



Alchemy at Alewife

Inside

2

A Brief People's History of Alewife

13

Traffic & Transit

21

Section II
Environment
& Open Space

31

Special Insert
The City's Plan for
Sustainable Development

35

Business & Growth

Restaurants, 18
The Great Swamp, 20
Public Comment, 41
A Word of Thanks, 43

Amaze Your
Friends!
Win Valuable
Prizes!

Memorize scores of
time-saving abbreviations!
Brandish impressive acronyms!
Enter our Bureauspeak Contest
Page 12

Design by Megan Hanna
Photography by Jerry Howard

This special issue of the North Cambridge News was funded primarily by the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee and the Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association, with help from our advertisers. The City Community Development Department prepared and funded the special insert on the new Alewife Plan for Sustainable Development, and paid for printing and mailing of the entire issue to Neighborhoods Nine and Ten.

Alewife: a fat-bellied river herring — and a 373-acre chunk of real estate at the western gateway of Cambridge hosting office parks, shopping centers, international consulting firms, high-tech enterprises, and the city's only urban wild. A sorely congested regional transportation corridor, Alewife is also one of the city's last frontiers for economic growth.

Alewife was never a simple piece of turf. A place where earth and water, culture and nature, and suburb and city meet, it has become a case history in land-use complexity, chronically unresolved. Once a scene of moist bucolic beauty, a rich fishery with fertile pasturage on the edge of three towns, Alewife developed largely without benefit of formal



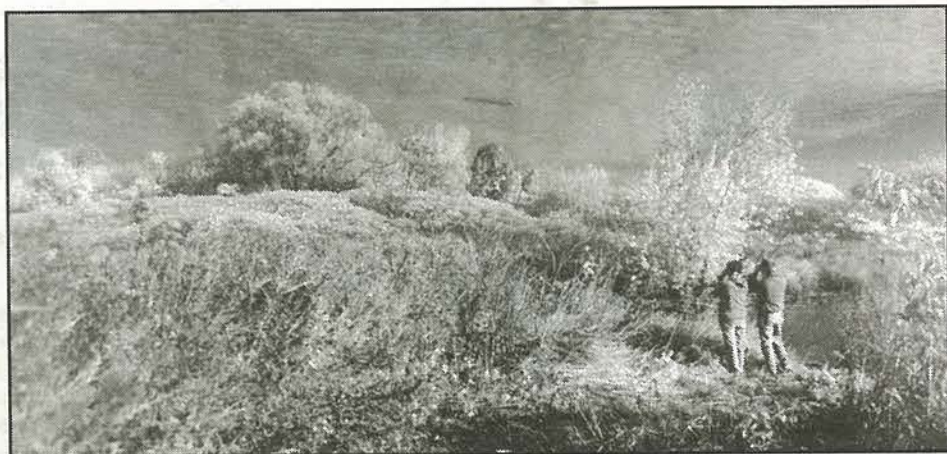
planning, like countless urban and rural New England landscapes. Unlike many cherished places, however, it became not a destination of tourists, but the location of "necessary but unpleasant activities" at the city's edge — brickyards, slaughterhouses, industries, and unsanitary landfills. In its incarnations as mine, sewer, dump, warehouse, and traffic artery, Alewife was valued for the things that could be extracted or excreted there, and as a way to get somewhere else. It has been regarded with ambivalence and dismay, but rarely with anything like affection.

Not until the onset of an economic boom in the mid-1970s did the city develop its first concrete vision for Alewife, the elegant "Fishbook" revitalization plan of 1979. But this did not pan out as expected, and four



years ago the city resumed the thorny challenge of redefining its vision. That process spawned this publication, which offers a summary of the city's new Alewife plan.

Unlike the Fishbook vision of 15 years ago, it may be said that today's vision for Alewife lacks a certain boldness and specific-



This area represents an extreme example of the various pressures that communities and regions must attempt to balance.

— John DeVillars, Mass. Environmental Secretary, 1989

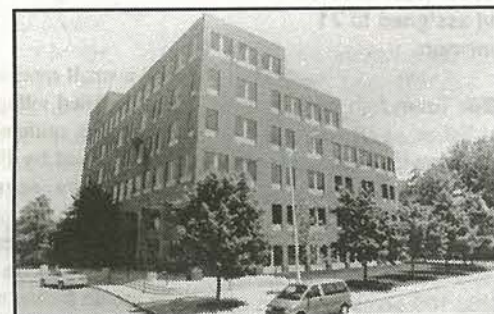
ty, reflecting the uncertainty of the times and the present lack of public or private funds to do grand things. Indeed, in its present state of untidiness, it may be hard to imagine anything else at all. While some have responded to the latest plan with frustration, even outright cynicism, one can argue that in the greater scheme of things, the master plan for Alewife is unfolding right on course. Psychologists



might volunteer that Alewife is in a kind of mid-life crisis, and that our collective angst can serve to push us on to resolution, all in good time. In hindsight, even developers agree that it is well we did not pave Alewife with office parks.

These pages will introduce you to the Alewife players, from bullish growth advocates to bearish naysayers, from those who would put a tidy glaze of niceness on the planning process to fiery, critics. However contrary their views, all are part of the complex equation seeking a solution that conserves and restores what is valuable here. All players might do well to heed Samuel Atkins Eliot's praise for the city's 1913 riverfront plan, which allowed "sufficient free play for individual initiative while subordinating the interest of property to those of humanity."

(Continued on page 19)



The Saga of Black Island

Some 350 years ago, English settlers grazed cattle on this grassy island "common" deep in the Great Swamp. First sold in 1707 for £8, the island was bulldozed for railroad landfill in 1900. Today the rubble under it is assessed at \$3 million. For reasons that have nothing to do with history, many people want to reconnect the two 17th century cow paths to this site, while others are adamantly opposed. The disagreement concerns development and traffic. Finding a mutual resolution is just one challenge ahead for the alchemists at Alewife.

7-10,000 BC: As the last glacier recedes, a broad, shallow lake forms in what future geologists will call Boston Basin. The melting outwash leaves a low mound of gravel around a large group of erratic boulders, forming a small island of land soon colonized by lichens and shrubs... **6,000 BC:** Advancing north with the retreat of the ice, a nomadic Indian hunting band takes shelter on this rise in the swamp. They crouch behind a growth of swamp willows, spears poised for a charge on the solitary, unsuspecting caribou cow munching sphagnum

in the nearby marsh... **1200 AD:** On a May afternoon, an Indian group retreats to this high ground with a large catch of herring from nearby Menotomet, a stream running from Fresh Pond to the sea.

Escaping the mosquito swarm, some spit-roast choice fish while others plant lesser specimens as fertilizer under hillocks of corn... **1632:** Proprietors of Newtowne (Cambridge), a tribe of European invaders, discover this grassy island in the area now called Alewife. Reserving it as common grazing land, these fathers name it Black Island. Settlers reach it from the east and

(Continued on page 19)



North Cambridge
News
P.O. Box 342
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-661-6121

POSTAL CUSTOMER
CAMBRIDGE, MA.

BULK RATE
US POSTAGE PAID
CAMBRIDGE, MA.
PERMIT NO.
56409

A Brief People's History of Alewife

Timeline

1630: Cambridge settled as capital of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Nine years later, the Pawtuckeog Squaw Sachem deeds land to the British.

1635: Present Alewife area first subdivided: pasture rights in wet meadow west of Fresh Pond assigned to 71 townsmen.

1636: Town fish weir established at Metonomy River (Alewife Brook) at site of old Indian weir, near present Matignon Road.

1638: 100 acres between Mass. and Rindge Avenues enclosed as public ox pasture.

1650s: Large land grants created estate of Justinian Holden and Thomas Danforth between Fresh Pond and Little River.

1700s: Prosperous farms and shops and taverns develop along Great Road to Concord (Mass. Ave.), serving highway travelers: carriers, wheelwrights, saddlers.

Late 1700s: Marginal lands around Great Swamp are drafted for commercial farming due to scarce land.

1797: Fresh Pond Hotel opens area as pleasure site, attracting Bostonians who cross new bridge over the Charles.

1803: Concord Road built across Alewife Brook near Fresh Pond. Tollhouse established at Blanchard Road crossing.

1820: First ice harvest operation established on Fresh Pond.

1830s-1900: Cattle industry booms in Porter Square. Tanneries and slaughterhouses leach into Alewife Brook.

1837: Race Course built between Rindge Ave. and Harvey Street to entertain immigrant labor population that doubles in two decades.

By Jerry Howard

When English settlers from Plimoth Plantation first explored the place we know to be Cambridge in the 1620s, they discovered a ghostly landscape of abandoned fields and deserted camps. A few miles north by the Mystic Lakes, they found a small remnant of Pawtuckeog Indians living in fortified villages decimated by drought and the smallpox epidemic of 1616-19, a disease probably bestowd by French traders and fishermen. This vacancy, says urban geographer Arthur Krim, was one reason that the English settled here: "There were no natives to deal with. It also explains why there are no Indian names for the Charles River and Fresh Pond."

The Pawtuckeogs were among the many peoples attracted to the Boston Basin since the first Paleolithic hunters migrated through these cold, bleak wilds between 8,000 and 10,000 years ago. The place we call Alewife—which the Pawtuckeogs called Menotomet, the Great Swamp—was a soggy landscape of marshland, maple swamp, ponds, sluggish streams, mud flats and wet meadows, rimmed by the granite hills of Belmont, Arlington, and Medford. It had emerged at the end of the Ice Age, when the retreating glacier left the entire Boston area covered with a shallow inland lake. Geologists have long believed that the outwash from melting sheets of ice deposited successive layers of gravel, sand, and thick blue clay in this basin. As the climate warmed, the ice dams that held the lake melted and the basin drained by way of Alewife Brook to the Mystic River and the Atlantic Ocean. This area's dominant features were Fresh and Spy Ponds, which probably formed as glacial outwash filled in around huge blocks of ice. When they melted, they left depressions as deep as 250 feet. But recent findings (including samples from the

Ice cutting at Fresh Pond, Ballou's Pictorial, 1855



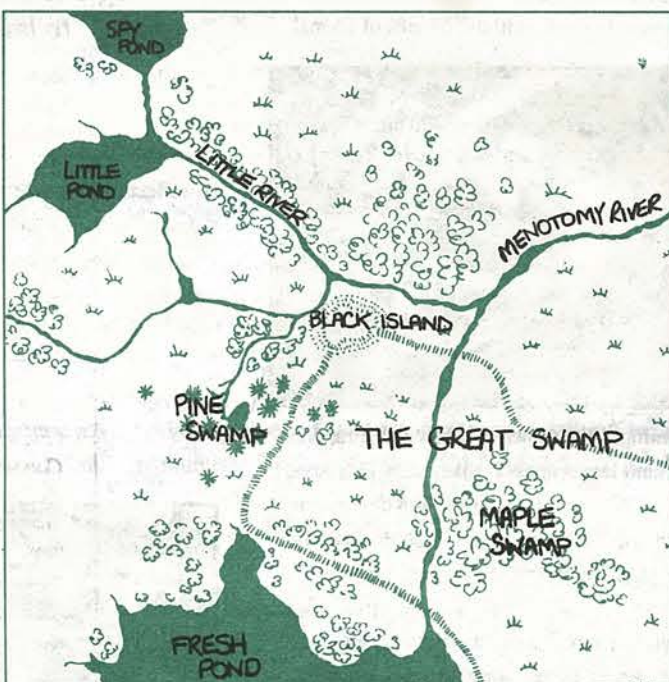
Cambridge Historical Commission

Red Line construction) are forcing geologists to rethink how these ponds and claybeds were formed, says Krim: "They now believe that ice features may have persisted on this landscape as recently as 6,000 B.C., long after they built the walls of Jerico in what is now Israel."

