

65 Antrim Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

May 18, 2015

To the Honorable City Council,

I want to begin by making a simple assumption – that each of you, members of the City Council, and I make the same assumption for the Cambridge Planning Board as well as members of the Community Development office – all have the best interests of the entire city in your hearts and minds. Why else would you be serving in public office? So, with this in mind, as you consider the Twining/Normandy project on the corner of Mass. and Main Streets, **I want to present you with some obvious questions that should be fully addressed before you take your final vote.**

**\*\***What is the justification for a building almost two times higher than any other existing building along the corridor between Albany Street and Prospect Street? A building that is projected to be higher than any planned for the new site on Broadway in the transportation building site?

**\*\***Since this building height demands a special up-zoning permit which even the Planning Board has finally questioned, how can you possibly deny other developers from being granted similar up-zoning requests?

**\*\***Yes, of course, most of us in the city want more affordable housing, but what plan is in place to determine/guarantee that the apartments designated as “affordable” will be available to current families in Cambridge, which I assume is the intention.

\*\*While some of you have publicly stated you are committed to maintaining a sense of community in the city, as well as diversity, what kind of housing encourages/supports a sense of community? Do buildings with apartments along long corridors? Do buildings that require elevators to reach the higher floors? Where are the playgrounds, the community meeting places?

\*\*By now, no doubt, you have read the Globe article "Kendall Square innovators stymied by traffic." If the current height of the building is approved, there will be many more residents in Central Square. But, the Red Line is over capacity at rush hour. There is no plan for the city parking lot. The congestion along Mass. Ave., Prospect, River and Western Ave has more than doubled the time it takes to drive from the river to Inman Square. Does this particular density make sense?

\*\*Some members of our community have spoken passionately that density brings services to an area. But, as prices for rentals in both apartments and commercial space continue to spiral out of control, who will determine what businesses will be encouraged/allowed to occupy the available spaces? If the restaurants and shops in the Kendall Square area are any indication, who other than the affluent members of our city can afford to shop or eat in that area? We long ago lost Corcoran's, the Clear Conscience Café, Pearl Art. Do we need more banks? Boutique clothing/gift shops? High end restaurants and bars that bring dynamic energy to the streets at night, but do little to address the needs/interests of families in affordable apartments?

*Since these questions have not been adequately answered,*  
Please do not vote to support this development ~~until these~~  
~~questions are answered.~~ Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Phyllis Bretholtz*

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*Normandy/Twining says it wants to be a good community member,*