbury, Highland Park and Mission Hill sections of Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. It is within those areas that the most land has been "taken" for the project and that construction disruption will be most serious. These neighborhoods also have some of the most promising development possibilities through the decking over the tracks in certain sections and the incorporation of a linear park system linking the various neighborhoods.

Within the last year the thrust of citizen input into planning for the SWCP has shifted from the SWCC to the SATF's, reflecting the progression from broad-based planning to dealing with a greater level of detail concerning such things as station design, access, interface with surrounding areas and kind of income that can be supported on developable
parcels of land. Through a series of meetings and presentations the planners and architects have obtained feedback from residents on the major conceptual and physical elements currently envisioned and reached some level of agreement on what kind of development is needed within various neighborhoods. However, the issue of community control over those parcels of land not yet designated for development remains in the forefront. Also, there still exists many questions yet to be answered having to do with final say-so on development criteria as well as architectural design.
3.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAITS
3.1 Neighborhood Context

From 1840 to 1870 Mission Hill was settled largely by working-class German immigrants that worked in the factories and mills located in the Stony Brook Valley, now the area generally covered by the SWCP. Subsequently it became, as the South End had been, a "zone of emergence" for lower middle class immigrants, a significant proportion of whom were Irish. This historic trend is described by Sam Bass Warner in Streetcar Suburbs:

During the 1870-1900 period lower middle class families moved into the Tremont Street district in two waves. The Irish, then the predominant emergent group in Boston, were the largest element among the newcomers - especially since there was an established Irish colony in the area. . . . However, coming with the Irish were lower middle class families of all ethnic backgrounds. A German colony continued for a time, only to be replaced in the 1890's by a wave of Canadians . . . In the 1890's the beginning Irish settlement on the lowlands around Ruggles Street began to be taken over by the next emergent group, the Jews.15

While a substantial portion of the population at present is still Irish stock, the neighborhood has retained this pattern as a settling place for "immigrant" groups. Newcomers include Greeks and other eastern European immigrants, Blacks and Puerto Ricans.

In terms of physical development, the historic pattern was the construction of two and three family houses and tenements in every available piece of land not already occupied by factories and stores. Demand for housing was great, partly because of the proximity of Mission Hill to sources of employment, and partly because of the already-established community of lower income people. In examining this pattern, it appears as though some of the weakening of Mission Hill as a neighborhood may
have been the result of the neighborhood in a sense "burning itself out". It developed to the point where it could develop no more and almost had to undergo decline in order to be revived. Warner points this out, saying:

> Not only was this pattern of lower middle class building destructive of nature, it was destructive of itself. It was so finely adapted to the disciplines of the moment that it could not be adjusted to future conditions save through the process of crowding and conversions which only made an already unsatisfactory housing environment even worse . . . Once a small area was filled with houses, factories, and stores, there was no way it could respond to a further increase in income or standards among its resident families - they had to move on to fresh land and new neighborhoods. 16

Thus it is evident that the problem of controlling market forces, particularly in the demand for housing, is not a new one, although the factors influencing that market are different.

While Mission Hill has unique physical and social characteristics, it is similar to other neighborhoods affected by the SWCP in several ways: (1) it is an area of changing socio-economic composition; (2) it has a number of parcels of land that are presently unused or underutilized; (3) it has a significant amount of older housing stock in need of some type of rehabilitation; and (4) it faces major changes as a result of the location of transit stops on the Orange Line.

In some respects Mission Hill has particularly valuable resources that lend hope for the reinforcement of a socially and ethnically diverse residential community. Its strengths lie in the cohesive social fabric of the community; the existence of developable parcels of land; the presence of a network of community organizations dealing with neighborhood-wide issues as well as issues specific to sub-areas; a number of viable institutions, if they can be controlled; and an increasing constituency of progressive-minded individuals willing to consider innovative approaches.
to improving the area.

Despite the fact that many families have moved out of the neighborhood in recent years (partly as a result of the destruction of 150 units of housing by the Lahey Clinic and Ruggles St. Baptist Church) there remains a sizeable contingent of residents who have chosen to stay in the neighborhood. In addition, there are a number of families who have moved back into the neighborhood from other areas. One resident who has recently purchased a two-family home indicated that a few years back she and her husband wouldn't have considered buying a house in the neighborhood, but with the availability of low-interest government loans and an increasing interest in community issues, they have decided to make an investment in the neighborhood. These types of residents have in effect provided continuity in the social framework that has enabled the neighborhood to retain its vitality through waves of change brought about by the pressures of institutional expansion, disinvestment and families pursuing the suburban ideal.

In addition to forming sharp physical boundaries, the presence of numerous institutions in and around Mission Hill (see map, page 31) has determined the character of much of the political, social and economic context of the neighborhood. One of the main reasons for the existence of organized community activity is that Mission Hill residents have constantly had to jockey with Harvard University and other institutions for position and control with respect to new building as these institutions sought to expand their facilities. The active struggle dates back to the early 1960's when the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital built the Whitney St. project in the Triangle Area. A large portion of the neighborhood was declared a "slum", destroyed and replaced by what turned out to be housing completely out of the range of what displaced residents
could afford. The community did not wish to see more chunks of their neighborhood gobbled up as part of development schemes that accrued few, if any benefits to them.

At present the battle with the institutions has two main focal points: one is the issue of the building of a $109 million "total energy plant" by Harvard University and the Medical Area Service Corporation (MASCO) on the block bounded by Brookline Avenue and Peabody, Binney and Francis Streets (see map, page 31). The second concerns the disposition of the approximately twenty acres of land left when Lahey Clinic and the Ruggles Baptist Church destroyed the housing they owned in the Back-of-the-Hill area (see Appendix I). Some major concessions have been made on the part of institutions in the form of construction of the Mission Park housing by Harvard and the defeat of a bill in the state legislature that would have allowed the New England Baptist Hospital to proceed with expansion plans without a state-granted Certificate of Need (see Appendix II). Even though community pressure has slowed the process of expansion for the time being, the capital and social investment will remain indefinitely and their presence will continue to be a dominant factor in community development efforts.

Another form of institutional presence which has helped to shape the direction of community development efforts is the Mission Hill public housing project. Built in the 1940's, the project first housed low income Irish, but has since become inhabited almost entirely by Black and Puerto Rican families. The project suffers from all of the ills associated with public housing and has a tenuous relationship with the rest of the community.

The Mission Church, on the other hand, provides a more positive in-
stitutional influence, and an anchor around which the community has been able to rally. Built in 1873, the church originally catered to the large lower middle income Irish population in the area. These were for the most part factory and mill workers for whom the church was a focal point of social and religious activity. In addition, it provided a symbolic point of reference for an aspiring population moving outward toward the "streetcar suburbs". The existence of the church has been one of the primary reasons many people have chosen to remain in, and come back to, the neighborhood. The symbolic meaning may now serve more to remind people where they have come from, but nevertheless the church is a valuable cultural and physical asset that has aided the community in defining itself. After having lost a significant portion of its congregation during the decade between 1960 and 1970, the church seems to be making something of a comeback and becoming more visible in community affairs.

3.2 PHYSICAL TRAITS

Physically Mission Hill has a rich mixture of natural and man-made elements which lend it a distinct character. The hill portion of the neighborhood, often referred to as Parker Hill, is one of the highest in the city and has some of the best views of surrounding areas, including Cambridge and parts of Boston harbor. As mentioned, the neighborhood has sharp physical boundaries on all sides as a result of being surrounded by institutions, the Penn Central Railroad embankment and steep grades. As in other parts of Roxbury and Boston, there are numerous outcroppings of Roxbury Puddingstone, which form the cliffs and grades that characterize the area and further define the pattern of development. In the past
Puddingstone was used extensively in the construction of homes and institutional buildings, and remnants of this type of construction can be found throughout the neighborhood.

Most of the open space in the neighborhood is contained in the Parker Hill Playground and a large parcel of land known as the "Ledge Site" near Huntington Ave. which is presently undeveloped. The amount of vacant land in the neighborhood has increased dramatically in the last several years due to fire, abandonment and the destruction of houses and industrial buildings.

The neighborhood is dominated by two and three family wood frame houses, but has a significant number of brick row-type apartments and single family houses. Churches, schools, industrial buildings and buildings associated with health care institutions form the balance of man-made elements of the neighborhood. Of these, several are historically significant.

One of the striking aspects of the neighborhood is the nature of activity on and around Tremont Street, which gives the street the quality of being a "seam". This quality emanates from the fact that Tremont Street is the middle ground between the largely single, two and three family home development up the hill on the south and the Mission Hill public housing to the north. The common thread joining the two has been the commercial activity on the street, the Mission Church and the Tobin School. Because people from all sections of the neighborhood use these facilities, the street becomes a binding element that helps make the transition between sub-areas that might otherwise be more sharply separated. The following maps describe this and other existing physical characteristics of the neighborhood.
Mission Hill

Brookline

Cambridge

MIT

k to Harvard

Boston Inner Harbor

CITY CONTEXT
SUB-AREAS
1 R.T.H.
2 TRIANGLE
3 M.H. PROJECTS
4 TOP-OF-THE-HILL
5 PELLE AVE.
6 TERRACE ST.
7 BACK-OF-THE-HILL

MISSION HILL

Study Area
Rail Right-of-way
SWCP
Transit Stops

0 200'
EXISTING ZONING

B-1 RETAIL & OFFICE  H-3 APARTMENTS  M-1 LIGHT MFG.
H-1 APARTMENTS  L-1 RETAIL & SERVICE  M-2 LIGHT MFG.
H-2 APARTMENTS  L-5 RETAIL & SERVICE  R-8 2 & 3 FAMILY APKS.

MISSION HILL
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- OPEN SPACE/RECREATION
- VIEWS
- POTENTIAL HISTORIC STRUCT.
- ACTIVITY NODES
- STEEP GRADERS

-- Study Area
- Rail Right-of-way
- SWCP
- Transit Stops

MISSION HILL
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. Mission Church
2. Mission Hill Playground
4. Tobin School
5. Boston Trade High School
6. New Life Presb. Church
7. Highland Cong. Church
8. Mission Church High Sch.
Mission Hill is characterized by a mostly lower income multi-ethnic population with a median income of $8,000 in 1970, compared to $9,133 for the city as a whole. Approximately 50% of the population receives some type of social security or public assistance. 52% of the families below the poverty level live in the Mission Hill housing projects and in 1977 the area had an estimated unemployment rate of 18%. Although most of the population is lower income, the number of professionals and students, particularly those associated with area institutions, has increased over the last several years.

