LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE
21st Meeting
March 24, 1997
Joseph G. Sakey Lecture Hall
Main Library
449 Broadway

Members in attendance:

Nancy Woods,   Co-Chair
Richard Rossi, Co-Chair
William Barry
Karen Carmean
Ed DeAngelo
John Gintell
Karen Kosko
Andre Mayer
David Szlag
Charles Sullivan
Robert Winters
Susan Flannery

Co-Chair Nancy Woods called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. At her request, Susan Flannery, Library Director, introduced those members of the Library Board of Trustees present: Chairperson Olive Johnson, John A. P. Good, Andre Mayer, and Janet Axelrod. The Library 21 Committee introduced themselves. Co-Chair Woods welcomed the consulting team from Sasaki Associates.

Co-Chair Woods expressed the Library 21 CommitteeÌs gratitude to the City Council for the approval of funding for a professional team of consultants to identify and evaluate possible sites for a new library. This will be Phase IV of the new library planning process. The committee recommended that the City Manager hire a consultant for the siting phase.   The committeeÌs work consisted of gathering input from a wide range of sources and developing the program for a Main Library for the 21st Century. At the end of Phase III, the committee felt that because of the issues involved in expanding on the current site, the city would be better served to engage in a comprehensive siting process using professional expertise.

Briefly describing the agenda for the evening, Co-Chair Woods said she would ask David Hirzel, Leader of the Sasaki team to outline the process, following which she would speak briefly on the Library 21 building program and then turn the meeting over to the Sasaki team. She explained that during Phase IV the Library 21 CommitteeÌs role will advisory to the City Manager.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Co-Chair Woods introduced David Hirzel who in turn introduced the Sasaki Associates team, all of whom are current or former residents of the City. He read a quote from a book on Carnegie

libraries citing that the intent with respect to siting libraries has never been about putting a library on a site, but that it takes input from the people and is a conscious act of Ïcity - makingÓ. He explained that SasakiÌs approach will be to pursue three parallel paths when determining appropriate sites for the library:

- physical accommodation
- relation to a Ïcivic heartÓ
- financial feasibility

There will be three public meetings, March 24, April 30 and June 10, 1998. He asked people to refer to the project schedule provided by Sasaki which lists major agenda items for the three meetings. In addition, a meeting will be held at Sasaki Associates on March 31, 1998 for private landowners, institutions, realtors and developers to solicit interest on prospective sites. Written responses of interest will be requested by April 17th 1998. At the April 30th public meeting, analysis of a number of sites will be presented, including the 449 Broadway site, and measured against the preliminary site criterion. From the extensive list of sites, a number of short- listed sites will be determined and will undergo extensive analysis for review at the June 10th meeting. At the end of the process, 3-5 sites will be ranked by Sasaki and presented in a report to the City Manager.

Library 21 Co-Chair Woods distributed the CommitteeÌs brief **Program Elements** report and stated that the brochure version was now ready for printing. She described the objective of Phase IV as the siting of a 90,000 sq.ft to 100,000 sq. ft, Main Library. All of the committeeÌs documents are available for viewing on the Library 21 web page. Minutes of the Phase IV process meetings will be posted there as well. She urged those concerned with this process to participate by posting comments in the web page **Comment Book** or sending messages to the City Manager at City Hall who will pass these on to the Sasaki team. Comment sheets are also available in the meeting room for those who would like to leave a written comment this evening.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

Rick Dumont referred to the size of City Hall (approximately 50,000 sq. ft.) for comparison and asked the audience to imagine taking the existing library and tripling its size. He questioned whether we can use the library as an asset to establish a civic center or heart rather than to reinforce an existing center. He stated that the library has the ability to become an emblematic symbol for the City, as a landmark.