Whenever the coastal area emerged, it offered a plethora of fish and game, well-connected waterways, and fertile soils for agriculture. Alewife Brook ran with spawning herring, shad, and possibly salmon. An easy walk from the rich tidal flats of the lower Charles and the documented winter camps in present Watertown, Newton, and

herring still so abundant that 300 could be caught on the single cast of a net. In the 1800s, resourceful ice and brick entrepreneurs ruined this fishery as they extracted great wealth from the very water and soil their forebears had spurned.

Just east of the swamp was the Menotomy Plain (now North Mass. Avenue)—rich, well-drained land that was first reserved as a common ox pasture until demand for private land forced leaders to divide it for farming in the early 1700s. West of Alewife Brook was the wet Fresh Pond Meadow, first divided as marginal grazing land in 1635. The northwest shore of Fresh Pond and present Cambridge Highlands, however, were good enough for the large 17th century farms of Lt. Gov. Thomas Danforth and Justinian Holden, who created the present-day Smith Place as a path to pasture on Black Island. This early agricultural way survives with Garden Street and Rindge Avenue, which were all routes to the usable land in the marshes.



The Great Swamp, 1636: Cow paths to Black Island

Medford, the swamp became an important hunting and fishing area. Shell middens, weirs, and countless artifacts indicate that native groups had foraged and feasted here for thousands of years.

The Great Swamp was just over the hill from Cambridge proper, separated from the Charles River tidal basin by a low glacial ridge that runs southwest from Porter Square to Watertown along Huron Avenue. When colonists divided the land beyond this hill, they found poor soil on a cold north slope that grew increasingly wet as it descended along the present Garden Street to Alewife Brook. By the late 17th century, many of these lots had become almost worthless, "willed to widows, daughters, younger sons and grandchildren," writes Krim.

The swamp was nonetheless picturesque—"reeds, bulrushes, wild rice and muskrat...beautifully diversified by wooded or bushy swamps alternating with open grassy marshes ... isolated round-topped hills, water good to drink"—with

and an almshouse. Here was room to house the immigrant labor needed to forge this future. And here, any complaints of offensive noise, stench, clutter, smoke, and sewage were not heard.

Curiously, this industry began with the discovery of a tropical market for pure ice harvested on Fresh Pond, an improbable venture that swiftly grew into a giant enterprise. By 1841, it became profitable enough to build the first railroad to West Cambridge, a five-mile line connecting the pond with export wharves in Charlestown, where up to 95,000 tons of Fresh Pond's finest were shipped annually to the South, to Europe, even to India. By 1880 the entire swamp was sutured with rail trunks, spurs, and branch lines, establishing Alewife as the vital transportation corridor it remains today.

The rails were an immediate boon to the cattle business that flourished in Porter Square (home of Porterhouse steak) and the brick industry that supplied the building blocks for Back Bay, Beacon

1840-1920: The Swamp Succumbs

The Great Swamp was an effective barrier to the west until 1808, when a toll road to the west called Concord Turnpike (now Concord Ave.) was built across Alewife Brook. This was the first of many 19th century engineering efforts that transformed this pastoral landscape into a seamy urban fringe. As the Boston region became New England's leading industrial metropolis, open land was needed at the city's edge for "necessary but unpleasant activities." Here was abundant space for cattle yards, brick yards, slaughter houses, tanneries, gravel pits, rail yards, streetcar barns, carriage factories, a race course, a poor farm,

FRESH POND HOTEL

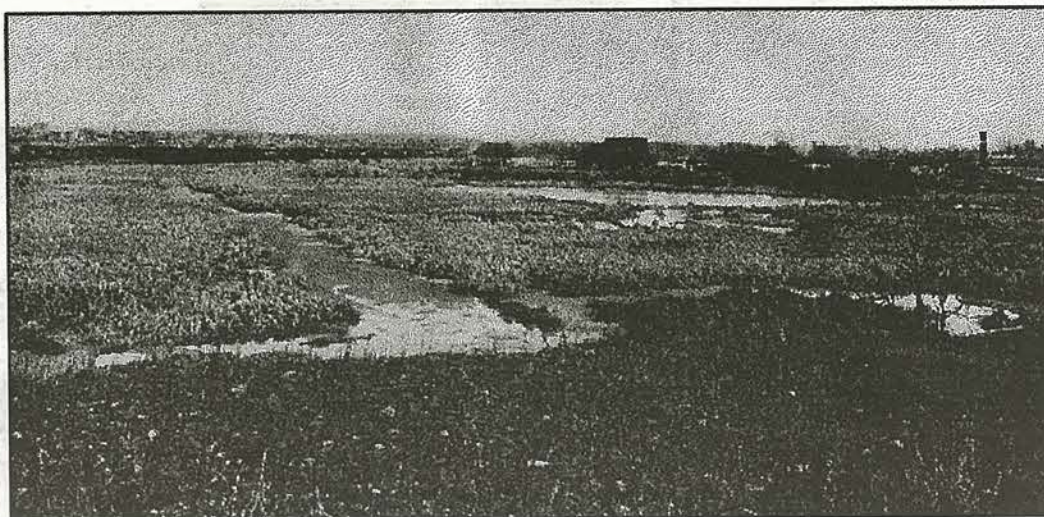


BY L. WILLARD.

Cambridge Historical Commission

Thanks

This section owes debts to the Cambridge Historical Commission's *Architectural Survey of Northwest Cambridge*, by Arthur Krim; *Cambridge: Changing of a Landscape*, by Allen Emmet (Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, 1980); *An Alewife Area Ecology Guide*, by Stewart Sanders (Mystic River Watershed Association, 1994); Steve Kaiser's unpublished *History of Land Use, Transportation, & Planning at Alewife*, and numerous reports, articles, documents, and interviews.



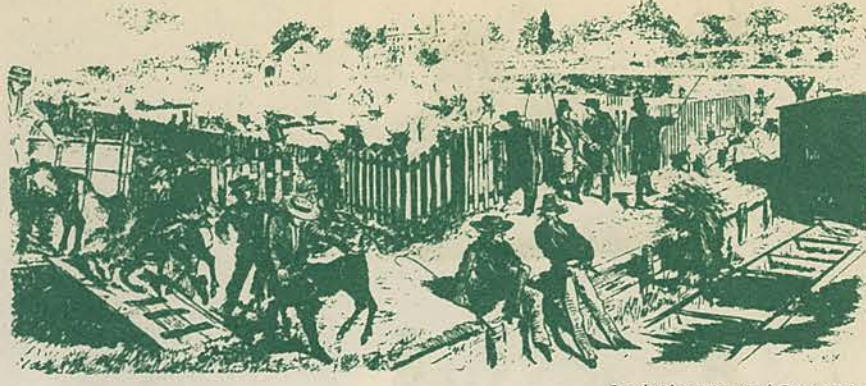
Fresh Pond Marshes (Alewife area), high tide, ca. 1890

Stew Sanders



Stew Sanders

Strawberry harvest, Heustis Farm near Perch Pond, ca. 1900.



Cambridge Historical Commission

Cambridge Cattle Market, Walden Street. Ballou's Pictorial, 1859.

Hill, and the Northeast's growing cities. Wet meadow and maple swamp were transformed into a complex of claypits, drying kilns, and brick yards that stretched from Walden to Harvey Streets and as far west as the Belmont line.

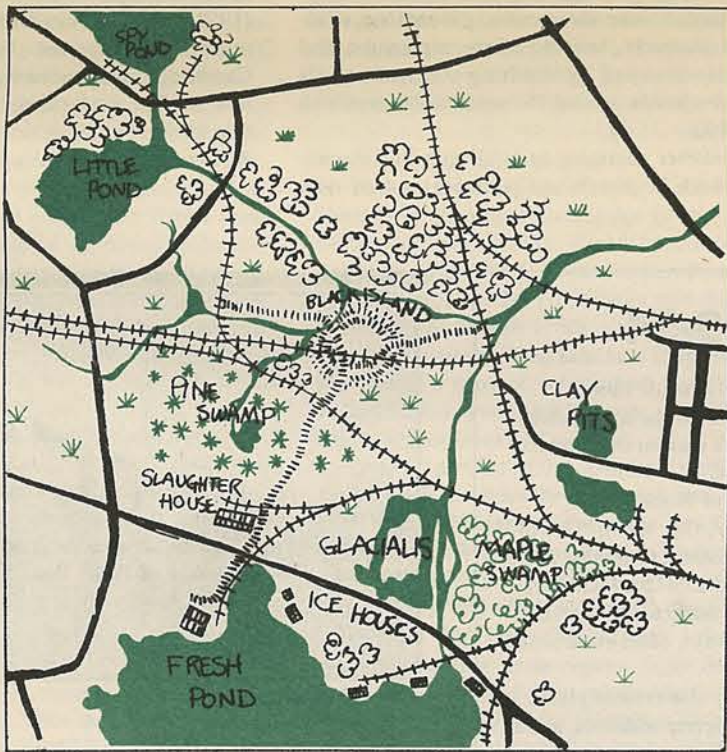
Vestiges of rural life persisted west of the swamp near Cambridge Highlands on small farms that had grown market crops for generations, and north of the Little River, where the fertile muck produced renowned celery that was raised here until the 1950s. ("It was blanched and white," recalls farm scion Bud Wyman. "You could actually eat it.") As late as 1875, one could still find sanctuary in the swamp. In his classic *Birds of the Cambridge Region*, naturalist William Brewster reported a "primitive and strikingly beautiful bit of wilderness" along the Smith Place cart path, "shaded by enormous white pines, [with] fine old oaks, beeches, and yellow birches growing along the neighboring ridge"—a refuge that continued to afford a congenial and reasonably secure retreat for hawks and owls, night and green heron, black duck and blue-wing teal.