The 1970 federal census gives an ethnic breakdown of 76% white, 17% black and 7% Hispanic for the neighborhood, but current estimates by community organizations place the black and Hispanic populations closer to 20% each. During the decade between 1960 and 1970 when most of the destruction of existing housing by institutional expansion took place, the neighborhood experienced a decrease of 17.3% in population. According to 1975 State Census estimates, the neighborhood has continued to lose residents, but at a slightly lower rate of 17%. Much of this loss was concentrated in the Back-of-the-Hill and RTH areas which lost a significant portion of their housing stock. Although there is not a more recent official population count, the level of resources being directed toward upgrading the housing stock and the sentiments of community leaders suggests that this out-migration has slowed considerably in the last few years. Some of the population loss will be offset by the recent opening of the Mission Park housing, which will house approximately 1900 people.
when fully rented. If current plans for the construction of 480 units of housing in the Back-of-the-Hill area are implemented, the neighborhood should gain several hundred residents. Many of the newly constructed units in the neighborhood will be occupied by current residents and others who are moving back into the area from elsewhere. The following table summarizes the population characteristics of the various sub-areas of the neighborhood:

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
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<td>537</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>451</td>
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<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delle Ave./Terrace</td>
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<td>198</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission Hill Projects</td>
<td>5,138</td>
<td>2,921</td>
<td>2,474</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1,926</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTH</td>
<td>1,607</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,466</td>
<td>1,921</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>9,192</td>
<td>3,389</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>10,868</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>42%</td>
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</table>

Between 1960 and 1970 Mission Hill suffered a decline in manufacturing-related employment, while gaining in service-related jobs. The comparison of neighborhood trends with those of the city as a whole is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mission Hill</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professionals/Managers</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/Clerical</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Labor</td>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman/Foreman</td>
<td>-28%</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operators</td>
<td>-45%</td>
<td>-28%</td>
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</table>

The impacts of population shifts and economic change have affected sub-areas of the neighborhood differently, and have in part given rise to a number of organizations addressing issues specific to those sub-areas. The following discussion outlines significant economic trends and the physical and socio-economic characteristics that dominate particular sub-areas.

Examination of real estate transactions in Mission Hill over the period from 1971 to 1977 (see Table 2) reveals that the neighborhood has seen a notable increase in property sales over the last three years. Of a total of 199 transactions, 57% took place during this period, and most of those were between 1975 and 1976. The majority of the properties exchanged were residential and concentrated in the Top-of-the-Hill area, which had 55% of all the transactions. So far during 1978, there have been only three transactions, all in the Top-of-the-Hill.

The median sales price for properties has actually dropped from a high of $28,125 in 1973 to $11,500 in 1976, but this may be misleading due to differences in size and condition of buildings. This fluctuation may also
be accounted for by differences in the number of transactions and the type of property involved. The Top-of-the-Hill has had consistently higher median sales prices, followed by the Triangle and Delle Ave. areas. In addition to size and condition of buildings this can be attributed to the location and type of building (two and three family wood frame or brick buildings.)

For the most part transactions over the period have been between individuals. Only 15% of the buyers and 26% of the sellers have been either institutional or corporate entities. Only 22% of the properties were mortgaged, most of which again were in the T-O-H. Even though most transactions took place from 1975 to 1977, the number of mortgaged properties dropped considerably between 1975 and 1976 from 43% to 11%. In 1977 only 5% had mortgages. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the reason for this without more detailed information, it could be due to differences in the financial condition of buyers. Generally the pattern of a low number of mortgages relative to property transactions is consistent with the patterns in inner city neighborhoods found by the State Banking Commission study on mortgage lending patterns in the metropolitan Boston area.

The fact that the number of real estate transactions has increased consistently over the past three years may in part be attributed to the inception of programs such as the Neighborhood Housing Services and city-sponsored housing rebate program. These types of programs have also promoted resident ownership, although there remains a considerable percentage of absentee owners. The housing trend indicates that there is a significant pattern of new buyers moving into the neighborhood and placing pressure on the market. While individual properties have generally been selling
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Property Transactions</th>
<th>Median Sales Price</th>
<th># Mortgaged Properties</th>
<th>Median Mortgage</th>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1972</td>
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*Source: Real Estate Transfer Directory, Mass. State Banking Commission*
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<tr>
<th>Sub-Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Property Transactions</th>
<th>Median Sales Price</th>
<th># Mortgaged Properties</th>
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### TABLE 2 (Cont.)

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<th>Sub-Area</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Median Sales Price</th>
<th># Mortgaged Properties</th>
<th>Median Mortgage</th>
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### PROPERTY TRANSACTION SUMMARY

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<th># Mortgaged Properties</th>
<th>Median Mortgage</th>
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for more than they did prior to 1975, the demand has not yet reached the point where sales prices have jumped to the extent that they have in Highland Park and the South End, for example. Another aspect of the housing market is that operating expenses have risen faster than incomes and sales prices, and many residents are striving just to break even. One recent buyer stated that "if the City of Boston decided to collect outstanding taxes on houses in Mission Hill, half of the neighborhood would be wiped out."

3.4 SUB-AREA ANALYSIS

Roxbury Tenants of Harvard

The RTH area is separated from the rest of Mission Hill by Huntington Avenue and is bounded on one side by the medical area and on the other by the Riverway. The dominant feature is the Mission Park Housing (recently completed). The area also contains two and three story brick and wood houses on Francis Street and Fenwood Road. RTH has been in the forefront of neighborhood planning politics for several years because it was one of the early victims of planned institutional expansion. In order
to understand the present development context of the area it is necessary to look at the plans conceived by Harvard University and the other medical area institutions in the early and middle '69's.

Essentially these institutions were moving toward a type of corporate conglomerate which would have culminated in the construction of a three-tower Affiliated Hospitals Complex of shared facilities. In their eyes the logical place for such a facility would be the area adjacent to existing facilities, which was a residential area of Mission Hill. The housing there was similar to that throughout the neighborhood and was occupied mostly by families. Harvard began buying up property in 1964 and renting to students and other transients from whom they could extract higher rents than they could from lower income families. Buildings fell into the familiar pattern of lack of maintenance, disrepair, and eventual decline in value. Many families moved out, and in 1968 the University planned mass evictions of those that remained in order to clear the way for construction of the AHC complex.

However, they did not anticipate the political strength that the community was able to muster, and ended up instead having to negotiate with RTH and strike a compromise with respect to current housing conditions and future developments. The essence of those compromises are as follows:

1. A freeze on rents in Harvard-owned apartments at 1969 levels;
2. Repairs to buildings to bring them up to code and exterior rehabilitation of remaining wood frame homes;
3. No evictions of tenants without the provision of suitable alternative housing by the University;
4. The establishment of a tenant selection process that would insure first preference in any new housing for families in the neighborhood and minimize the number of transients;
5. The construction of new housing to replace what had already been destroyed or become uninhabitable.
This last agreement is the focal point of what has happened in the area over the last four years. In 1975 RTH and Harvard University agreed on the construction of the 775-unit mixed-income Mission Park development which would be built on land formerly used for parking. When completely rented it will house about 1900 people, including 129 units for the elderly and the balance mostly for families. In addition, the complex will house a variety of community facilities, including a day care center, tennis and basketball courts, a swimming pool, and tot lots. There will also be social and recreational programs, mostly for the elderly. Construction has been completed and many of the units are now occupied.

However, the battle with Harvard continues, this time over the construction of the $120 million power plant by MASCO (Medical Area Service Corporation) alluded to earlier. This has become a sensitive issue in the neighborhood, and one which has divided the community. At issue is the fact that the completion of the construction of Mission Park constituted a concession to the community in return for RTH's public support for the power plant. Harvard claimed partway through the planning process that Mission Park was no longer financially feasible. At the same time, the approval or disapproval of MASCO's Chapter 121A application by the BRA was imminent and the issue would be decided after a public hearing. The answer the university came up with was that the housing could be completed if it were heated free of charge by the proposed power plant. Thus RTH was in the position of having to support the power plant in order to insure its completion, while the rest of the community, in addition to people in Brookline and other surrounding communities, was vehemently opposed to it on health and environmental grounds. The BRA approved the power plant in the fall of 1975, even before any environmen-
tal impact studies had been completed. Subsequent to this three such studies in fact had been rejected.

From then until now the controversy has centered on the amount of pollutants that the plant would emit, and redesign of the plant to address this problem. The state Department of Environmental Quality Engineering gave preliminary approval for "excavation and foundation work" while it considered the design changes and pollution controls proposed by MASCO engineers. Even though the Mission Hill community remains opposed to the plant, MASCO now has a "foot in the door" in the form of excavation, foundations, fuel tanks, pedestals for the diesel engines, and a three-story temporary building. The AHC is also under construction, though its original three towers has been reduced to one and the building will be confined to the former parking lot of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital.

While it can be said that the Mission Hill community was able to extract some important concessions from Harvard and the Affiliated Hospitals, it may have paid a dear price. Many people feel that RTH was "bought off" and that once again the institutions were throwing the community "crumbs" in order to get what they wanted. Some also felt that by providing the range of support services it plans, it is "turning in on itself" and separating itself from the rest of the community.

Triangle Area

The Triangle area is residential, commercial and mixed use, and encompasses the Brigham Circle business district. The three high rises which constitute the Whitney Street development house a largely transient population of young working people, students and employees of the medical area, who form a population distinct from the rest of the neighborhood.
In 1975 the area had a population of approximately 1,920. The area is characterized by a considerable amount of traffic congestion created partly by the intersection of public transportation lines, and partly by the nature of the commercial and institutional activity on both sides of Tremont Street and Huntington Avenue. The large parcel of land known as the "Ledge Site" facing Brigham Circle constitutes the major land area yet to be developed. Harvard owns the land, and although the University has proposed a series of high-intensity uses, no implementation plans have proceeded to date. Aside from the high rises, most of the housing is three-story brick and stone apartment buildings which line Wigglesworth, Worthington and Tremont Streets. Two and three family houses are adjacent to the Ledge Site at the southern perimeter of the area.

The main concerns in the Triangle area are crime, commercial disinvestment and the pressures created by the proximity to the medical area on the other side of Huntington Avenue. Although the community has received a commitment from Harvard and the medical area institutions not to expand on the eastern side of Huntington Avenue, the area is particularly threatened by the possibility of that promise being broken.

The decline of neighborhood-oriented business is a critical concern in view of a sizeable population of elderly and others who must rely on public transportation for services. Besides the majority of small businesses, the area also contains the only large supermarket in the vicinity which serves residents of the immediate area and those of adjacent neighborhoods. While crime and disinvestment have caused a general decline in Brigham Circle over the last several years, the situation has improved somewhat with the institution of "Team Police" by the city, affording greater protection during the night hours. The 1978-79 Neighborhood
Improvement Program of the city contains a budget for hiring a Marketing and Business Development specialist to evaluate the needs of the Brigham Circle and Tremont Street commercial areas and to formulate programs and strategies to address those needs.

Mission Hill Projects

The Mission Hill Project area contains the low-rise (3-stories) Mission Hill Main and high-rise (7-stories) Mission Hill Extension public housing, in addition to a few other residential structures, light industry and institutional uses. In 1975 the total population was approximately 2,900, down from about 5,200 in 1970. Most of this loss was due to the closing down of units within the projects. Although the area contains about 30% of the population of the neighborhood, it has over 50% of the families below the poverty level, and the majority of the neighborhood's Black and Hispanic population. Overall about 58% of the population is 18 years or under, with a density of 126 persons per acre.