Jonathan Austin referred to the detailed summary program and asked how large a site are we looking for. The answer to this is likely in the program itself. The programÌs net area is approximately 65,000 sq. ft., requiring a gross footprint of approximately 90,000 sq. ft.. The largest portion of the program is the nonfiction collection requiring 20,000 sq. ft. This collection would likely need to be located on one floor; therefore the minimum footprint for the library itself would be 20,000 sq. ft.. The area required for parking 100 cars requires an additional 30,000 sq. ft.. Service, loading, and drop off areas would also require additional area. Thus the minimum footprint would likely be roughly 55,000 sq. ft., if parking is on- site.

He referred to a spreadsheet depicting the decreasing efficiency realized when the number of stories increases. For example, a one story 100,000 SF building would be 75% efficient,, a three story building would be 70% efficient and a five story building would be only 60% efficient. Going above five stories is infeasible.

Comments/Questions:

Are footprints for building shown relevant for either urban or more suburban locations Ò *Yes*.

What is an example of 30,000 sq. ft.? The *size of two floors in City Hall.*

Is retrofitting more, or less, efficient? - Usually less, an existing 100,000 sq. ft. building might not yield the same rate of efficiency that a new 100,000 sq. ft. building would.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAM AND THE CAMBRIDGE CONTEXT

Rick Dumont and Jonathan Austin showed slides depicting one, three, and five story footprint, with an adjacent surface parking area for 100 cars on an easily recognizable site - the Cambridge Common. They showed more slides to illustrate how libraries have achieved ÏpostcardÓ or emblematic status.   The slides, from a library archivist, depicted primarily the New England vernacular architecture of libraries, ranging from one room libraries to the library in the park to more urban sites where the library is built to the street edge, often with commercial space at grade. Other slides depicted libraries which achieve a measure of grandeur. These libraries (Boston, New York) often combined public open space as a forecourt to the library building.

UNDERSTANDING THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE The analysis then shifted to a discussion of what makes Cambridge unique. Dumont and Austin, both Cambridge residents, described the City as one with a series of centers or civic spaces, united by public streets and transportation, with branch libraries scattered proportionately across the City. The spaces are park-like (Cambridge Common, the river front area near Harvard, the existing library site), urban (Harvard, Kendall and Central Squares) or suburban (Fresh Pond, Porter Square). Slides were shown to illustrate these centers or civic spaces in Cambridge:

- Cambridge Common
- Harvard SquareÌs Holyoke Center
- Winthrop Square near Grendel's Den
- St. Paul Church forecourt on Bow and Arrow Streets
- Existing library site on 449 Broadway
- Inman Square
- Courthouse Square - major public building with semi-private open space
- City Hall - 50,000 sq. ft. total , 12,800 sq. ft. footprint with tower built on a hill
- Central Square - is it a site or a linear corridor?
- Kendall Square - new architecture which strongly defines the open space at the T stop

- Boston Public Library - new addition creates a control problem - 2 major entrances to building Newton Library - new building regarded as park-like with drop off area and urban plaza, most users arrive by car. (200-250 surface parking spaces.

They referred to a 6Ì by 9Ì map of the City and pointed out the mapping key, with centers, (Fresh Pond, Porter, Harvard, Inman, Central, Kendall, and Lechmere/North Point) T stations, bus routes, and library branches. Each center was surrounded by a circle representing a ten minute walking distance (1200 feet), a distance Sasaki felt was a feasible distance to travel to a civic building.

Comments/Questions:

Where is the demographic center of Cambridge? *Discussion of this point was deferred to next section.*
Was the riverfront considered a potential center? *Yes, it could be except that it has very limited access to public transportation, only buses access the area.*

MAJOR FACTORS FOR SITE SELECTION

David Hirzel presented three factors affecting site selection generated by Sasaki

- **physical**
  parcel size, expansion potential, site configuration,
  service capacity, utility service, soils/environmental
  quality, access by as many groups of people as possible
  to public transportation, availability of on site and/or off
  site parking, regulatory constraints, history of the site
  and environs, sustainability (public safety,
  environmental impact)

- **community**
  interface w/ Library 21 goals, demographics, civic infrastructure,
  land use, community development objectives, access to alternative
  modes of transportation, sustainability (contribution to City).