But in 1876, wrote Brewster, these trees were cut, the ridge leveled, and the swamp filled for "a large slaughtering establishment. Besides disfiguring the locality by its unsightly buildings, [the slaughterhouse] was permitted to discharge directly into neighboring swamps." The offal drained east into stagnant pools fed by raw sewage from the stockyards, tanneries, horses, and immigrant settlements that had mushroomed around the brick-

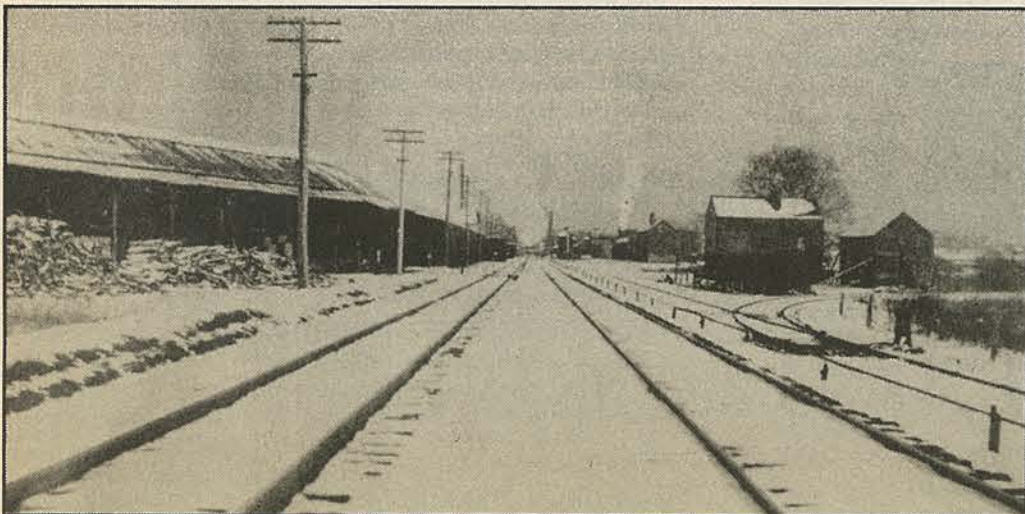
yards. Flooding and mosquitoes were always a problem in the Great Swamp, especially during storms and high tides in Boston Harbor that could reverse the flow of Mystic River and Alewife Brook, forcing waters back into Fresh Pond and corrupting the public water supply. This finally forced the city to separate the brook from its source in 1876 and to close ice operations and slaughterhouses around the pond in 1892. But the putrescent fens remained, breeding *anopheles* mosquitoes that

created a malaria epidemic in four municipalities around the swamp—graphically indicated on a 1904 public health map that itself looks diseased, with hundreds of infected homes blotched in bright red.

Not until the scourge infected pricier neighborhoods, however, was the state persuaded to ask consulting engineer John Freeman to find a remedy for "this tax on the vital force and comfort of the community." His 1904 report advised ditching meadows and stagnant pools, rechanneling waterways to increase flow, and building a dam downstream in Medford to deter the tides. This work was done promptly at great cost. Freeman imagined "a beautiful park like the Back Bay Fens," with boaters and skaters gliding on the sanitized claypits and dammed ponds that could be periodically released to help flush the system. By eminent domain in 1908, the Metropolitan Parks Commission took lands that became the Alewife Reservation and the Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook Parkways. In securing public open space here, the commission protected Freeman's fantasy that someday this forsaken wasteland might be restored to a proper urban wild—a prospect still unrealized as the century turns again. And in creating the landscaped pleasure roads that linked Charles River with the Mystic River Parkway in Medford, the MPC helped to fulfill Charles Eliot's 1893 vision for the nation's first Metropolitan Parks system—and introduced the primary force that shaped the 20th century Alewife landscape.



Above: Alewife area, 1890: Railroads and claypits
Below: Fitchburg Railroad at Brickyards, eastbound, ca. 1890



Cambridge Historical Commission

Old North Cambridge

Sally forth upon Benicia Street and turn northward, until I reach a little bridge which appears to span a small stream. It unites banks

lined with a growth of trees and briars suggesting a quiet water-course; though in fact it is the Fitchburg Railroad that purls between them, with rippling freight and passenger trains and ever-gurgling locomotives... If I follow the railroad westward half a mile, I come to vast brickyards, which are not in themselves exciting to the imagination, and which yet, from an irresistible association of ideas, remind me of Egypt... I have no trouble erecting temples and dynastic tombs out of the kilns; while the mills for grinding clay serve me very well for those sad-voiced sakis or wheel-pumps which the Howadji Curtis heard wailing at their work of drawing water from the Nile...

A little further on I came to the boarding house built at the railroad side for the French Canadians who have by this time replaced the Hebrews in the toil of the brickyards. I take my way up through the brickyards towards Dublin, the Irish settlement on the north, passing under the long sheds that shelter the kilns. The ashes lie cold about the mouths of most, and the bricks are burnt to the proper complexion.

On that loveliest autumn morning, the swollen tide [of Alewife Brook] had spread over all the russet levels and gleamed in the sunlight a mile away. As I moved down the street, luminous on either hand with crimsoning and yellowing maples, I was so filled with the tender serenity of the scene, as not to be troubled by the spectacle of small Irish houses standing miserably about on the flats ankle deep, as it were, in little pools of the tide, or to be aware at first, of a sluggish movement of men through the streets, and a flying of children through the broken fences of the neighborhood, and across the vacant lots on which the insulted sign-boards forbade them to trespass. Here and there abandoned hoopskirts defied decay and near the half-finished wooden houses, empty mortarbeds and bits of lath and slate were strewn over the scarred and mutilated ground, adding their interest to the scene.

—W.D. Howells, *Suburban Sketches*, 1875

Kiln, New England Brick Co., 1925



Cambridge Historical Commission

1841: "Ice Railroad" built from Fresh Pond to Charlestown as wharves open the area to rail transport. In peak years to follow, exports rival harvests on Hudson River.

1843: Fitchburg Line railroad built through Great Swamp, connecting central Mass. to Porter Square and Boston, offering passenger and freight service. Rail spurs and suburban branches are added through 1880.

1844: First major brickyard developed on site of Jefferson Park. Local industry mushrooms to meet demands of regional urban growth.

1863: Swamp west of present Fresh Pond Shopping Center is dredged to create artificial ice pond called the Glacialis.

1867: Exhausted claypit on Kidder's Lane (Rindge Ave.) known as Jerry's Pit is used for swimming and skating by laborers and families until MDC pool is built in 1962.



Cambridge Historical Commission

1868: Naturalist William Brewster spots a flock of 50 carrier pigeons beside Pout Pond, east of Cambridge Highlands. Pigeons are extinct by 1914, pond by 1955 (filled for development).

Brick Yards, 1940s

When I grew up here in the forties, there were almost no houses or buildings, there was nothing but weeds. Across the tracks was the same thing, and a farm, all kinds of vegetables. We never bothered that area, we weren't allowed to go across the tracks. I can remember the Ringling Brothers circus train coming in, carrying the different animals. They were headed for Boston Garden. It used to stop right over there, for some reason, I have no idea. Our mothers and fathers grabbed us, took us right alongside, just to look at those animals. When we got older, we used to jump the train to the brickyards in North Cambridge. Those were raggedy buildings, a ramshack place, you or I wouldn't work in a thing like that today, you'd condemn it. We'd walk through there watching the guys firing up their ovens, making their bricks, until they found us and kicked us out. Then suddenly they quit. I don't know what happened, they must have run out of clay.

—Jack Tennis
Cambridge Highlands



Cambridge Historical Commission

1872: First tidal gate built on Alewife Brook at Broadway in Somerville to reduce flooding; removed in 1896.

1874: Claypits opened at former site of Pine Swamp west of Smith Place and present site of Blair Pond; worked until 1900.

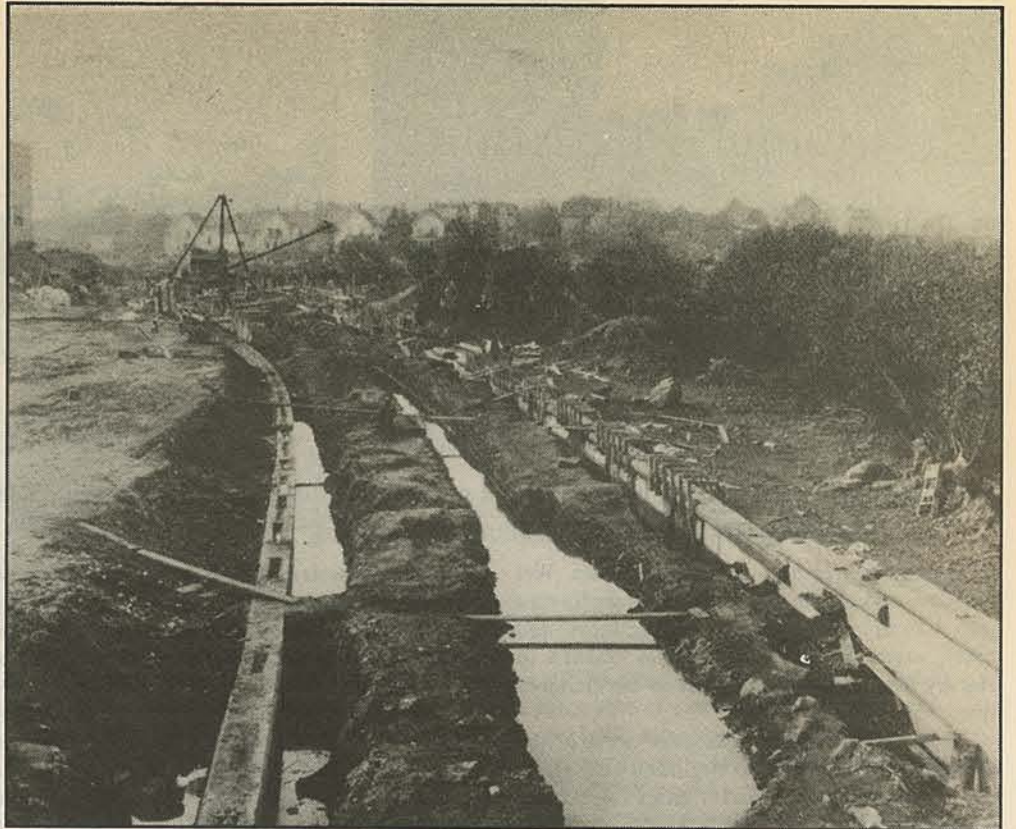
1876: Fresh Pond, a city reservoir since 1856, is cut off from Alewife Brook, now polluted by city sewage.