Even though both the Mission Hill Main and Extension housing is in the area, each of the complexes has distinct but overlapping problems as a result of design and location. The low-rise buildings are closer to Tremont Street and the stores, institutional facilities and transportation lines there and at Brigham Circle. They are also of a more manageable scale in terms of making physical improvements to accommodate the needs of a dense, lower income population composed largely of children. The high-rises on the other hand are more isolated, being surrounded by the railroad embankment, Northeastern University, Wentworth Institute and industrial uses. There are no commercial facilities in the immediate area and the nearest transit is across the railroad embankment on Columbus
The failure of high rises as living environments for low income families has been amply documented and when combined with a total lack of any amenities, they become practically intolerable. The lack of maintenance and common areas characterizes both complexes, and the whole area is lacking in basic goods such as convenience foods.

While many of the problems of the projects are a result of inadequacies in design, siting and maintenance, a critical issue continues to be the psychological effects of that sort of living environment. There is a range of personal and social needs which must be met for any type of housing to work, especially when it involves high density living. Another consideration is the fact that low income people are generally less mobile and tend to use their living environment more intensely than people who spend a majority of their time elsewhere working, socializing, etc.

The industrial uses in the area are confined to the blocks between Prentiss and Station Streets and consist mostly of warehousing and storage operations. The northern and western edges of the area are impacted by parking and access to Northeastern and Wentworth Institute, and there is a considerable amount of traffic through the area to Tremont Street.

The proximity of the entire area to the Southwest Corridor make noise, safety and development of nearby vacant land prime considerations, especially in the Extension. The location of the Roxbury Crossing transit stop also implies changes in pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns through the area.

Top-of-the-Hill

With the exception of the Mission Hill Project area, the TOH contains
the most land of all the sub-areas. It has the largest concentration of two and three family homes, housing approximately 2,700 people as of 1975. The housing is generally in better condition than other sub-areas, although within the last few years the problem of abandonment has become more acute. In terms of housing the main problem area is the disposition of several abandoned, absentee-owned row-type brick apartment buildings on Wait Street near the intersection of Huntington Avenue. The community is currently seeking ways to transfer ownership of those properties to an organization or individual with the means to acquire the necessary financing for rehabilitation. Over 35 homes in the area have received loan assistance from the Neighborhood Housing Services.

The expansion plans of Robert Bent Brigham and New England Baptist Hospitals, along with the parking and traffic problems created by them, frame the institutional conflict in this area. Even though the Baptist Hospital was denied a Certificate of Need by the state, they are seeking other means of implementing their expansion plans. This poses a threat not only to homes but also to the Parker Hill Playground which is adjacent to the hospitals. In addition to the hospitals the area also houses the Parker Hill Medical Center which is a facility operated by private physicians and does not pose any immediate expansion threat.

When put in the context of features that make land in an urban setting valuable, the T-O-H would appear to have some of the most desirable land in the city. The views in all directions are magnificent and even though the park is not maintained as well as it could be, it is nevertheless a valuable amenity. There are even underground springs that at one time supplied the breweries in the nearby Stony Brook Valley.
Delle Avenue

Delle Ave. is the smallest of the sub-areas, encompassing only a few blocks between Tremont Street, St. Alphonsus, Allegheny and Parker Streets. The B.R.A. neighborhood profile considers Delle Ave. and the Terrace Street area as one sub-area, and lists a 1970 population of 1,151, concentrated mostly in the Delle Ave. section. According to 1975 estimates, the population has dropped to just over 500. Next to the Mission Hill projects, it has the highest concentration of Hispanic families and the growth of this population is evidenced by the recent opening of a Hispanic grocery store on the corner of Delle Ave. and Parker St.

It is a mostly residently area with the majority of housing being two and three-family wood frame structures. There are also a number of brick and puddingstone row-type apartment buildings on Sewall and Carmel Streets. Most of the housing is in fair condition and in need of some exterior renovation. As of early 1976, 7 homes had received assistance from Neighborhood Housing Services. Within the last year the area has been plagued by several fires, some of which residents believe are of suspicious origin. There is speculation that the buildings, owned by absentee landlords, were burned for insurance purposes, and in fact one individual has been convicted on arson charges for fires in buildings he owned in other areas of the city. The Delle Ave. Neighborhood Association has been active on this problem, in addition to things such as instituting a foot patrol, improving lighting, and general public relations.

Because of its proximity to the rail right-of-way it can be expected that the area will be significantly impacted by the construction and traffic associated with the SWCP.
Terrace Street

Along with the Mission Hill Project area, the mostly industrial strip between Parker Street and the railroad embankment forms the area that will be most affected by the construction in the SWC. Presently almost half of the land in the area is vacant and the few remaining commercial uses consist of two autobody shops, a pickle factory, sign company and printing company. Even though much of the once-thriving light industry has moved, remnants remain in the form of large unused or underutilized buildings concentrated at the New Heath Street end of Terrace St. There are a few one and two family residences in fair to good condition on Allegheny, Oscar and Gore Streets, and a series of abandoned wood and brick apartment buildings on Terrace St. There are two churches in the area -- New Life Presbyterian and Highland Congrega-tional. The former serves a primarily black constituency, while the latter is mostly white. Both Terrace and Parker Streets tend to be used as high-speed shortcuts for traffic through the neighborhood.

Since the Terrace St. area has traditionally been industrial, the residential area just up the hill has been shielded from the railroad embankment. But the tearing down of several buildings has placed it in plain view, raising the question of what the interface will be once the Orange Line is in place. Plans call for the rail lines to be partially depressed along this section, with some planting on the narrow strip separating it from Terrace St. A major concern of the community is noise and safety, and until there are more specifics on the design and engineering of the rail lines, the exact nature of the separation is unclear.

In addition to the question of interface, other issues concerning access across the right-of-way and Columbus Ave., activity around the
Planned Roxbury Crossing transit stop and appropriate uses for vacant land have been raised within the context of the SWC Station Area Task Force meetings. There is considerable sentiment on the part of residents that the area should continue to be mostly light industry, with the possible introduction of other commercial uses that have the potential of employing Mission Hill residents. With the proposed Cross-town Industrial Park, Roxbury Community College, and the new Campus High School/Occupational Resource Center complex being located across Columbus Ave., the parameters of possible development become more clearly defined to focus on support for these facilities as well as the existing residential development on that side of the hill.

**Back-of-the-Hill**

The Back-of-the-Hill is primarily residential, with a population of approximately 625. In addition to the 96% of the housing stock that is three-family, the area also contains the Resthaven Nursing home and is bordered by the Parker Hill Playground. Because of the more than 20 acres of vacant land left by the destruction of housing by Lahey Clinic, the area appears devastated and the replacement of that housing dominates the development agenda.

The Back-of-the-Hill Organization has proposed a three-phase plan to replenish some of the lost housing stock, with emphasis on providing units that have some approximation to what was destroyed in terms of the types of units and affordability. Phase I of the plan calls for the construction of 125 units of housing for the elderly and handicapped on a site at the foot of the hill on South Huntington Ave. The second phase would be comprised of 256 units of family housing on the same site. The third and most crucial phase in the view of the B-O-H is the construction
of 119 townhouses further up the hill, which would be designed to address the needs of the type of people who had lived there before. With the support of the B.R.A., the B-O-H has received a commitment of $4.8 million from H.U.D. for loan mortgages to be applied to the first phase of the project. However, the plan cannot proceed until the conflict with Lahey over the sale of the land to B-O-H is resolved.

The city of Boston has assessed the 12.5 acres that B-O-H wishes to buy as being worth about $900,000. However, Lahey insists on a minimum of $1.5 million for the land and so far has refused to negotiate that figure. Because B-O-H is anxious to take advantage of H.U.D.'s commitment they have considered purchase of only the parcels necessary to implement the first phase of the plan, but they have been unable to reach agreement with Lahey on that either. Within the last two months, the B-O-H has resorted to demonstrations at the J.F.K. Federal Building in Government Center in an effort to increase the visibility of the situation to apply political pressure on Lahey.

In addition to the provision of new housing, the most pressing need is the rehabilitation of existing structures. Most of the homes are in fair to poor condition, largely as a result of the problems associated with absentee ownership.

B-O-H has the advantage of being next to the Parker Hill Playground, but access to it is limited because of the poor condition of the stairs and paths leading to it.
Objectives

& Goals

Development

4
The examination of the physical and socio-economic characteristics of Mission Hill points toward several issues which are key to the future development of the neighborhood. These issues are key because it is only through addressing them individually and collectively that a comprehensive neighborhood development plan can be formulated. The following summary highlights those issues which emerge as priorities for community development in the Mission Hill context:

**4.1 Neighborhood Issues**

**Institutional Expansion**

The fact that Mission Hill and the area institutions are in such close proximity means that they will continue to be engaged in a "turf" battle for control over the relatively little land left for new development. The level of expansion activity by Harvard and the Affiliated Hospitals especially has been on the rise in the last several years, but site acquisition has become increasingly difficult because of the re-entrenchment of the residential character of the neighborhood through a series of community-based development efforts. The issue of expansion for the neighborhood then becomes how to strengthen this residential development and secure the marginal areas that are likely to be most impacted by any further institutional expansion. The skirmishes that the community has won thus far in the ongoing institutional battle have helped it to gain a better bargaining position which must be strengthened through political leverage and property control. While securing "buffer zones" is essential for the community, at the same time more attention should be given to the issue of the services those institutions provide and how they can be made to be more responsive to the needs of area
residents. The breaking down of some of the functional barriers between the neighborhood and the institutions can help shift the emphasis from an adversarial position to one of mutual benefit. The Back-of-the-Hill, the Top-of-the-Hill, RTH and the Triangle area will continue to be the areas most sensitive to expansion. The construction of Roxbury Community College will have some impact on the Mission Hill projects and the Terrace St. areas in terms of pedestrian and vehicular access, but any expansion on the Mission Hill side is unlikely.

**Commercial and Residential Disinvestment**

Apart from the capital investment of area institutions the economic base of Mission Hill has historically been composed of three main elements: (1) industrial and manufacturing jobs; (2) housing; and (3) local commercial establishments serving the residential and institutional populations. To some extent the problems of disinvestment reflect a change in the employment base of the neighborhood and the city as a whole away from manufacturing to service-related businesses. As the neighborhood goes through this transition the lag between the creation of new jobs to replace those lost has created an income gap as reflected in the number of people on some type of government assistance and the number of unemployed. The loss of jobs, destruction of housing by institutional expansion and the period of decline of the neighborhood as a desirable place to live have all contributed to the decline of local business.