- **financial**
  site development and pro-forma acquisition costs with assessed value,
  redevelopment costs, relocation costs, parking costs, operations and
  maintenance costs

He referred to a board framing the context of physical factors plus community factors plus financial factors which would add up to a civic success. A civic success would:

- be a distinguished work of architecture
- have a strong sense of place/public space
- achieve postcard or emblematic status

- achieve fit: architecture to the program, architecture to site and location, and site to community context
- assure a ground level integration of uses with a connection to the street and to public space

He asked for input on the criteria from the audience.

Comments/Questions:

- Adjacency to the high school should be a factor.
- Site should be available to as many people as possible via public transportation.
- Need to evaluate frequency of T travel - more quantitative analysis is needed. If the site is good enough, we can make the MBTA provide a route to the site.
- If we add a bus route, it generally means one is taken away from another area.
- Had we considered going underground with library program or parking? *Given the Cambridge water table, this is usually at a very high premium.*
- Site needs to have physical access for the handicapped, children, mothers with babies, etc.
- Site should have access to all ethnic groups.
- Locate the library in most densely populated area.
- Locate the library where population density is predicted to occur - ethnic enclaves change over time.
- Has the Community Development Department predicted 2050 population?
- How costly is eminent domain? Ò *Co-Chair Richard Rossi replied that eminent domain costs money, takes time, and generates political consideration.*
- Newton Library should not be emulated for Cambridge - no T access.
- Has the old Sears building (Porter Exchange) been considered?
- What happens to the existing library if main library is built elsewhere? - Is it a branch?
- Locating parking underground saves on cost of purchasing additional sites.
- Are additional personnel included in operating costs? -
- More stories mean more employees.
- People who frequently use the library will walk further to get to it.
- How do we reach out to people who donÌt use the library as much as they could?
- Library director should provide consultant with cardholder by neighborhood information to plot on maps.
- Existing site attracts people to come and enjoy the library and adjacent attractions.
- What activities does a library generate? The private sector may be attracted to the generation of foot traffic for additional compatible uses.
- We canÌt assume the library will draw anyone other than the users themselves.
- It is important to look at adjacent uses which are open during similar hours as the Library.
- Are there any sacred cows? e.g. If the perfect site currently has housing built on it, are we considering displacing housing for a library?
- Nothing is sacred, yet a shuffle or swap is possible to replace anything which may be displaced.

- A mixed use development is possible, where a library is on the first few floors with other uses above; or a public/private partnership is possible.
- Consider taking the Holmes Trust site by eminent domain.
- Mixed use buildings are less dignified; a library should be a library only.
- The Main Library should be a distinctive building by itself and not mixed with other uses. The ÏCivic HeartÓ needs to be identifiable as such.
- Note the police station site.
- Adults need to advocate for high school students who will lose access to their library if the existing library moves.
- They need the reference library - we need to quantify the impact of relocation of the reference function on the high school.
- Why are we doing this, wasnÌt the Rawn /Beha plan approved by the City Council? *Co-Chair Rossi replied that the City Council didnÌt approve the study, preferring instead to kick it back to the City Manager to undertake an objective site search with a community process which includes consideration of the open space.*
- Consider Micro Center site.
- Exclude university property because the sites will be perceived to be the domain of the students not the residents of the City.
- Does the subway move more people than the buses do?
- Look at rents near red Line stops - they are higher than those near bus routes.
- Consultants should look at the status of the Urban Ring.
- Jitney trips to Cambridgeside Galleria approximate 1 million trips to date.
- Existing library site is located in the geographic center of the City.
- Consultants should note the social habits of the high school students
- An interesting analysis would be to overlay cardholders with modes of transportation.

David Hirzel and Nancy Woods thanked everyone for their attention and their comments and reminded them of the April 30 meeting date. Co-Chair Woods asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet so as to be sure of receiving future mailings and adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.