1878: Niles slaughterhouse built at Smith Place, linked by rail spur to Porter Square cattleyards. Closed in 1892 and replaced by glue factory.



Cambridge Historical Commission

Above: Filling Station No. 60, Concord Avenue, 1925. **Right:** Construction of V-bottom Alewife Brook Channel, to increase flow of polluted waters from swamp, 1912.



MDC Archives

1920-68: Apotheosis of the Auto Culture

With direct rail service to Boston and points west, paved roads, and vast tracts of flat land, the infrastructure was in place for the next phase of Alewife's expansion. A new wave of urban fringe activities—industries, dumps, schools, athletic fields, shopping centers, and housing projects—gradually replaced the exhausted claypits and abandoned brickyards.

The first modern industry was Penn Metal, a steel fabricator that settled in the Quadrangle off Concord Avenue in 1910. Chemical and electronics firms that developed here during World War I found cheap local labor in the immigrant neighborhoods of North Cambridge, where people were disinclined to complain about noxious odors and toxic materials. American Oil Co. (Amoco) built a storage depot at the end of Rindge Avenue in 1917. Dewey & Almy Chemical developed the old Yates brickyard at the end of Harvey street in 1919, and Prest-O-Lite started manufacturing carbon auto lamp filaments on the future site of the Fresh Pond Shopping Center in 1920. Steel fabricator A. O. Wilson, who settled on Smith Place in 1923, arranged the first bus service for his Cambridgeport work force in 1928, the same year developers F.H. Moulton and R.J. Fawcett filled in the Glacialis (an 1860s man-made ice pond)

and opened an industrial subdivision that thrives today.

As families took to the road in the prosperous 1920s, service stations sprouted along Concord Avenue and in Cambridge Highlands, residential development began. During the Great Depression, public works projects upgraded the parkways, added traffic circles, and built Route 2, paving the way for the post-World War II industrial boom, when many remaining wetlands were filled and much of Alewife Brook was buried in a culvert. West End Iron Works and Bethlehem Steel erected eight acres of fabricating sheds beside the freight yards in what was known as the Industrial Triangle, while across the tracks, shipping, warehousing, and small manufacturing firms swarmed into the Quadrangle. Adley Express, a trucking firm that built its terminal off Smith Place in 1953, once had 350 trucks on the road.

Cheek by jowl with industrial traffic was the suburban automobile culture that spawned in the Eisenhower years, a product of post-War affluence and cheap energy. This strip-mecca of shopping centers, auto showrooms, gas stations, roadside restaurants, bowling alleys, nightclubs, and motels—isolated by seething traffic from all neighborhoods around it—reached its zenith in the 1960s.

However charming in hindsight, this chaotic patchwork of parcels and purposes evolved with

no plan or oversight and without apparent coherence, order, or integrity, except to the convenience of market and the moment. As urban fringes typically do, it developed on a no-man's land with abundant space, cheap land, and few residents who lived close enough to care. There was indeed a functional logic to evolution at Alewife: the brickyard closings coincided with growing city needs for large spaces. Empty claypits served first as dumps, and when filled, as sites for subsidized housing including Jefferson Park (1949), Lincoln Way (1960), Rindge Towers (1968-70), Walden Square (1971), and also Tobin School (1971).

None of this deterred the next wave of entrepreneurs, a new breed of research and development firms. Scions of university science projects that fed heavily on government military contracts, they were lured by the low cost of land and convenient location midway between city campuses and bedroom suburbs. The first and largest, Arthur D. Little, built its own campus beside Route 2 in Acorn Park in 1952, followed by Abt Associates (1957), Bolt Beranek & Newman (1958), and Genetics Institute (1984), firms that remain among the largest employers in Cambridge. They were the forerunners of countless smaller professional and research ventures that gradually began to change the character of the decaying industrial area during the 1960s.



O'Neil family brick

1879: Alewife Brook first straightened and Fresh Pond meadows ditched to improve drainage.

1884: Yates' Pit (next to Alewife Station) opens west of Harvey Street. Worked until 1893. Metropolitan sewer main connects Alewife Brook Area to Deer Island. Municipalities tied in by 1896.

1892-94: City landscaping of Kingsley Park around Fresh Pond marks end of ice harvests.

1900: Boston & Maine buys all railroads in the area and levels Black Island to create West Cambridge freight yards.

1904: Malaria epidemic prompts state health study that advises drastic hydrology changes to improve flow and reduce sewage and mosquitoes in swamp.

1906: Gradock Dam built downstream in Medford, reducing tidal influence in Alewife area.

1908: Metropolitan Parks Commission takes Alewife Brook, Little River, and adjacent land for future parkway. Brook rechanneling to improve drainage completed by 1912.

1908: City builds tuberculosis sanatorium on Concord Avenue (now site of Sancta Maria Hospital.)

Dewey and Almy 1919-54

In 1919 MIT graduate Bradley Dewey and Harvard alum Charles Almy joined forces on the old Yates brickyard to produce adhesives for the booming shoe industry. With rubber imported from Malaysia, they also perfected an ingenious liner that prevented tin cans from spilling their beans. As Japan usurped critical rubber sources in Southeast Asia in the 1930s, Dewey & Almy responded by developing bunadrene-styrene, a synthetic rubber that proved crucial to the allies during World War II—when President Roosevelt appointed Dewey US Rubber Administrator, charging him to establish natural rubber plantations in Latin America and speed up synthetic rubber research. In the war

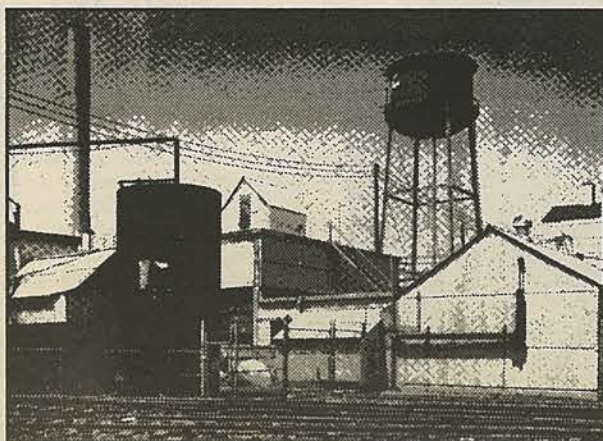
years the firm also made rubber weather balloons for the army, which were tested from a tower that became a local landmark.

"By the end of World War II," wrote historian Arthur Krim, "Dewey & Almy had created a sprawling maze of some 30 structures laced with railroad spurs and connected by a web of pipes and walkways, often enshrouded in a white mist."

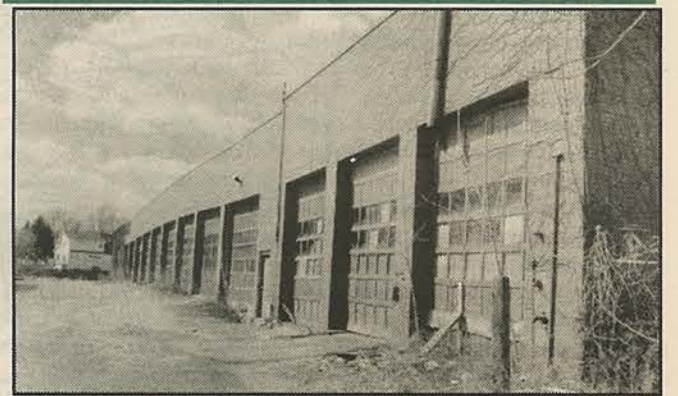
The company also created plastic shrink-wrap, concrete additives, and a resin separator that greatly extended the life of car batteries, still widely used today. W.R. Grace bought Dewey & Almy in 1954 and phased out local operations during the early 1960s. The worldwide headquarters of Grace

Construction Products now occupies 10 of the 29 acres on this site slated for development.

— Kelly Mendonca (with thanks to retired D&A chemist Tom Raphael).



Cambridge Historical Commission



Adley Building, 1995

Adley Express, 1953

When Adley put in a trucking depot west of Smith Place in the 1950s, they had to sink pilings, because that was an old claypit that the city used for a dump between 1933 and 1950. Some went down about 80 feet deep. All kinds of things went into that pit, including stumps from the elms that were lost in the 1938 hurricane. When a piling hit a stump, it registered as solid ground, but as the stumps rotted, the building settled terribly. It's condemned now. If people think the truck traffic is bad today, they should have been here back then.

—Al Wilson, Wilson Realty Trust

West End Iron Works, 1960s

At West End Iron Works on Rindge Avenue Extension they put together steel beams 130 feet long and shipped them all around the region. But they couldn't make the turn onto Alewife Brook Parkway, so they had close off the street before dawn to back the trucks across the parkway down the entire length of Rindge Avenue to Pemberton Market and turn onto Mass. Avenue. Then they'd go out Route 2.

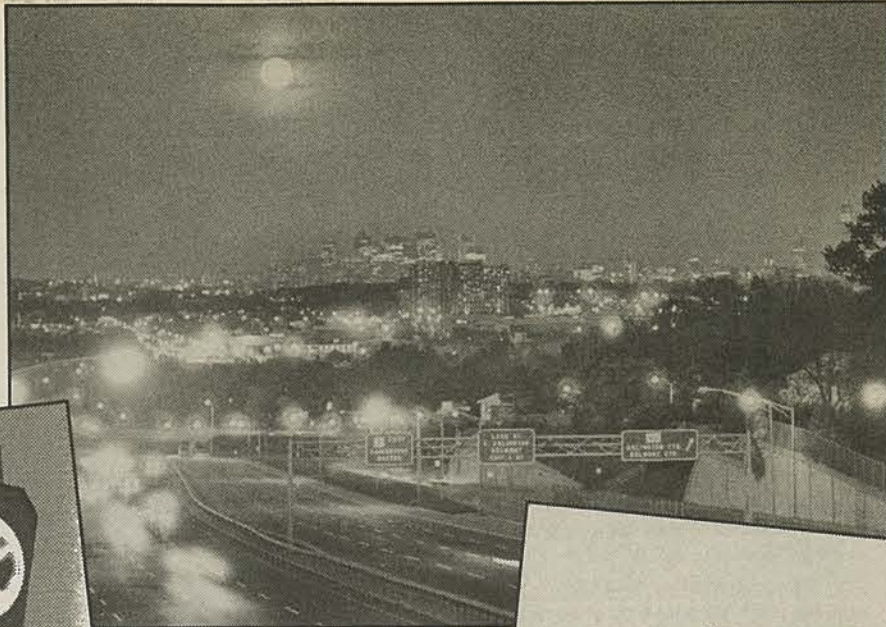
— Dick Yorke, Rindge Avenue

A Rush of Commercial Proximity

A spectacular approach to Cambridge can be gained at night in the long descent of Route 2. As if landing in jetliner, the crossing of the Cambridge line brings an immediate rush of commercial proximity achieving the full drama of contemporary night architecture, with glittering cars, lighted concrete, and garish signs jammed upon one another. The nighttime array of Alewife Brook Parkway is a vague confusion of buildings entrapped by parking lots. Only the white luminescence of the Fresh Pond Cinema succeeds in capturing the architectural potential of the darkness...