Taking these factors into consideration, the disinvestment issue becomes centered around what kind of development will strengthen the residential and local commercial sectors while providing the opportunity for growth. Commercial growth should be oriented towards providing
essential services for an increasing population and the type of businesses that will keep money being "recycled" within the neighborhood. It should also be directed at providing support rather than competition for other proposed SWC-related development. Since the Cross-Town Industrial Park is expected to create from 300 to 400 jobs, and several thousand construction-related jobs will be created by the building of the Orange Line, the prospects for reducing unemployment and dependence on government assistance in Mission Hill is promising. The activities of the Neighborhood Housing Services and other government-sponsored housing programs have had the positive effect of increasing the willingness of private lenders to loan money for rehabilitation, but absentee landlords continue to be a problem. While the replacement of some of the housing that was destroyed will counteract residential disinvestment, density should be controlled so that the neighborhood does not find itself in the same position it was in the early part of the century. It is essential that the community have flexibility to respond to market pressures in order to have balanced growth.

### Quality of Life

The general feeling of the residents of Mission Hill is that it is presently a desirable place to live that has the potential of being even better by capitalizing on those physical and social attributes that are indigenous to it. The issue of the quality of life in the neighborhood focuses on the improvement of the network of amenities such that they become more accessible to residents. In a physical sense improving the quality of life involves a targeted approach at physical upgrading in certain sub-areas, and utilizing vacant land and underutilized land and buildings. In a social sense it involves assuring that all residents
of the neighborhood have access to commercial, institutional and community support services and the opportunity to make a positive social contribution. To an extent this will mean taking a "holding the line" approach to certain existing qualities such as the residential character and ethnic diversity, while at the same time it can mean the opportunity to create new amenities by taking advantage of present development opportunities.

Potential Effects of the SWCP

In assessing the potential effects of the SWC project most considerations have to do with (1) how the neighborhood will relate to both the corridor itself and the Highland Park and Lower Roxbury neighborhoods; (2) how the likely new commercial activity around the transit stop will impact the Brigham Circle and Tremont Street commercial areas; (3) how present traffic and parking problems can be alleviated; and (4) how construction disruption associated with the SWC can be controlled. Additionally, it can be expected that because the neighborhood will be more accessible and enhanced by new development that land and housing values will rise considerably within the next several years. Controlling the effects of this can in part be addressed through strategies dealing with commercial and residential disinvestment, but a key issue is the speed with which the community is able to exert control over major parcels of land available for development, and establish a set of development criteria that is consistent with neighborhood goals.
Mission Hill Public Housing Projects

The resolution of the problems of the Mission Hill housing project necessitates a multi-faceted approach that encompasses socio-economic as well as physical changes. The major problem of public housing, especially in Boston, is that it operates at a loss, and since the city cannot extract but so much in rent from its tenants, there is really no incentive to make needed physical improvements. Alternatives as to what to do with the project boil down to three basic choices: (1) tear them down and replace them with new housing; (2) sell them to private organizations to renovate them for other groups such as the elderly or students; (3) find alternative ownership strategies such as sweat equity to give current residents an opportunity to "buy into" them and do renovations. The first of these is unlikely and the second means displacement of low income residents. The last approach is the most appealing in principle but relies on the availability of government funding mechanisms as well as a significant educational process for residents. Given that the implementation of any program will take a considerable amount of time, a central concern is what the relationship of the projects will be to the rest of the neighborhood in the interim and how the choosing of a development option by the city can be influenced to the benefit of the neighborhood.

Addressing the problems of the projects is critical to strengthening a weak link in the neighborhood sub-area system. They may be seen as a buffer to institutional expansion by Northeastern University and Wentworth Institute, and thus it is in the best interests of the neighborhood to see that the interface of both buildings and people is positive.
These neighborhood factors can be translated into a set of goals and objectives that establish guidelines for neighborhood development and provide a basis for delineating more specific development criteria.

## 4.2 Goals & Objectives

### Channel/Check Institutional Expansion
- Improve system of community review of institutional activities.
- Prevent further acquisition of property by institutions.
- Increase level of institutional services provided to Mission Hill residents

### Strengthen Economic Infrastructure of the Neighborhood
- Promote job-creating development.
- Promote resident ownership of businesses and housing.
- Compliment existing commercial development.
- Prevent large-scale speculative development.

### Insure Availability of Quality, Affordable Housing
- Promote rehabilitation of existing structures.
- Promote new mixed-income units of various sizes.
**STRENGTHEN TREMONT STREET "SEAM"**

- Improve parking and traffic circulation.

**STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITIES**

- Encourage economic and ethnic diversity.
- Maintain residential character.
- Maintain existing building scale.
- Provide support services for residential development.

**DEVELOP POTENTIAL OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

- Seek better definition and distribution of open space.
- Preserve existing views and vistas.
- Upgrade existing park areas.
- Improve pedestrian access to sub-areas.

**PROMOTE INCREASED UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- Improve access and parking.
- Upgrade existing facilities.
**CAPITALIZE ON POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF SWCP**

- Promote community control of parcels adjacent to the SWCP.
- Provide tie-in to corridor park system.
- Use activity node to be created by stop an an anchor for development.

**SEEK POSITIVE CROSS-CORRIDOR RELATIONSHIPS**

- Establish controlled interface at Roxbury Crossing
- Promote accessibility of businesses and institutions in the Corridor to Mission Hill residents.

**MINIMIZE POTENTIALLY DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE SWCP**

- Control construction disruption
- Minimize traffic disruption
- Minimize competition with Brigham Circle

**SEEK POSITIVE INTEGRATION OF PROJECTS INTO OVERALL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

- Provide opportunity for residents to "buy into" the neighborhood.
- Soften edges and reduce physical barriers around the projects
- Improve communication between residents & rest of neighborhood
*IMPROVE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS WITHIN PROJECTS*

- Investigate alternatives to city ownership
- Upgrade existing units and create additional amenities
- Utilize currently unused units.
In considering a neighborhood development plan, it becomes evident that there are key physical and social elements that must be addressed as priorities for strengthening the neighborhood as a whole. The designated target area (see map) encompasses those nodal areas and sub-systems outlined below that are central to understanding the physical translation of neighborhood goals and objectives. The upgrading proposed for these nodes and sub-systems in the following chapter supports the current development being undertaken by government and community agencies. It will also respond to the issues of securing marginal areas and establishing buffer zones between residential and non-residential development.

4.3 TARGET AREA DEV. PLAN

The target area includes the following specific sites and parcels as major objectives for development:

- Ledge Site
- Parker Hill Playground
- Parcel 25
- Parcel 27a North
- Mission Hill Playground
- Unused and underutilized industrial buildings on Terrace Street
- Tremont Street
- Gloucester Memorial Hall property (across Terrace Street from Parcel 27a North)

For the most part these sites are at areas of interface where some transition from one type of use or development to another is necessary.
The first of the following maps delineates the major development parcels and areas and the second provides an analysis of the dominant features of the target area. Based on this analysis and the synthesis of neighborhood goals and objectives, a set of conceptual relationships was generated to address the linkages within and between nodes and sub-systems. In reference to the open space system, the term formal denotes areas of structured activity such as playgrounds and ball fields; semi-formal denotes space allotted both for structured and unstructured activity; informal indicates spaces oriented towards more spontaneous activity and freer movement.

The concept plans have been further synthesized into a set of development criteria for the major sites and parcels and alternatives for development. Those aspects of the alternatives which differ reflect options for usage depending on what type of development the community wishes to emphasize. The following development criteria are consistent with expressed community desires for upgrading and address the implications of proposed SWC improvements.

**TREMONT STREET**

★ Develop as a major pedestrian link between Brigham Circle and Roxbury Crossing

★ Promote greater use of street as a social and commercial activity center

★ Maintain existing building scale and architectural character

★ Maintain existing commercial uses
Provide additional parking

GURNEY ST. BLOCK

- Develop primarily as neighborhood commercial
- Use Gurney St. as a pedestrian street
- Upgrade existing brick and puddingstone buildings with attention to potential historic significance of stone buildings

GLOUCESTER MEMORIAL CHURCH PROPERTY

- Develop consistent with existing residential and possible new commercial uses
- Minimize impact on adjacent residential units

PARCEL 27a NORTH

- Develop as neighborhood commercial/retail
- Explore possibility of reuse of existing building

MISSION HILL PLAYGROUND

- Maintain existing uses
- Integrate into overall Tremont street-scene

TERRACE STREET

- Maintain existing industrial uses
- Establish major link with corridor park system
- Utilize vacant industrial buildings
LEDGE SITE

* Preserve part of area as permanent open space
* Develop open space for informal, low intensity use
* Preserve existing views
* Secure unsafe edges where steep grades exist

PARKER HILL PLAYGROUND

* Develop as the major active open space with well-defined uses
* Preserve field area and wildlife
* Preserve views
CURRENT LAND USE RELATIONSHIPS
### TARGET AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites/Parcels</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Existing Use</th>
<th>Existing Zoning*</th>
<th>Proposed Development</th>
<th>Height/Density</th>
<th>Zoning Change Req'd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TREMONT ST.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>- Street improvements-planting, benches, resurfacing of sidewalks;</td>
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<td>- Street improvements-planting, benches, resurfacing of sidewalks;</td>
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<td>- Storefront improvements-painting, signage, awnings</td>
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<td>- Resurfacing of Tremont St., planting</td>
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<td>- Alt. 1 Parking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Alt. 2 Open Space-Tot. lot</td>
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<td>- Parking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Tremont St.            | Street improvements-planting, benches, resurfacing of sidewalks; Storefront improvements-painting, signage, awnings | N/A            | no |
| Tremont St.            | Parking                                                                 | N/A            | no |
| Tremont St.            | Resurfacing of Tremont St., planting                                                                                                                                 |

| GURNEY STREET BLOCK    | 144,043 sq.ft. Commercial, vacant | N/A            | yes |
|                        | • Retail-convenience foods; sandwich shop, drugstore, stationery store; replace burned out retail | 1-2 stories    | yes |
|                        | • Parking                                                                            | 25-30 cars     | no  |
|                        | • Alt. 1 Parking                                                                      | 50-60 cars      | no  |
|                        | • Alt. 2 Open Space-Tot. lot                                                         | N/A            | no  |

| Parcel 25             | 83,500 sq.ft. vacant                  | M-2            | yes |
| Parcel 25             | • Retail-convenience foods; sandwich shop, drugstore, stationery store; replace burned out retail | 1-2 stories    | yes |
| Parcel 25             | • Parking                                                                            | 25-30 cars     | no  |
| Parcel 25             | • Alt. 1 Parking                                                                      | 50-60 cars      | no  |
| Parcel 25             | • Alt. 2 Open Space-Tot. lot                                                         | N/A            | no  |

| Parcel 25a (MBTA power sub-station) | 24,910 sq.ft. vacant | M-2 | no |
| Parcel 25a (MBTA power sub-station) | • Retail-convenience foods; sandwich shop, drugstore, stationery store; replace burned out retail | 1-2 stories    | no  |
| Parcel 25a (MBTA power sub-station) | • Parking                                                                            | 25-30 cars     | no  |
| Parcel 25a (MBTA power sub-station) | • Alt. 1 Parking                                                                      | 50-60 cars      | no  |
| Parcel 25a (MBTA power sub-station) | • Alt. 2 Open Space-Tot. lot                                                         | N/A            | no  |

