

November 10, 2005

Mr. Jay Rourke, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: The Forecaster Building

Dear Mr. Rourke:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Project Change for this project.

The Boston Groundwater Trust was established to monitor groundwater levels in sections of the City where building foundations are threatened by lowered groundwater levels and to make recommendations aimed at solving the problem. As such, our comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The proposed project is the rehabilitation and expansion of an existing building in the Bulfinch Triangle, an area of filled land on which many of the buildings are believed to be supported on wood pilings. I was surprised when, during the scoping session, neither the architect nor the developer knew whether the Forecaster Building was supported on pilings or what the condition of the substructure is. This was especially surprising given the plans to add two floors to the building.

I was pleased when the developer promised to investigate to make sure the conditions below the building. The information on the presence of pilings and, if the building is wood piling supported, on their condition and cutoff elevation should be shared with both the Authority and the Trust. Also, because the building has an existing basement, there should be a certification from a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that the building does not currently pump or drain any groundwater; in addition there should be an annual certification by a professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that the building has not pumped or drained groundwater in the preceding year. In addition, the project should install at least one groundwater level observation well in the public sidewalk adjacent to the project at a location to be coordinated with the Trust to allow monitoring of groundwater levels in its immediate vicinity. After project completion, the well should be turned over for incorporation into the Trust's monitoring network.

I look forward to working with the Authority and the developer to assure that this project has no negative effects on groundwater levels in the Bulfinch Triangle area.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer
Executive Director

Cc: Mr. John Walser, BRA
Ms. Maura Zlody, BED