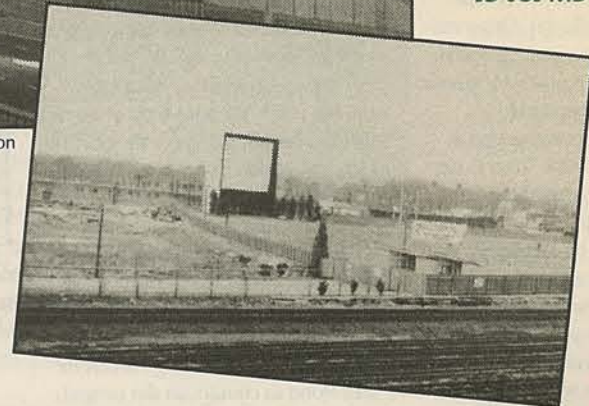
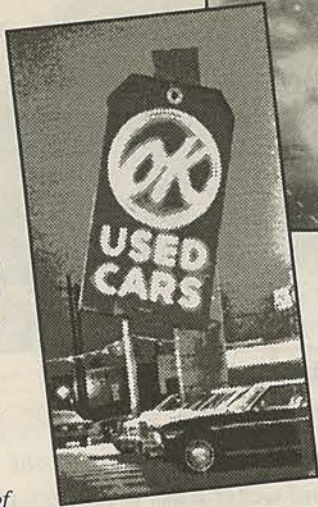
Beyond the commercial ribbon is a vast industrial world reached by a file of hidden roadways that begin innocently at restaurant lots and wander back under power lines and across rail spurs. [This is] the contemporary landscape of suburban industry, with low buildings adrift in a vague asphalt plain. Their architectural form is a bland uniformity: concrete block structures and corrugated iron warehouses, loading docks and storage yards, wire fences, chained dogs, and signs of electrical danger. The true grandeur of this functional aesthetic can be appreciated in the monumental forms of "Steel Row" along Rindge Avenue Extension at the West End Iron Works, with its giant cranes and cavernous sheds.

—Arthur Krim, *Architectural Survey*, 1977



Cambridge Historical Commission

Above: View east from Route 2 of Alewife and Boston skyline
Left: Porter Chevrolet
Right: Fresh Pond Drive-In



Fresh Pond Drive-In, 1960s

When we were kids used to go out "canning" at the drive in, raising money for the Pee Wee hockey team. Some of the cars were locked and all steamed up. Those were the windows we knocked on the hardest.

—George Spartichino, Jr.,

1950-1970: Highway Tyranny

Most of these companies settled in Alewife because it was on a major regional transportation corridor, the same feature that lured another 1950s pioneer species, traffic engineers. These engineers were charged with executing the brave new vision of post-war America. This was perhaps best codified in the 1956 Federal Highway Act, which aimed to rewrite major urban areas with beltways and radial arteries better suited to moving Detroit's burgeoning effluence. Alewife, already a locus for road and rail, was on a beeline between Boston and the west.

For four decades, no single factor has had a more profound impact on this area than the perennial dogma that as a regional transportation corridor, Alewife must be "improved." The chief proponent of this notion, the state's muscular Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC), has been the most persistent force on Alewife's environment, economic growth, and quality of life—and the chief reason many city officials and activists today feel they are survivors of a 30-year transportation war.

The groundwork was laid in 1948, when the state's highway master plan proposed expanding sleepy Route 2, making it into a freeway and extending it into an "Inner Belt."

Construction began in the mid-60s, as the state Department of Public Works (MDPW) widened Route 2 into an eight-lane superhighway from Route 128 to the Cambridge line, the first earth-wrenching salvo of a campaign to extend the road straight through the city along the Fitchburg railroad. With the Inner Belt, this swath—portrayed by a state highway consultant as an "aesthetic buffer" between the railroad and residences—would have wiped out 2,000 Cambridge dwellings. Not by chance, it would also have created a linear wasteland ripe for

urban renewal, the preoccupation of modernist urban policy makers dedicated to sanitizing cities of impoverished blight.

The champion of the highway juggernaut was Governor John Volpe, a former road contractor who had been President Eisenhower's federal highway chief, and who had once thumped Rep. Tip O'Neill on the chest, boasting that he was going to build "that road"—knowing, of course, that O'Neill hated it, as did most of his constituents. Tip called it "another Great Wall of China." He was far more interested in getting the Red Line extended to Route 128 via Alewife, a plan first proposed in 1953 by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), which also planned take 55 acres of the MDC's Alewife wetlands for a major storage and repair yard.

The wholesale demolition threatened by the Inner Belt awakened Cambridge to the tyranny of the highway lobby. Fired by community activists, Cambridge joined other threatened communities in the vociferous anti-highway movement of the late 1960s. Even Volpe's suburban friends were telling him how they felt about the Route 2 project, which had destroyed 40 homes in Arlington and Belmont as well as the southern four acres of Spy Pond.

Over 60 percent of the commuter traffic coming through the Alewife bottleneck had a destination beyond Cambridge, and the city had long resented its role as a gangplank to Boston. As of 1970, official traffic policy here became, "No More Traffic and No New Road." The time had come, said City Councilor Barbara Ackermann, to send a message to the region: *Suffer the traffic jams or get out and take public transportation.* With that, the city began to clamor for the Red Line extension that had languished on state drawing boards with other mass transit proposals since 1953.

Swimming hole at Jerry's Pit, with New England Brick Co. sheds in background, ca. 1945.



Cambridge Historical Commission

1910: Penn Metals is first steel fabricator to settle in "wasteland" along Concord Avenue. Joined by A.J. Ryerson in 1920 and A.O. Wilson in 1923.

1913: City acquires 22-acre Russell Field for school playing fields.

1916: 80 lots laid out on Cambridge Highlands farmland, later developed as 250-home "automobile suburb."

1916: MDC begins building Alewife Brook Parkway as part of open space green belt from Memorial Drive to Medford.

1917: Amoco builds gas storage depot on site of present

Alewife Station.

1920: Prest-O-Lite Co. begins manufacture of carbon auto lamp filaments on former maple swamp (future site of Fresh Pond Shopping Center).

1928: Glacialis filled for commercial subdivision in Quadrangle, creating Moulton, Fawcett and Wheeler Streets. Motor bus provides transport for workers.



Cambridge Historical Commission

Concord Avenue at Blanchard Street: ad for new Cambridge Highlands subdivision.

1929-31: Alewife Brook Parkway, iron truss RR bridge, and Concord Ave. traffic circles completed.

1934: State builds Concord Turnpike (Route 2).

1934: Fantasia's Restaurant opens on western Concord Ave. The scene of countless local functions, this popular venue closed in 1984.

1938: Farmers' market established in Quadrangle as source for area produce. Some farming persists on Alewife fringes until the 1950s.

1940s: Steel fabrication expands in post-war boom on Rindge Avenue Extension (Steel Row). More wetlands are filled; Alewife Brook buried in culvert.

1947: Mass. Aeronautics Board wants to build permanent airstrip between Little River and Route 2. MDC says no.

HAZARDOUS WASTES: Ghosts of an Industrial Past

by Kevin Rothstein

Former city councilor Ed Cyr remembers watching the old North Cambridge city dumps get filled in the 1950s and 60s. Once he saw refuse, trucked from a nearby university, burst into flames before going down the old claypit. Other residents recall the open pits of greenish liquid that never froze in winter where the Rindge towers now stand.

During Red Line construction at Alewife, workers got sick from toxic fumes and acids corroded the steel tunnel. Tests revealed large pits of chemical wastes left by Dewey & Almy and W.R. Grace Co., containing mostly naphthalene, acids, and rubber compounds. Just last year, construction on the new Alewife Brook Parkway truss bridge was disrupted for months after discovery of a manufacturing residue.

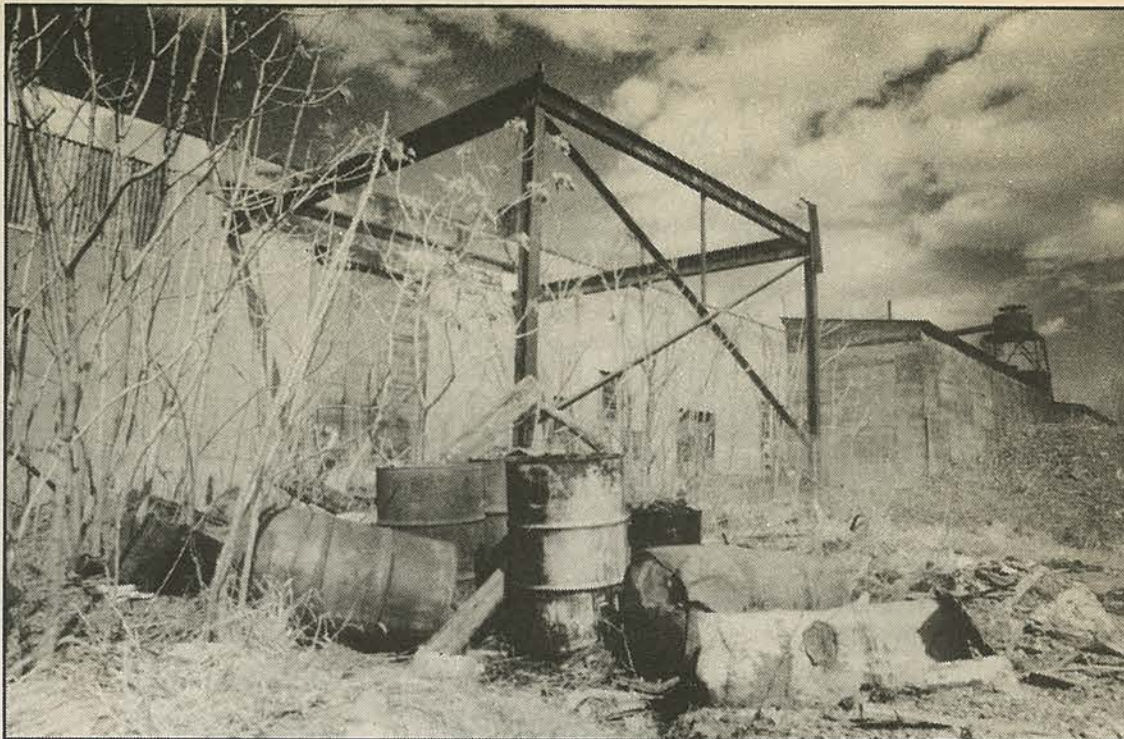
The Alewife area is littered with abandoned or leaky petroleum storage tanks. It has long suffered the accumulated runoff of hydrocarbons from highways and fuel spills and heavy metals from railroads. Residents are justifiably uneasy about what poisons might infest Alewife soils and water after a century of industrial activity, especially since housing, a public school, and a park have been built on old dumps where hazardous materials can remain active for decades — and the city's water supply is a stone's throw away.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has designated over 40 Alewife area locations as "21E sites," named after

Chapter 21E of the Hazardous Waste Management Act, which provides a framework to monitor corrupted sites and regulate cleanup procedures. There are thousands of such sites in the state; the 21E designation means only that some petroleum, hazardous wastes, or both are present. More telling is how these sites are rated. The DEP classifies most Alewife sites as either "non-priority" or "pending," meaning that hazardous materials exist but probably pose little or no risk to public health, safety, or the environment, unless disturbed. No Alewife sites have been classified "Tier 1," which indicate dangerous toxin levels.