*See existing zoning map for explanation of zoning.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites/Parcels</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Existing Use</th>
<th>Existing Zoning</th>
<th>Proposed Development</th>
<th>Height/Density</th>
<th>Zoning Change Req'd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West side of Gurney St.</td>
<td>9,807 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Vacant, housing</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>Alt. 1- Parking</td>
<td>25-30 cars</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alt. 2- Housing</td>
<td>3-4 stories/medium</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alt. 3- Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARCEL 27a NORTH</strong></td>
<td>15,000 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant bldgs.</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>Neighborhood commer-</td>
<td>1-4 stories</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cial; office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOUCESTER MEMORIAL CHURCH PROPERTY</td>
<td>31,370 sq.ft. Vacant</td>
<td>L-1 M-2</td>
<td>Alt. 1-Neighborhood commercial</td>
<td>1-4 stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>15-20 cars</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alt. 2-Housing</td>
<td>3-4 stories/medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>20 cars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERRACE STREET</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Street improvements-</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>resurfacing sidewalks, streets, planting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel A</td>
<td>16,895 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>40-50 cars</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parcel A(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abandoned housing</td>
<td>H-1</td>
<td>Rehab</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parcel B</td>
<td>3,034 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>H-1</td>
<td>Alt. 1-Housing</td>
<td>1-3 stories/low</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel C</td>
<td>34,927 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>Alt. 1-Light Mfg.</td>
<td>1-2 stories</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alt. 2-Open Space</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sites/Parcels</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Existing Use</td>
<td>Existing Zoning</td>
<td>Proposed Development</td>
<td>Height/Density</td>
<td>Zoning Change Req'd</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel D</td>
<td>25,469 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>• Alt. 1- Light Mfg.</td>
<td>1-2 stories</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Alt. 2- Open Space</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel E</td>
<td>72,782 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Unused Industrial bldgs.</td>
<td>M-2</td>
<td>Rehab for new industrial or community use</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledge Site</td>
<td>287,719 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>H-1</td>
<td>• Alt. 1-Open Space- planting, benches</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Alt. 2-Open Space, Housing</td>
<td>180,743 sq.ft.</td>
<td>dependent on bldg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-4 stories/</td>
<td>height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Hill Playground</td>
<td>184,731 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Recreation/ open space</td>
<td></td>
<td>Repair &amp; upgrade existing facilities; planting</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker Hill Playground</td>
<td>898,872 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Recreation/ open space</td>
<td>R-8</td>
<td>Repair &amp; upgrade existing facilities; additional lighting,</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>benches, planting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulfinch School</td>
<td>39,052 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>R-8</td>
<td>Reuse as community facility: arts, theatre, adult educ-</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ation, special programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. IMPLEMENTATION
5.1 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Within the last several years, a number of improvements have been made in the Mission Hill neighborhood by public and private organizations. The City of Boston has made several capital improvements in the neighborhood over the last ten years, including construction and renovation of community facilities and parks, re-building of streets, replacement of sewer and water lines, and street lighting. Over the last three years 75% of the Community Development Block Grant program has been devoted to capital improvements in the Mission Hill projects. In 1975 and 1976, $2.5 million was allocated to the projects alone for renovations and installation of security screens.

In addition to capital improvements, the city has supported the Neighborhood Housing Services, a community-based revitalization program providing loans and technical assistance to residents. A particularly positive feature of NHS's services is that they administer a revolving loan fund for homeowners not meeting conventional lending standards. This fund is supported by Federal, city and foundation grants, and allows borrowers to make improvements according to their ability to pay. Technical assistance provided by the organization includes:

- On-site consulting by the rehab specialist to help the homeowner identify needed home repairs and establish job priorities.
- Development of a detailed work program including construction specifications and cost estimates.
- Coordination with the City's Housing Improvement Program to take advantage of the 20% rebate which can then be applied to additional repairs.
- Referral of experienced, reliable contractors as well as assistance in contract negotiations.
- Frequent inspections as the work progresses and final inspection to insure satisfactory completion.
- Individualized budget and debt management counseling.
- Referral of qualified borrowers to participating lending institutions and preparation of loan applications.
- Encouragement of homebuyers through pre-purchase counselling and assistance with mortgage approvals.

NHS plans to rehabilitate over 30 structures in the coming year.

The 1978-79 Neighborhood Improvement Program of the city continues the thrust of previous programs and includes:
- continuing the boarding and demolition program for abandoned buildings.
- Implementing the Open Space Management Program for the first time on Mission Hill, both to upgrade scattered vacant lots and to beautify the grounds of Mission Hill Project.
- Providing new streetlights and reconstructing streets and sidewalks, as requested by residents.
- Improving neighborhood police protection.
- Supporting social services at the Mission Hill Project in a continuing effort to improve the quality of life for residents.
- Designing strategies to revitalize the Tremont Street and Brigham Circle commercial districts.

The various improvements proposed for 1978-79 are funded at the following levels:

**Housing**

- Housing Improvement Program - $65,000
- Neighborhood Housing Services - revolving loan fund - $50,000
- Boarding and Demolition of vacant buildings - $40,000
- Open Space Management of vacant lots - $30,000
- Mission Hill Housing Project (Main and Extension)
  - Open Space Management (grounds beautification) - $25,000
  - Mission Hill Main - Building 19
  - Program developer and coordinator - $15,000
- YMCA Hispanic Programs (ESL, GED, job counseling) - $25,000
- Mission Hill Extension renovations - $65,000
Human Services

Continuation of the Senior Shuttle Program - $17,000
Hennigan Community School
Senior Citizen Home Help Aid (youth assisting the elderly) - $10,000
After-School Day Care - $10,000

Public Works

Streetlights and sidewalks
Fenwood Road (Vining St. to Huntington Ave.) - $72,000
Pontiac St. - $80,000
Street and sidewalk improvements - $131,200
Calumet St.
Delle Ave.
Hillside St.
Iroquois St.
Oswald St.
Sewall St.

Public Safety

The "team police" program will be expanded to include the entire Mission Hill neighborhood. Coordination with the community is to be provided through the Boston Police Department and Little City Hall.

Commercial District

Shuttle bus operating through the neighborhood - $26,000
Marketing and business development specialist to evaluate needs of the Brigham Circle commercial district and design strategies for implementation of improvements - $18,000

TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM $678,000

Relative to other neighborhoods in Boston, Mission Hill is at the low end of the funding scale, ranking third behind Back Bay/Bay Village and Chinatown in the least amount of funds allocated. Even though the majority of funds have gone towards improvements to the Mission Hill projects, there remains a great deal to be done there and in other sub-areas as well in terms of infrastructure to support future development. The only other major development effort recently completed has been the
Mission Park housing in the RTH area. This project will hopefully enhance the neighborhood development efforts and now that it is near completion, attention can be focused on the Corridor side of the neighborhood.

In addition to these major projects, the neighborhood is receiving increased assistance from private lending institutions in upgrading the housing stock. With the anticipated continuation of the State Banking Commission's Bank Investment Disclosure Program and increasing interest in the neighborhood, the private sector should become more visible in the future.

Although it will be some time before construction of the Orange Line and related improvements are completed, there are a number of planned developments adjacent to and outside of the neighborhood which will impact development within Mission Hill. They include:

**ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (R.C.C.)**

The proposed R.C.C. is to be located on the east side of Columbus Ave. between Jackson Square and Roxbury Crossing. The college is expected to accommodate 3,000 students in Phase I, and an additional 2,000 students in phase II. In addition to classroom and administration space, the college will have parking for 500 cars and recreation facilities. Because R.C.C. will be a commuter college, it can be expected to draw traffic from a radius of several miles. This traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular will provide a market for neighborhood commercial development.
CAMPUS HIGH/OCCUPATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

The Madison Park High School was completed within the last year and has begun operation. The complex is located on New Dudley Street, diagonally across from Roxbury Crossing. The O.R.C. is located adjacent to the high school and construction is under way with an expected completion date of 1980. It will be part of the city's magnet school system and provide on-the-job training for approximately 2,500 students. As with the R.C.C. the additional traffic associated with these institutions will contribute to commercial development. It can also be expected that some traffic to and from the complexes will pass through Mission Hill.

CROSS-TOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK

The federal Economic Development Administration has been actively involved in the planning and allocation of funds for an industrial park located in Roxbury near the proposed cross-town arterial street. Digital Equipment Corporation has made a commitment to locate a sizeable facility in the park which would be a major employer. All told, the park is expected to employ between 300 and 400 people. In addition to Digital, the park will house other industrial uses and provide space for minority vendors. The park should prove to be a great advantage to Roxbury in terms of providing jobs and a sounder economic base. Mission Hill stands to make
some inroads into regaining jobs lost as a result of the exodus of older industries. The park also holds implications for existing and possible future industrial development in the neighborhood.

**CORRIDOR PARK SYSTEM**

The Corridor park system includes general parkland, the Corridor Trail (pedestrian and bicycle), active recreation and station plaza areas. At certain points in the system the parkland links with existing open space areas to create pockets within neighborhoods. In the vicinity of Mission Hill, the park system becomes primarily a narrow buffer of planting of from 20 to 50 feet wide on the Terrace St. side of the right-of-way, and a continuation of the Trail on the Columbus Ave. side. The community has expressed concern that the system is not sufficiently linked to the neighborhood and residents will not have full benefit of it.

Besides the physical improvements associated with the SWCP, it is estimated that the project will create 18,500 jobs with $245 million in wages during the six to ten year construction period. 2,400 of those jobs will be permanent, providing a $31,000,000 annual payroll. Within the last year several labor organizations have joined together as the Boston Jobs Coalition to lobby for the reservation of a substantial percentage of those jobs for residents of affected neighborhoods. The coalition has crossed racial lines, although a prime concern
continues to be the number of jobs available for minorities.

The eventual implementation of these proposed facilities will significantly aid in addressing the current development issues in Mission Hill. The money channeled through the city's CDBG program will deal with some basic improvements to existing recreational areas, streets, housing, social services and abandoned buildings. However, it is only to the extent to which the neighborhood is viewed as a political and economic priority area that an increase in funding for these types of improvements will be made. While the neighborhood may only be able to exert marginal influence on planned development outside of it, this is an issue which is equally important because of its implications for property values, traffic, employment and business opportunities.
The strategies available to the Mission Hill community for implementing the development alternatives proposed in this study are varied and require additional examination to define which are most appropriate for specific types of development. Essentially the implementation of any development relies on the extent to which the community is able to leverage political pressure. Competition for scarce resources is great, and dealing in the Boston political arena requires vigilance and a loud voice. Community control over the planning process, as distinguished from community participation in it, is vital to the resolution of future development issues. There are a variety of actors that the neighborhood must deal with, including the City of Boston (the B.R.A., Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals); the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (M.B.T.A.); area institutions; H.U.D.; banks and private lending institutions; the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (M.H.F.A.); and private developers. In order to deal effectively with the development opportunities that are presented by the SWCP, the neighborhood will have to devote the type of energy to it that it has toward the Lahey Clinic and MASCO situations. Given that these are still active struggles, it has been difficult for the neighborhood to devote the type of consistent attention toward the SWCP that it deserves.

Effective control in the SWCP planning process requires that participants in the Station Area Task Forces (SATF's) be both well-informed and vocal in demanding clarification of development plans as
they are formed. Given that the MBTA has final say on the disposal of key parcels (Parcel 25, 25a, 27a north), the community must extract a commitment that no development decisions will be made without full review by residents and an opportunity to veto any decision that is not consistent with expressed neighborhood goals.

In addition, pressure should be applied to the city government to influence the types of improvements that will be funded through the CDBG program. An alliance between the Mission Hill Planning Commission and organizations such as the SWCC and Roxbury Action Program (R.A.P.), could be effective in determining how government agencies will relate to the neighborhoods affected by the project. R.A.P. is a prime example of how a community-based organization has been able to influence development through becoming actively involved in negotiating commitments for specific improvements and being designated the official planning agency for the neighborhood by the city. R.A.P. and its involvements in development in Highland Park bears further study by the Mission Hill Planning Commission as a potential model for restructuring its approach to neighborhood planning. Other organizations such as the Lower Roxbury Community Corporation (L.R.C.C.) have also become developers of housing and other projects, and can provide insight into the operation of community development corporations. Such a corporation is under study in Jamaica Plain, and Mission Hill may wish to tap its resources.

Besides political pressure, the major means the community has to exert control over development is to be able to either purchase or retain development rights over property. While the Planning
Commission may not wish to take on the responsibility of being a developer, its activities with respect to development would be considerably enhanced by the formation of an arm of the organization that would have responsibility for market studies, site acquisition, and negotiation of financial agreements. Even though this may represent a desirable route for the neighborhood, the reality of the situation is that acquiring funding is a long and arduous process and a number of other neighborhoods in the Corridor will be competing for available funds. In an environment where funds tend to be spread thinly over a number of organizations, it is difficult to secure the level of funding that will enable an organization to compete with institutions and established developers. This is particularly true concerning such parcels as the Ledge site and vacant parcels on Terrace St. The situation with Lahey Clinic is a glaring example of how the best the community has to offer may not be enough to win out.

Short of actual property acquisition, there is a variety of interim, hybrid (neither short nor long term), and permanent land use controls available to the community to exert control over development. The application of any of these controls is dependent upon property ownership, timing and proposed development. In some instances controls are aimed at stopping a particular action, while others are meant to promote development. The extent to which land use controls can be leveraged has a direct relationship to both the community's understanding of them and its ability to influence the zoning bodies that must approve them.
Since several alternatives proposed in this study concern housing and commercial use, further study of the marketability of these uses on the sites proposed is necessary. In addition to taking advantage of city funds provided through the Neighborhood Housing Services and the Rebate Program, further investigation of M.H.F.A. (Mass. Housing Finance Agency) and H.U.D. Section 8 housing is warranted. These two vehicles are the routes most often taken in providing housing for low and moderate income people and are the major sources of government housing subsidy. Again, there are constraints on the availability of such funds, but this may be the only route for the construction of housing, in the near future, given the scenario outlined earlier. At the same time, banks and private lending institutions should be made more responsive to rehabilitation needs in particular, and the expansion of lending activities into areas considered as high risk. While private sector response to the housing market may be sluggish at present, the beginning of construction on the Orange Line and other improvements will make the neighborhood a surer investment in the future.

From the foregoing survey of strategies, this study suggests a set of items for action by the Mission Hill Planning Commission and the community which deal with steps to move the neighborhood towards the next phase of planning. These items address both things that should be done within the Planning Commission itself as well as actions that should be pursued once those things have been dealt with. There is an attempt to assign priorities based on the relative importance of each item in the overall planning scheme laid out in this study.
A number of the items are information gathering tasks, but are important as bases for making further development decisions.

AGENDA FOR ACTION

Priority I

Item A - The Mission Hill Planning Commission should agree upon and establish a set of priorities for neighborhood development based on information contained in this study and current Commission plans. This will provide a sort of master plan against which development proposals can be judged.

Item B - Staffing for the Commission should be increased to handle the need for additional information gathering and planning functions. The hiring of at least two staff would both expand the Commission's capabilities and help alleviate the administrative load that the present staff person now bears. Preferably these would be individuals familiar with the area and having a background in planning and/or marketing or land use. The Board of Directors might be called on to take a more active role in developing planning strategies. If the Commission does not now have a legal advisor, it should seek someone with expertise in land use and development as an outside resource.
Item C - The New B.R.A. neighborhood planner should be made thoroughly aware of the community's concerns about development, and a rapport established so as to insure that the current needs of the neighborhood are reflected in the city's future CDBG applications.

Item D - The Planning Commission or other designated neighborhood representatives should meet with the state SWC Coordinator, Harvard and other major property owners to secure a commitment that no development decisions for parcels in Mission Hill will be made without prior community approval. The Memorandum of Agreement signed by the SWCC and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1972 may provide a model for such an agreement.

PRIORITY II

Item A - The Planning Commission should perform marketing studies to assess the demand for particular sizes and types of housing units and the extent to which newly-completed and planned housing will address present and future needs. Such a study should include a survey of private and public funding mechanisms and their applicability to particular types of housing. A similar study for various types of neighborhood-oriented commercial development on Tremont and Terrace Streets is necessary.
Item B - The Planning Commission should initiate discussions with the SWCC, R.A.P., S.R.C.C. and similar organizations involved in planning and development for the SWC and adjacent areas in order to find out what techniques and mechanisms they have employed in their projects and to assess their applicability to Mission Hill. In regards to R.A.P. in particular, the Planning Commission should find out more about the meaning of its status as the city-designated neighborhood planning agency and what powers it has pursuant to that.

Item C - The Mission Hill neighborhood should take an active role in the Boston Jobs Coalition and work with that organization to develop a schedule of how many and what types of jobs would be available to residents.

Item D - The Planning Commission and other neighborhood organizations should promote increased discussion among residents concerning the development potential of different sub-areas and issues of prime concern.

Item E - The community development corporation being considered for Jamaica Plain should be investigated as a potential model and or cooperating agency for development.

PRIORITY III

Item A - The neighborhood and the Planning Commission should
reassess its position with respect to area institutions and find ground for compromise concerning institutional present and expansion. Among the topics for a possible meeting would be the disposition of property owned by institutions in the neighborhood and services they could be providing to residents that they are not now providing.

Item B - Studies of potential land use controls and infrastructure needs (sewer, lighting, streets) for specific parcels of land depending on proposed use should be undertaken to support any planned development.

Item C - A member (or members) of the Planning Commission or it staff should monitor the progress of projects outside of the neighborhood per se (Roxbury Community College, Occupational Resources Center, Crosstown Industrial Park, etc.) to gather information that is pertinent to Mission Hill and to make input into any decision making process associated with them.

The previous items represent a sizeable task for the neighborhood and the Planning Commission. Some may be accomplished with existing resources, but the majority will require additional personnel. Possible funding sources for staff include H.U.D.'s 701 Comprehensive Planning Program and private foundations. Graduate students from area colleges and universities provide an abundant pool of talent, particularly for information gathering. There may also be residents of the neigh-
borhood with some training who could volunteer their services for specific tasks. Even with students and volunteers, the volume of work the Planning Commission faces indicates that in the longer term more paid, full-time staff will be necessary. Thus the Commission should assign priority to finding funding sources while at the same time utilizing other short-terms personnel. The improvement of the internal capability for dealing with planning issues will strengthen the Commission's position with respect to government agencies and enable it to exert more effective control in planning for the neighborhood.

This study has attempted to provide direction for planning and development in Mission Hill and to suggest topics that require further study in order to proceed toward implementation of planning efforts. It offers a comprehensive approach that is the first step in forming an attitude about development. The next steps must be those of the community, both in evaluating it as an approach and using the information it contains as a tool for development.
Footnotes

1. See The Urban Villagers, by Herbert Gans for a discussion of the series of events leading up to the renewal of the West End and its effects on the lower income Italian community.

2. Information obtained from the Charles River Park Apartments Rental Office, April 1978.


4. Lower income neighborhoods include the South End, Fenway, Campus High, Kittridge Square, Washington Park and Brunswick-King.

5. According to 1970 federal census data, Boston lost approximately 27% of its population between 1950 and 1970.

6. From 1967 to 1972 approximately 12,600 families and 4,262 businesses had either been relocated or were awaiting relocation by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Source: B.R.A. relocation figures.


8. Ibid., page 6.

9. See "Hostage, Housing and the Massachusetts Financial Crisis:, a report by the Boston Community School, 1977, for a discussion of the various aspects of the housing market.


16. Ibid., page 98.

18. Chapter 121A of the Mass. General Laws establishes a tax rate that is tied to the annual gross rents of a development for a fixed number of years. It also gives one central planning agency (the B.R.A.) say-so over safety codes, zoning and air pollution control variances and building code variances.

19. The Bank Investment disclosure program requires metropolitan area banks to disclose the amounts of funds reinvested in neighborhoods in loans and the amounts received in bank deposits, in addition to other financial data.

Demonstrators protest Lahey Clinic's policies in Mission Hill — story page 5.
THE BACK OF THE HILL AND LAHEY CLINIC

For seven years, residents of the Back of Mission Hill have been trying to reclaim their community. The Back of the Hill, once a vibrant community which provided decent, affordable housing, was virtually destroyed when, between 1959 and 1967, Ruggles Street Baptist Church and the Lahey Clinic bought up 150 units of housing. They paid often exorbitant prices to speculators, absentee landlords, and working-class residents who could scarcely afford to refuse an offer way above what they knew their houses were worth.

In the hands of Lahey and Ruggles, the houses began to deteriorate rapidly. Needed repairs were rarely if ever made. As the houses became uninhabitable, the institutions quickly tore them down to make room for the new church and new clinic which were to be built on the land.

But the church and the clinic were never built. Ruggles Baptist decided to move to Beacon Street, and Lahey decided to build in Burlington. Even after these decisions, though, the institutions continued to buy and tear down houses. What had started as construction plans began to look more and more like land speculation -- a strange although not unusual activity for "non-profit, charitable" institutions.

What Ruggles and Lahey had not planned on, though, was the strength of a small but determined core of the community, committed to staying and seeing that the damage done by those two institutions was repaired. In 1967, the Back of the Hill won a partial victory against Ruggles. After a long rent strike, attempted evictions, and the occupation of 55 Lawn Street to stop its demolition, Ruggles turned its seven remaining houses over to the tenants.