The Fresh Pond Reservoir is situated beside numerous 21E sites, the largest of which is the former dump under Danehy Park. The Water Department maintains high levels in Fresh Pond to counteract the natural tendency of ground water to move toward the pond from potentially contaminated sites in Alewife, and has installed seven ground water wells to monitor quality of migrating water (for decades, water levels were kept low to draw water from nearby aquifers). Watershed manager Chip Norton stresses that these are only precautionary measures: "So far, we have nothing to indicate a problem, but with such a sensitive area we need to be proactive."

Ed Cyr agrees. As community organizer of the Toxic Alert watchdog group that formed during the Red Line construction, he is proud of what this educated citizens' group has done to clean up the area. He says, "It's important that we do good science, and not overstate the extent of the problem," but cautions against com-



Unspecified leftovers from an industrial past

Residents are justifiably uneasy about what poisons might infest Alewife soils and water after a century of industrial activity, especially since housing, a public school, and a park have been built on old dumps.

placency, "In the end, we still don't know what's out there."

Most 21E sites in Alewife, as elsewhere, are identified when property is transferred, during environmental studies before development, or during construction. How and where materials are disposed is another matter. So far no one has heard complaints from New Hampshire, where the residue found during truss bridge construction was dumped after the DEP deemed it too corrosive for Massachusetts landfills. But the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may soon hear from retired Winchester carpenter and policeman John Morgan, who claims

that hundreds of truckloads of contaminated soil removed from the MBTA's Red Line tunnel at Alewife were illegally dumped in 1982 on a vacant lot 60 feet from his front door.

Morgan, an organic gardener, believes that vapors from the site have since killed his fruit trees, mutated his pet rabbits, given him a chronic eye infection, and caused his wife liver and thyroid problems. Morgan has carried on a long personal crusade against what he calls a cover-up by MBTA, state, and Winchester officials. He and his attorneys now await a trial date in Middlesex County Court.

The Boston Carmen's Union also has long-standing issues with the MBTA. Spokesman Jimmy Duschaney blames pollutants such as naphthalene for a string of illnesses, including high cancer rates, reported by union workers at Alewife. The MBTA insists that workers' claims have not been linked to Alewife, and that no environmental problem exists in the tunnel. Carmen members call it a cover-up, and say the MBTA has stymied their investigations. They hope John Morgan will have more success.

But Morgan's lawyers may have their hands full proving the case, since DEP tests at the Alewife and Winchester sites have revealed no serious health hazards, and the agency has ruled both as non-priority 21E sites. Regardless of the outcome of Morgan's case, no one expects the ghosts of Alewife's industrial past to disappear. ■



Could you use a helping hand... with some money in it?

Then come to Cambridge Trust and apply for a loan.

A new car that starts every time, landscaping the yard, a computer to help the kids in school — these are the things that can make all the difference in your life. And Cambridge Trust would like to help you get them, by lending you the money you need.

Cambridge Trust is committed to meeting the financial needs of our community, so that all of us will prosper. So if you could use some extra money for any worthwhile purpose, come talk to us. We'd really like to give you a hand — with a nice surprise in it.

Cambridge Trust Company

Harvard Sq. | Kendall Sq. | 353 Huron Ave. | 1720 Massachusetts Ave. | University Place | Weston | Concord | Member FDIC | 876-5500

*Your HEALTH IS OUR
PRIMARY CONCERN.*

Mount Auburn Hospital is a 300-bed Harvard Medical Center community teaching hospital located in Cambridge.

Our healthcare services include:

- ◆ Primary Care
- ◆ Obstetrics and Gynecology
- ◆ Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery
- ◆ Midwifery
- ◆ Psychiatry
- ◆ 24-Hour Emergency Department
- ◆ Walk-In Center
- ◆ Prevention and Recovery Center (Substance Abuse)
- ◆ ASK-A-NURSE (1-800-544-2424)
- ◆ Physician Referral Service (1-800-322-6728).

For a GUIDE TO MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL DOCTORS, which includes comprehensive information on some 250 local physicians, call the Community Relations Department at (617) 499-5098.



Mount Auburn Hospital
330 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02238

Two Views on Development

As Northwest Cambridge has developed over the past four centuries, a ring of attractive land with fine houses and green fields has encircled a core of swampland with open pits and smoky railroads. Each time a decision had to be made where to fish, where to plant, where to build, the natural qualities of this landscape would again be considered. These decisions usually confirmed what others had already realized, and the inherent distinctions of the landscape were thus perpetuated, creating the economic and social patterns of [Alewife].

— Arthur Krim, 1977

At Alewife as elsewhere, land-use decisions are, for the most part, political ones. As long as land-use policies are treated as the by-product of social, economic, and environmental public choices, they are bound to be contradictory... This ensures that arguments will erupt when it comes time to make site-specific decisions.

— Lawrence Susskind, 1978



The \$84 million Alewife Station, a 1 million square-foot transit facility wedged between a wetland and a traffic corridor, presented major design challenges for architects Ellenzweig, Moore & Associates, Inc. Covering 4.4 acres, the building integrates an underground subway station; a 12-berth bus platform; a 2,200 car parking garage; retail stores and restaurant; a friendly, functional pedestrian environment; and a complex traffic system. Despite its mass, it manages not to overwhelm its surroundings. With skylit mezzanine, garage atrium, dual drum ramps, colorful graphics, public art, and landscaped plazas, this landmark structure has won numerous design awards.

Cost Estimates for the Red Line Harvard-to-Alewife

1953.....	\$31M
1966.....	\$66M
1970.....	\$150M
1977.....	\$377M
1982.....	\$620M

symbolized tyranny and backroom deals.

Gov. Sargent directed the Boston Transportation Planning Review, a group that brought many disciplines under one roof, to recommend a balanced course for the future. This task was abetted by the 1972 Clean Air Act, which forced the state to reduce drastically its noxious automobile emissions and restore mass transit to its rightful place. For Cambridge, this policy brought the controversial parking freeze (largely ignored until 1990) and a recommendation to extend the MBTA Red Line through Alewife west to Route 128.

Many saw the station as a magic bullet that would remove thousands of cars from Cambridge streets and create new jobs and taxes in this industrial backwater. Others foresaw plagues of traffic, noise, pollution, floods, subsidized housing, and destabilized property values. The area was already under stress from a host of competing agendas and contradictory uses; now most expected that the advent of the Alewife Station would stimulate growth as nothing had since the railroad. This not only threatened the remnants of the original swamp but created a new quagmire that the colonists would have found inconceivably complex. Perhaps nowhere in the Commonwealth was joint regional planning more desperately needed than at Alewife: the area straddled four municipalities, and a dozen regional agencies had overlapping jurisdictions or interests here. To Altshuler's great credit, he intended roadway and transit planning to proceed as one integral piece.

Alewife lured planners, entrepreneurs, and activists as a flame draws moths. Many found a

seat on the Alewife Task Force (ATF), a regional advisory group formed in 1975 to ensure that planning for the Alewife roadway and transit projects were closely coordinated and proceeded with full public participation. Created by the MBTA, MDPW, the City of Cambridge, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the task force included almost 50 groups ranging greatly in power and interest—from state agencies, municipalities, and big business to neighborhood groups and concerned citizens.

Historically, officials had finessed the public process by hand-picking "blue ribbon" committees to rubber stamp back-room deals, or by holding public forums where people could vent their spleen and be discounted. The ATF chair, MIT Urban Studies professor Larry Susskind, had a radically different agenda: he wanted to use the new rules to guide this group to an unprecedented consensus on what should happen at Alewife. On the strength of such agreement, he intended his task force to generate enough political clout to determine the outcome here as no public advisory group ever had before. He saw the Task Force's mission very differently from Salvucci: not as transportation planning but as comprehensive land-use planning—the challenge of leveling the playing field and distributing burdens and benefits fairly among the players.

Susskind knew much about the players: their jurisdictional jealousies, boundary conflicts, hidden agendas, trump cards, and Achilles' heels. To "get to yes," he created an open negotiation process that led members deep into their conflicts,

using workshops, brainstorming, and role-playing. He reportedly made giant steps in bringing many factions toward mutual understanding and respect (if not always agreement), helping to define a new direction for public planning.

Not everyone was enthralled with this noble experiment, which pushed the envelopes of collaboration and participation far past the comfort levels of many bureaucrats. Particularly resistant were the MBTA and MDPW planners, who already had their separate marching orders from Governor Michael Dukakis's new transportation secretary, former populist cult figure Fred Salvucci. His mission was to expedite. He didn't have time for integrated planning, much less Susskind's tedious agenda. Unilaterally, Salvucci decided to bypass the environmental impact process by declaring the Alewife roadway a "non-major action," one of many autocratic moves that astounded some task force members. ("Unlike most bureaucrats," recalls task force member Steve Kaiser, "Fred actually wanted a public process, but it had to be one that said, 'Fred, you're right.'")