Around the same time, Ruggles found a developer interested in its land. When the residents made it clear that nothing would be built on the land without community approval and control, the developer, Jerry Levin, began negotiations which led to a plan to co-develop the land with the Back of the Hill. The negotiations finally broke down: the control demanded by the community was more than Levin was willing to give. Levin made an attempt to go it alone but the Back of the Hill quickly stopped him; and it became even more clear that no developer would be able to do anything with the open land on the Back of the Hill without the community's approval.

What the community would approve, was, simply, housing comparable to what had been destroyed by Ruggles and Lahey, at a price that working people could afford. And they would have
to have enough control of the process to be sure that that was what they actually got. Any attempt by Lahey or Ruggles to profit from their land speculation by selling to a developer of luxury highrises would be quickly thwarted when the would-be developer found out that the community just wasn't going to let it happen.

Meanwhile, the community continued trying to negotiate with Lahey -- to buy the land at a price that would allow them to replace the housing that had been destroyed. But the community had no money; funding for new housing was virtually unavailable; and, perhaps, Lahey was still holding out for a better offer. At any rate, the process seemed to be at a standstill until the fall of 1976, when Lahey broke a promise to the community and tore down one of its two remaining houses on the back of Mission Hill.

It was the anger of Mission Hill residents at this broken promise that got things moving again. June Howe, president of the Back of the Hill Organization, was arrested trying to stop the demolition. Angry letters went out to just about anyone who might be interested in the destruction of a community by Lahey, or who might have some power to stop it. And suddenly, people outside of the community became interested in the plight of the Back of the Hill.

The strongest support for the community came from the Boston City Council. Councillor Frederick Langone and the City Council Housing Committee held a hearing on February 10, 1977, at which 200 residents from all parts of Mission Hill testified about Lahey's actions on the Back of the Hill.

Under pressure from the City Council, Lahey officials indicated they would consider any "reasonable" offer from the community, and the negotiations seemed to be moving again.

What the community proposed was a three-phase development plan. The first phase would be 125 units of housing for the elderly and handicapped, to be built on South Huntington Ave. The second phase would be 256 units of family housing, also on South Huntington. The third phase, and the key one for the community, would be 119 units of townhouses, to be built further up on the hill. The housing would be subsidized, to make it affordable to the kinds of people who had lived there before. Each phase would move ahead as funding became available.

This plan would not, of course, really replace the housing that Lahey had destroyed. 150 units of housing would be replaced by 500, and only 119 of these (the townhouses) would really be
comparable to what was there before. However, the community realized that this compromise was the closest they could possibly get to what they wanted. What Lahey had destroyed could never really be replaced.

To be sure that Lahey wouldn't take advantage of the community by agreeing to the first phase, then trying to sell the rest of the land, made more valuable by the first building, to another developer, the Back of the Hill proposed a series of options on the land. The options would effectively tie down all the land until the Back of the Hill was able to build on it, or until it became clear that they would not be able to do so in the near future.

Although Lahey officials still had some objections to parts of the proposal, their response was more encouraging than before. On the strength of that response, and with the support of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Back of the Hill sent in an application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for funding under the 202 direct loan program for rent-subsidized housing for the elderly and handicapped. Last September they learned that their proposal had been accepted, and that HUD had reserved a $4,800,000 mortgage loan for the community for the first phase of their development plan.

The Back of the Hill expected to be taken more seriously by Lahey now that they actually had money to offer: a purchase price of $220,000 for the land needed for the first phase, which now had funding, and $750,000 for the entire parcel. Lahey, however, refused the offer.

The Back of the Hill took another look at their plans to find a way to squeeze out every possible penny for land costs without sacrificing the quality of the housing. They were able to come back with an offer of $900,000, which Lahey still refused.

In fact, the absolute minimum Lahey will consider is $1,500,000 for all the land -- in cash. In his reply to the community, Dr. Robert E. Wise (Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Governors of Lahey) makes it clear that the Clinic refuses to take any responsibility for its destruction of the community. In Dr. Wise's words, "...the Clinic's posture with respect to the ... property is not different from that of any other seller of real estate, entertaining offers with a view toward optimizing the net proceeds of the sale."

Back of the Hill people find Lahey's position hard to understand. According to their information, the land isn't worth near what Lahey is asking, and their offer is perfectly
reasonable.

The community is determined not to allow anyone to do the kind of development in the area that could support Lahey's high land cost, and this is a community that has stopped bulldozers before. The Boston Redevelopment Authority strongly supports the Back of the Hill plan, as it has for years. The land has been on the market for seven years with no prospective buyer other than the Back of the Hill.

For all these reasons, Lahey's position seems irrational as well as immoral. Lahey seems intent on damning the future of the neighborhood, just as it has already destroyed most of its past.

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Wouldn't it be nice if our institutional neighbors would let us relax and enjoy the Christmas holidays one of these years? If it's not MASCO, it's the Baptist, and this year it was both. Just before Christmas, the New England Baptist was trying to get their expansion bill through the legislature. That's the one that would allow them to go ahead with their expansion plans without a Certificate of Need. Our local representative, Kevin Fitzgerald introduced the bill in the House, and led the floor fight for it, even though the Planning Commission, the Health Movement, and the Back of the Hill Organization, as well as many individual residents, had taken a stand against it.

The bill passed the house easily, since many of the legislators look to the local representative for advice on how to vote on issues effecting their district. In December, it was before the Senate. A campaign was underway to inform the Senators about the disastrous effect the bill would have on Mission Hill.

In spite of heavy lobbying by Hillites, the bill passed, 20-14. The Governor vetoed it, as we knew he would, and more Hillites were back at the Statehouse the week after Christmas. They were trying to find out what went wrong, and how they could keep the bill from passing over the Governor's veto.

And it was clear that something had gone wrong. In spite of what many people felt had been a heavy lobbying campaign by neighborhood opponents, several legislators indicated that the position of the community had been unclear to them. Perhaps it was the Baptist's strong campaign for support among their employees which helped cloud the issue. And of course, there was the strong support of the local representative that had to be somehow dealt with.

The group of Hillites who were roaming the corridors of the State House just after Christmas found these, and other obstacles to turning around the votes they needed. It was obvious that the Baptist was pulling out all the stops. Many legislators had been taken on tours of the hospital. Some were quite impressed with what they considered deplorable conditions, and with the wonderful job the Baptist was doing in very inadequate facilities. Hillites had to point out to the legislators that no one had ever disputed the need for renovation. This was not what the bill was all about. Instead, it would allow them to do anything that was in their Certificate of Need application. The application had been denied for very good reasons. An outrageously expensive facility, financed by dubious means, doctors' offices, a parking garage--it all would be possible if the bill passed.
Another problem was that many votes had been committed. Some legislators listened sympathetically to all the arguments, but then indicated that there was no way to change their vote at that point. It had been already promised, presumably in exchange for a vote on a bill that was particularly important to them or their constituents.

The Hillites were scared, but undaunted. On January 3, from 10 AM to 8:30 PM, they walked the corridors of the State House trying to convince as many legislators as possible to vote against the bill.

It was the last day of the session. Many important issues, including Court Reform, would have to be decided by midnight, or put off until next session. The last day is always crazy, and this year was no exception.

For a while, it seemed as if the bill might be defeated in the House. But Speaker McGee, a strong supporter of the bill, pulled a few strings at the last minute. Some of our potential allies had to vote for the Baptist in order to save bills that were crucial to them and their constituents.

We didn't expect to win in the house anyway, with Rep. Fitzgerald giving impassioned pleas for the bill in the name of the community. In the late afternoon, it passed the House, and the struggle moved to the Senate.

And that was where the persistence of the community opponents finally paid off. When the Senate finally voted around 5:30, the vote was 20-18 against the Baptist. They not only failed to get the 2/3 needed to pass it over the Governor's veto, we actually had a majority!

But it still wasn't over! The Senators then voted to reconsider the bill at 8 PM. Now the size majority we had would be pretty hard to turn around. But after what had happened in the House, we weren't taking any chances. Frantic calls went back to Mission Hill.

Working people who had been unable to help during the day were asked to come down and help finish off the bill once and for all. And they came! By 8 o'clock about 20 Mission Hill residents were out in the hall in front of the Senate, mingling with the Senators as they came back from dinner. And when the vote finally came, it was 20-19. It sure was great to win one for a change!

In a letter to the Planning Commission, the Baptist indicated that they will now go back to the Public Health Council and file a new Certificate of Need application. Their Mission Hill neighbors have never said they weren't willing to work with them on a more sensible plan which will solve the hospital's problems and also meet community needs. Most people felt that Baptist officials were honest with the community, even while they were working most strongly for the bill. So we're hopeful that a plan can now be worked out which is acceptable to everyone.
I. Historical Background

As far back as the early 1960's, William Furlong, the Keeper of the Will of Peter Bent Brigham Hospital was central in putting together the Whitney Street Project on Mission Hill. Residents opposed this project, but the Boston Redevelopment Authority convinced many that the housing would be low-rise and have space for the dispossessed residents of the area. Instead, a good-sized part of the community was declared a slum, torn down, and replaced by high-rises, which former residents of the area could not afford to live in, even if they wanted to.

Harvard next tried to take over the Francis Street and Fenwood Road area by eminent domain, under the cover of the Mass. Mental Health Center. Mission Hill residents, having learned some lessons from the Whitney Street project, organized the Mission United Neighborhood Improvement Team (MUNIT) and lobbied and demonstrated (4000 strong) until Mission Hill was removed from the Urban Renewal area.

But that didn't stop Harvard. By a clever use of straws, they began to buy up property, both in the Francis Street and Fenwood Road area, and on the South side of Huntington Avenue. By 1969, they had purchased almost all of the property, which they had permitted to deteriorate, and issued mass eviction notices to the tenants.

Unfortunately, for Harvard, the attempted evictions coincided with the Harvard student strike. Not only did Harvard face community opposition, but their own students actively opposed the hospital expansion plans.

The tenants formed a strong organization, Roxbury Tenants of Harvard (RTH), which obtained many important concessions from Harvard over the next few years. The evictions were stopped. Rents were frozen. Many of the houses that had been originally slated for demolition were, instead, rehabilitated. And Harvard agreed to develop, with RTH, housing which would serve as a replacement for any that was destroyed due to medical area expansion.

In 1971, plans were announced for the Affiliated Hospital Complex (AHC). Originally, seven hospitals were to be "Affiliated" and would cover the land from Francis Street to the Riverway. 'Biggest and best', 'turf-wars', etc. caused in-fighting among the participating institutions 'til only 3 were left: The Peter Bent Brigham, Boston Hospital for Women, and Robert Bent Brigham.
Over the next few years, the AHC was the focus of the struggle between Harvard and Mission Hill. The Public Health Council had neglected to have an Environmental Impact Statement done for the new hospital, and a lawsuit by the Mission Hill community, which was being threatened, could have tied up the project indefinitely.

The AHC is now being built, but not without some changes in its design and concessions from Harvard. Under pressure from RTH, the Mission Hill Health Movement, and other organizations, the AHC shrunk from three towers to only one, and will be confined to the former parking lot of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital.

Also, out of this struggle came money for the Health Movement to open a community doctors' office, funding for the Mission Hill Planning Commission, and a commitment by the AHC not to expand across Huntington Avenue, and to return to the community land they already own there. How, and if, this commitment is carried out is expected to be an important issue on Mission Hill in the coming years.

II. Enter MASCO

In 1972, the community first heard of Masco (The Medical Area Service Corporation). Masco was to be made up of the Harvard affiliated institutions in the area, and it was to provide non-medical services to them. Masco would, in fact, be dominated by Harvard, giving them an additional way to consolidate their control of the institutions and increase their power.

And then Masco (Harvard) came up with their major project, a $56 million "total energy plant," which would provide electricity, steam, chilled water, and incineration to the 12 member institutions. It would cover nearly the complete Brookline Ave., Peabody, Binney, and Francis Street block, with cooling towers reaching 90' high and a 300' smokestack (higher than Mission Hill). It would generate electricity, both with steam boilers and with six diesel engine generators (with room for 4 more to be added later). It would have the capacity to generate electricity for a community of 33,000 — 40% more than what the member institutions would be expected to use in 1990.

Harvard told us this total energy plant was the latest concept in efficient energy production, and would save the member institutions a lot of money, therefore helping to keeps down patient costs.

What they didn't say was that it would add significantly to the pollution we already breath, to the noise, and to the traffic, in an already crowded residential and hospital area. What they also did not point out, but which was obvious, was that it's capacity would be a real key to Harvard's future expansion; and, indeed, would strengthen Harvard's control over the medical area.
III. Premeditated Blight and the Big Tax Give-away

As if that wasn't enough, this total energy plant was to be subsidised by our tax dollars. It was to be built by a Ch. 121A corporation. Ch. 121A corporations are given exemption from property taxes, and also zoning and building regulations, supposedly because they are improving a "blighted, open, and/or decadent" area.

Was the area where the power plant was to be built a "blighted, open, or decadent" area? Not until Harvard got to it! They started buying up the fine red-brick townhouses in the block around 1968, and by the time they got around to evicting the last of the tenants, the buildings had deteriorated significantly. However, when some of the last tenants decided to get together to fight the evictions, they were unable to find any significant housing code violations, which would have helped their case! So Harvard evicted the tenants, tore down 97 units of good housing, and said, "Look a blighted, open area!" Of course, by the time their Ch. 121A application was being considered, there was no way to prove what condition the demolished houses had been in — they weren't there any more!

Clearly, any savings in Masco-generated electricity over electricity purchased from Boston Edison would be a result of this tax break. The Masco plant will pay $1,500,000 per year in lieu of taxes. Originally, the figure was to be $960,000, but outrage by taxpayers and increases in property taxes forced the city to attempt to assuage its citizens by upping it somewhat. At the property tax rate the ordinary homeowners pay, Masco would be paying $10-12 million per year; at the industrial rate which Boston Edison would have to pay, it would be 7 or 8 million.

IV. Roxbury Tenants of Harvard

As the time for BRA approval, or disapproval, of Masco's 121A application came closer, opposition to the plant began growing. At the same time, the Roxbury Tenants of Harvard were negotiating final plans for Mission Park — the new housing which, since 1972, Harvard had been promising would be built to replace any housing destroyed by medical area expansion. At the last minute, however, it appeared that Mission Park was in trouble. Harvard was claiming that it was no longer financially feasible.

Harvard had an answer though, and, conveniently for them, it would require that the Masco power plant be built. The agreement was that Harvard would supply free heat to the housing from the Masco plant. RTH, therefore, not only had to accept the power plant in order to guarantee completion of Mission Park, but had to publically support it. And just to make sure they would, Harvard refused to begin construction of the housing until the power plant had received its 121A approval from the BRA.

And so, at the public hearing on the 121A application, RTH came out strongly in favor of the power plant, effectively neutralizing the community opposition, and dividing Mission Hill.

V. Kevin White and the BRA

Now the BRA had some community support for the power plant, which they could point to if they approved it. And it was obvious that they were going to. The fact that Hale Champion, former head of the BRA, was now Vice President of Financial Affairs at Harvard, and was in charge of the Masco plant, certainly must have helped. (Hale Champion is now undersecretary of HEW in the Carter administration, and, we hear, is being considered as a replacement for Burt Lance).

Kevin White also clearly supported Masco. And what Kevin White supported, the BRA would approve. He made sure of that. BRA board members are supposed to be appointed to staggered terms, so that only one at a time is ever up for reappointment, and therefore particularly susceptible to pressure from the mayor. But Kevin White had not "gotten around" to reappointing 4 out of the 5 members whose terms had expired. Would they risk their political futures and their positions by voting against the Masco power plant?

The Masco power plant was approved by the BRA in the fall of 1975, before any environmental study was completed. In fact, 3 environmental studies were rejected after its approval.

Only one BRA member voted against the approval. He was immediately replaced by Kevin White.

VI. DEQE, and Masco, Discover Some Mistakes

The next year, 1976, was a time of continued community struggle against the power plant, and the gradual realization by those, both inside and outside of Harvard, of the technological absurdity of the plan.

The struggle now moved to the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE), the state agency which implements federal anti-pollution laws. Masco was supposed to receive a permit from DEQE before they could "construct or operate" a power plant. Mission Hill residents, with the help of increasingly concerned experts from MIT and Harvard School of Public Health, brought up all kinds of problems with the design of the plant — so many in fact, that even Harvard and Masco began to realize that something
was wrong. In March they fired Geiringer, the engineers, and hired United Engineers, who proceeded to redesign the plant as best they could, given the fact that the six diesels had already been purchased and shipped, at great expense, to the Boston area.

It was obvious that a quick approval from DEQE was not forthcoming. Since the whole plant was being redesigned, Harvard had not even been able to complete their application. However, Harvard asked DEQE if they could begin the excavation and foundation without the permit, and DEQE, in an unprecedented move, obligingly decided that excavation and foundations are not part of construction. Ironically, at the same time, that other Harvard-affiliated institution, the Affiliated Hospital Complex, was nothing but a big hole in the ground, and they were claiming, for the purpose of the Certificate of Need law, that their hole was part of the construction.

With a preliminary go-ahead from DEQE for "excavation and foundation work," Masco began working furiously. By November, 1977, when their application was finally being considered, the "non-construction" included excavation, foundations, fuel tanks, massive pedestals for the diesel engines, and a 3-story, temporary building.

VIII. The BRA and the Redesigned Plant

Meanwhile, in October, 1977, Masco was back before the BRA with amendments for their redesigned plant. Some of the changes were due to questions asked by experts and by the DEQE, and some were simply due to common-sense observations by people in the community. The changes include:

1) The elimination of the incinerators. As community opponents had been saying all along, incinerating hospital wastes, a large amount of which is disposable plastics, would poison us all.
2) The addition of pollution controls, as being required by DEQE. These included afterburners for the diesels, and electrostatic precipitators for the steam boilers.
3) Because of the changes in design, the size of the plant would be increased by 23%.
4) The plant was turning out to be noisier than they expected. Masco admitted that they couldn't keep it to the legal night-time noise level, so we'd have to put up with the day-time level at night.

5) The cooling towers were being raised from 90' to 140', supposedly to cut down the noise somewhat.
6) And all this would more than double the cost of the plant, which was now estimated at over $109,000,000.

The reasons the BRA originally gave for approving the Masco power plant were:
1) It would supply free steam to Mission Park, making it financially feasible.
2) It would save the institutions, and therefore their patients, money.
3) The incinerator would eliminate 5200 trash trucks per year from the streets.

NONE OF THESE REASONS EXISTED ANYMORE!

Mission Park was now nearly completed, and receiving free steam from Harvard's old Blackfan Street steam plant. In fact, at the BRA hearing, Harvard promised they would honor their commitment to provide free steam whether or not the Masco plant was built.

The cost had risen from $56 million to $109 million, making any arguments about cost saving rather unconvincing.

The incinerator had been eliminated, so the trash trucks were back.
And, while some of the changes might cut down some of the worst of the pollution, what we were left with was still plenty.

The Masco plant would still emit 9 times as many nitrous oxides as the present plant, and our short-term exposure would be at least 2-3 times the level recommended by the World Health Organization. Nitrous oxides are associated with a variety of respiratory diseases and decrease in the body's ability to fight off infection.

The suspended particulates in the air would increase by 4% in 1980 and 22% in 1990. Although the precipitators would remove the larger particles, they would not be effective in controlling the smallest ones, which penetrate most deeply into body tissues and are therefore most dangerous.

And it would also increase levels of carbon monoxide, smog, sulfur oxides (particularly if, in the future, low-sulfur fuel is not available), and hydrocarbons.

In spite of all this, in October, the BRA again approved the Masco plant, and tossed the ball back to DEQE to decide whether the pollution would be kept to acceptable levels.

IX. DEQE Caves In

By October, Masco's application to DEQE was finally complete, and opposition to the power plant was rapidly growing. DEQE asked Masco's engineers if they could guarantee that the pollution from the diesel generators would be kept to the required levels. The engineers answered that there was no way that the pollution could be predicted that accurately. DEQE told them
that, if that was so, they could not approve the diesels. Dropping the diesels would cut the pollution roughly in half.

But what looked like a significant victory — finally — for the community opponents, was rapidly turned around under pressure from Harvard. Three days later, the engineers were back, promising to do what they had just said was impossible, meet the pollution standards. They also offered to monitor the pollution at Singletree Hill, Brookline, and at the crest of Mission Hill after the plant was operating. And DEQE announced a tentative decision to approve the plant, diesels and all.

X. DEQE’s Split Decision

Community opponents came to the DEQE hearing on Nov. 30 expecting this to be the hearing, after which the decision would be made. But they found another surprise. DEQE wanted to delay the decision on the diesels for some new information, and have a second hearing on them on December 19. That was OK. What wasn’t OK was that they planned to make a separate decision on the rest of the plant. This would allow Masco to continue construction beyond the “excavation and foundations.”

Harvard wanted to be able to continue the construction, right up to the point of connecting the diesels. And they assured DEQE that, if the diesels were not approved, it would be a simple matter to remove them and use an alternative source of electricity. That was Nov. 30. A few days later, they were contradicting themselves again, and insisting that the plant is certainly not feasible without the diesels. And they don’t want any split decisions. They just want DEQE to look the other way while they continue construction, until the permit is issued. Clearly, their strategy is to build as fast as possible. After all, who’s going to tell Harvard to tear it down again, after they’ve spent so much money!

Well, more and more people are telling them just that. If the Masco Total Energy Plant receives its final approval, diesels and all, and if it is finally constructed, it will go down in history as a truly disgraceful episode. Most of us will have a hard time explaining to our children and our grandchildren why we permitted our elected and appointed officials to approve a project that will be found indefensible on any grounds, and which our descendants will be forced to bear the consequences of.
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