Many in Cambridge were also displeased that a do-good regionalist group was meddling on its



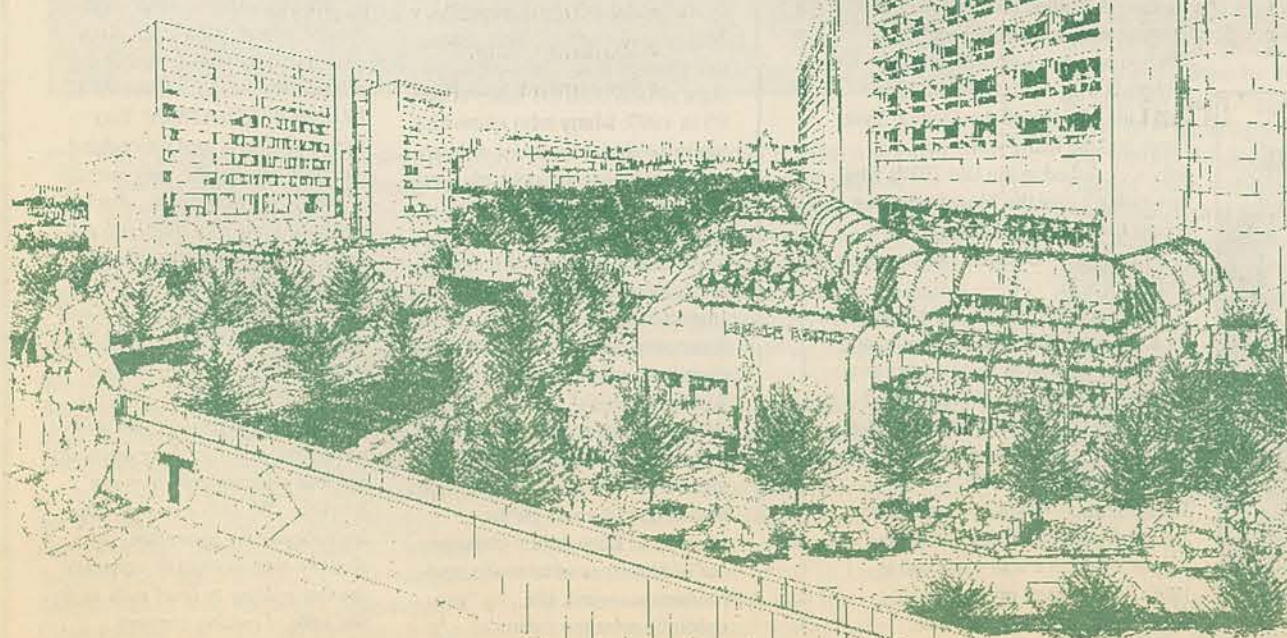
Cambridge Historical Commission Claypits, site of Danehy Park, ca. 1930

1970: Harvard's plan to fill Blair Pond for 850-resident housing complex blocked by new state wetlands law.

1971: City closes landfill behind Fresh Pond Shopping Center. Site will become Danehy Park.

Alewife's excellent location, with regional highway access and proximity to Boston's commercial and governmental centers, its natural amenities, and its existing markets and labor sources, combine to make the area potentially one of the most highly attractive development sites in the entire Boston Region.

— 1979 Alewife Revitalization Plan



Alewife Boulevard, looking toward Belmont from the MBTA garage, as envisioned in the city's 1979 Revitalization Plan (Fishbook): A "unique activity center" with shopping arcade, pedestrian bridges, offices, housing and hotel.

The Green Vision

These seminal 1975 objectives of the regional Alewife Task Force guided the city's Urban Design Study of 1977, which sought "a balance between economic, transportation, and natural uses" and a "pleasing and functional human environment." They were included in city's 1979 Alewife Revitalization Plan (Fishbook) and are now at the heart of the new 1995 Alewife plan (see p. 31).

- Promote maximum use of public transportation and reduced use of the automobile
- Restore parkway character of Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond Parkways
- Preserve, expand, and link the natural and park lands in a continuous open space network
- Solve chronic flooding in the watershed
- Establish a network of bike and pedestrian linkages
- Create an effective, secure and enjoyable human habitat

1972: City consolidates various planning functions into Community Development Department (CDD).

1973: Aged Alewife Brook Parkway truss bridge closed to heavy vehicles, diverting truck traffic onto side streets.

1977: Responding to concern about "another Rindge towers," city downzones W.R. Grace site and calls moratorium on large development in Alewife.

1979: CDD publishes new Alewife Revitalization plan, a.k.a. "Fishbook." Rezoning follows in 1980.

1981: North Cambridge Stabilization Committee and Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association created to preserve established values in community during Alewife-related growth.

1981: MDC hydrology study addresses impact of Alewife development and related flooding.

1982: ADL announces plans for 1.5 million feet of expanded campus.

turf. City officials, businessmen, and property owners saw new gold in the old swamp. Gaining local control of the process became critical, especially given Susskind's initial success. The group had killed the more gargantuan ideas on the state's drawing boards (a three-deck highway, a Logan Airport-sized MBTA garage) and had substantively agreed on a range of issues previously ignored by state and city planners alike—including an Emerald Necklace-like, linear park solution for the corridor. But key parties felt Susskind had gotten too big for his britches, and had to go: Salvucci colluded with City Manager Jim Sullivan to dump him after 18 months on the job. As a mediator, Susskind was like the doctor who performs a successful operation, only to have his patient die.

Crippled and increasingly factionalized, the task force continued in a role reduced to what some members call "window dressing." Ultimately it served as a forum for angry complaints about the MBTA—noise and dust from Red Line construction, the authority's legendary

The vision for Alewife as described in the 1979 plan has not materialized. Alewife has been compared to a suburban shopping center with too much asphalt, concrete, and buildings that do not relate well to one another. The area has remained stark, mundane, and isolated from surrounding neighborhoods.

—North Cambridge Neighborhood Study, 1989

bad manners, and the new parking garage. Unexpected suburban resistance was forcing the subway to terminate at Alewife, not Route 128. North Cambridge neighborhoods feared the worst.

1977-1989: Gold in the Swamp

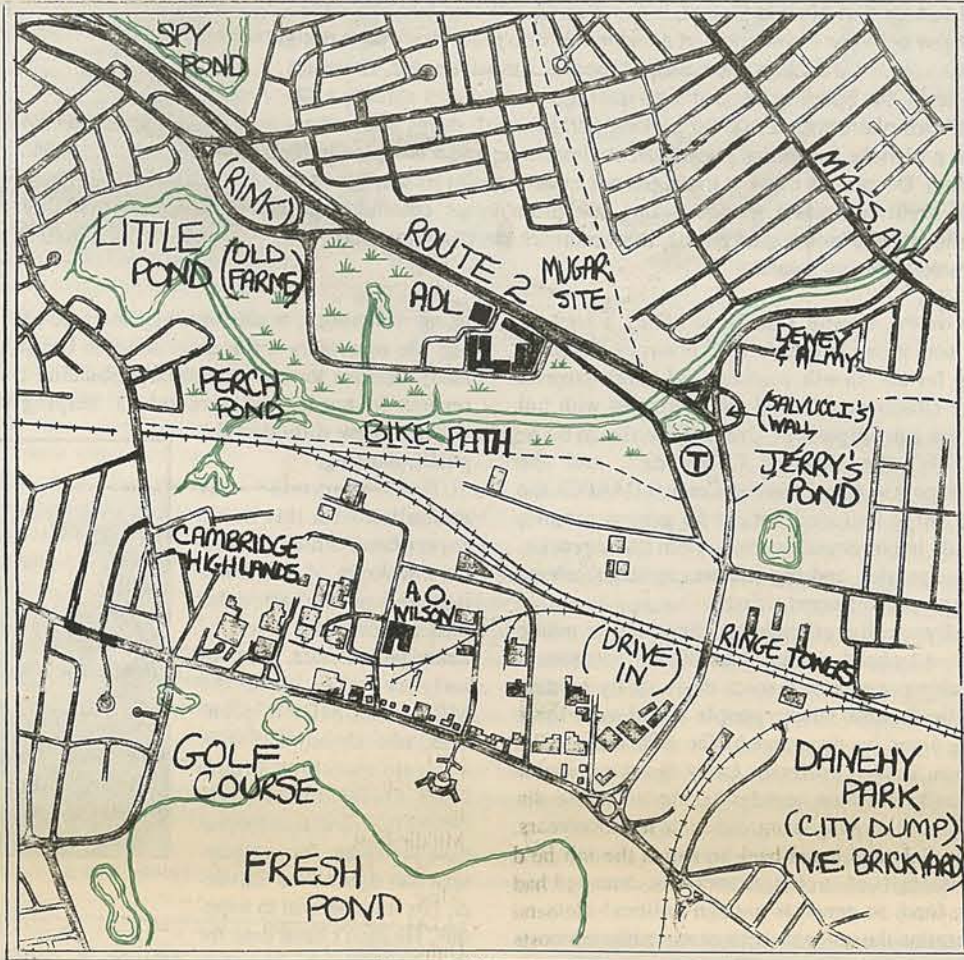
The city, meanwhile, was well into its own Alewife revitalization planning process, which had even come to embrace some of the "green" ideas of the Alewife Task Force. After a 1977 Urban Design Study explored various options for degrees of residential and commercial growth, the Community Development Department (CDD) fashioned a "mixed-use" solution heavy on planned economic development that crystallized in the so-called 1979 "Fishbook." This cohesive, elaborate vision, engineered by CDD head David Vickery, proposed a grand boulevard connecting the Triangle and Quadrangle, intersected by a landscaped canal that revived Alewife Brook (long banished to a culvert). Around the T-station core, a complex of 8- to 14-story offices, condos, shops, and hotels were linked with elevated pedestrian arcades, outdoor plazas, and flood retention ponds.

Even in an area ripe for a boom, it was a grandiose scheme. The Fishbook boasted that the plan could yield up to \$300 million in new building projects, 8,500 construction jobs, 18,000 new permanent jobs, and \$21 million in additional tax revenue. While 3 million square feet of building permits were issued and Cambridge Park Drive began to march westward, sending "prestige" buildings into the sky, the anticipated market bubble never materialized here. Recast as a developer, David Vickery was able to complete only one of six large Alewife Center buildings permitted on the former W.R. Grace site. Yet in the mid-1980s, development progressed at a searing pace elsewhere, especially in Kendall Square and on the East Cambridge river front, where a project resembling the Alewife Canal was resoundingly successful.

What was emerging in Alewife looked much more like the generic suburban "edge cities" springing up along Route 128 than like Cambridge. While new zoning was intended to assure stringent control of large, well-coordinated projects, developers were building piecemeal, slipping under the radar of urban design review.

Because the city's zoning strategy relied too much on a complicated "planned unit development" process, it lost much control here, despite many meetings with developers to encourage voluntary compliance with the spirit of the Fishbook.

Fearing rampant speculation, nearby residents in all towns remained uneasy about the prospect of development that could quadruple the built area of Alewife (roughly 50 12-story buildings), even after down zoning in 1982. One worry was



Alewife area, 1995



Anderson-McQuaid Co., 1995

Elsie Fiore, Doctor of Alewife Studies

Ask about the Battle for Alewife, and Elsie Fiore's name comes up the most. "Elsie's been at this longer than anyone," says activist Dan Geer. "She has the institutional memory."

In 1949, Elsie and her husband bought a small cottage in the East Arlington flats, a stone's throw from Route 2, then a quiet turnpike lined with graceful willow trees, market farms, and smoldering peat swamps. In 1951, a flooded basement piqued this young mother's concern about the Mugar group's plan to build a shopping center on a nearby piece of soggy floodplain. That fell through, but the Mugar's kept coming back with ever grander proposals, driving Elsie to run as a member of Arlington Town Meeting in 1962, where she has served for 33 years.

Proto-environmentalist Dr. Herb Meyer drafted her in 1963 to testify against the MBTA's crazy plan to build a streetcar barn on 55 acres of marsh beside



Elsie Fiore and pet turtle, age 24

Little River: "All I could think of was people standing with one foot on the train, one foot in the water." Together they took on the cause of Alewife open space, many years before it became a popular cause.

She vividly recalls the mid-1960s, when "Governor Volpe's highway people started widening Route 2. First they leveled all those willows and took 40 houses in Arlington and Belmont. Six people died shortly after that from the trauma, the human toll was so terrible. One woman had looked at 69 houses before she bought this one, and they took it a week later. No one told her the highway was coming.

"The state blew the top off the ridge to make it easier for truckers to get up that steep hill, and dumped all that rubble in the wetlands. They filled four acres of Spy Pond. People were livid."

Days, Fiore worked as a secretary in Boston. Evenings, she mothered, studied law, chaired the Conservation Commission, and established East Arlington as a neighborhood to be reckoned with. With the coming of Red Line, she joined the Alewife Task Force and the battle with Fred Salvucci. Asked in the late 1970s why he wouldn't give the Mugar property access to Route 2, Fred pointed at Fiore and said, "Because she'll sue me and she'll win."

Salvucci was furious at Arlington for killing the Red Line extension, and was smart enough to seize a scapegoat when he saw one. He also respected Elsie Fiore as a fierce combatant who did file several suits over the years. As a member of the Alewife Transportation Advisory Committee and the Coalition for Alewife, she fought Salvucci's wall to its end in 1990. "I've earned my degree in Alewife Studies," allows Fiore.

Dr. Meyer, Giant Killer

Dr. Herbert Meyer was a German Jew who resisted fascism and made his way to this country after escaping Hitler's Gestapo. A metallurgist who devoted over 20 years to the Mystic River Watershed Association after his retirement, Meyer was the environment's white knight in the citizens' struggle for the right to participate in transportation planning. Rigorously methodical, relentlessly stubborn, and never satisfied, Meyer kept a log of every phone call he ever made. He continued to fight almost until his death at age 95 in 1993. Many who knew him agree he was an optimist at heart who had no use for cowards, and expected bureaucrats to do the right thing.

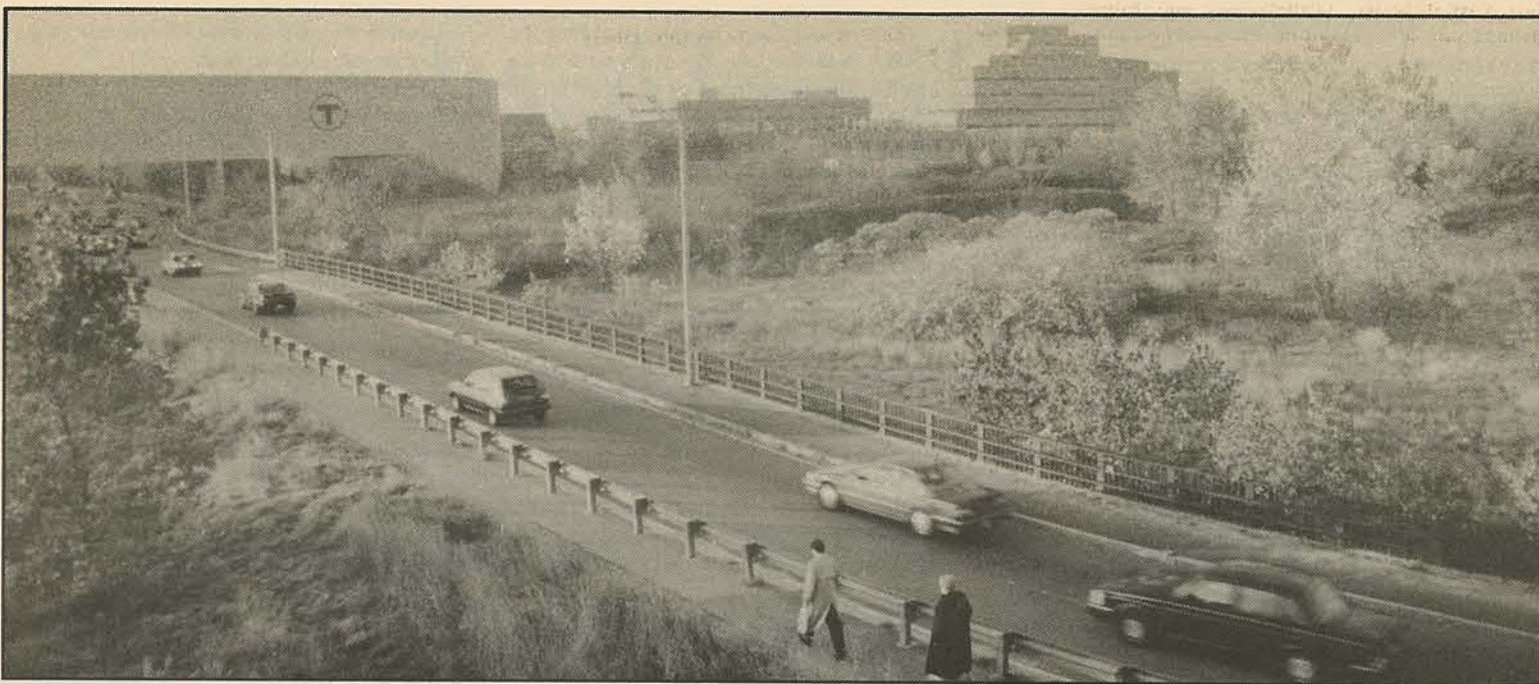


Dr. Herbert Meyer

Of many public comments in the 1,200-page Environmental Impact Statement for the Red Line Extension, Meyer's were the most thorough and pungent. Citing "dilatatory tactics" and "crafty and arbitrary maneuvers," he detailed the methods used by the MBTA and MDPW to avoid cooperative planning, to bypass public process, to keep public comment out of reports, and to evade environmental review. (i.e., by "proceeding under the fiction of a 'no-

build' highway alternative" and by dismissing impacted park wetlands as "non-significant.") It is a credit to the process that his comments were finally published. "Herb was just trying to keep everyone honest," recalls Arlington's Jim Forte. "He was a gentle spirit and a heroic public servant. If he had something harsh to say, you could be sure he had cause."

A few of Meyer's remarks: *We are unhappy with shifting procedures to reduce the process of active participation to one of passive review. REVIEWING IS NOT PARTICIPATION! This series of delays and procedural changes defeats the very purpose of public participation... Agencies are hiding the fact that both projects severely or permanently impact public open space at Alewife... both have ignored and suppressed assistance and advice from the task force... This is a unique opportunity to create a demonstration project that will be of lasting credit to these agencies and the governments they are serving... We abhor as law-abiding citizens the distressing fact that the transportation agencies are not willing to level with us for the sake of cutting corners... [they] seem to be bent on flouting*



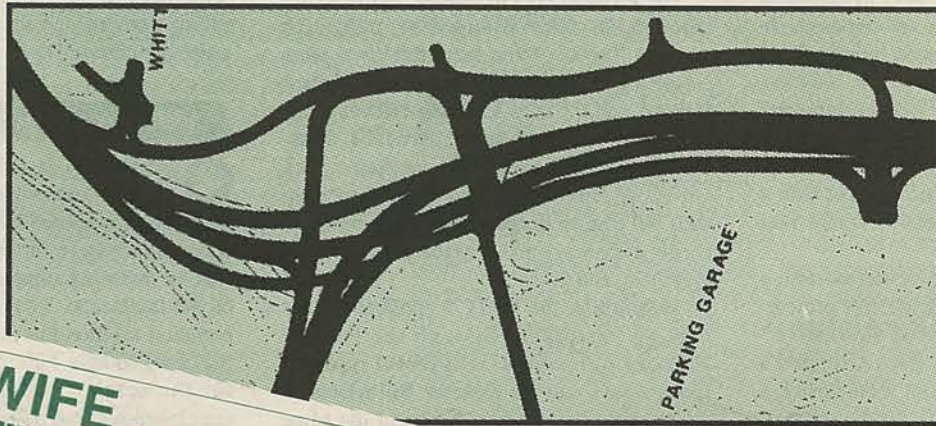
The approach to the Alewife T station from Rt. 2

the impact of more wetland disruption in an area long notorious for severe flooding. In 1955, Hurricane Diane filled the first floor of a new Arthur D. Little building with 18 inches of water. Three decades later, the new MBTA parking garage lay smack in middle of the 100-year floodplain, looking like a post-modern ocean liner aground in the marsh. The Red Line's 32-foot diameter tail-track burrowed under the river, marsh, and Route 2 toward chronically-wet East Arlington basements.

The greatest local fear was the likelihood of a tidal wave of new traffic. For years commuters had found growing cracks in the dam at Alewife Brook Parkway and increasingly snarled neighborhood streets, an issue all but ignored during Red Line planning, despite neighborhoods' protests. Belmont was particularly irked as city-bound trucks, blocked by the 1973 weight restriction on the old Alewife truss bridge, convulsed its quiet streets.

In 1981, the Cambridge City Council created two citizens' groups, the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee and the Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association, to preserve community values and address adverse impacts of the project and related development. Both groups were funded for 14 years (through June 1995). The *North Cambridge News* is their joint project.

"45 Million Dollars of Spagetti:" Arlington Selectman Charles Lyons' term for Fred Salvucci's 1989 "preferred alternative"



ALEWIFE Parkway, not Highway
 491-7332
 Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge... TOGETHER!
 MYSTIC RIVER WATERSHED ASSOC.

1983-1991: Salvucci's Wall

During eight years of transit planning and construction, little progress had been made on plans for the Alewife roadwork. In 1983, after sitting out the King administration for four years, Fred Salvucci came back to finish the job he'd started in 1974. In his absence, the challenge had escalated, as development had created a demand for greater road capacity and construction costs

had soared. Disgusted by dithering here, the Federal Highway Administration refused funding for the required environmental impact study. With Alewife Station coming on line and the old truss bridge quaking, time pressure was immense. After what the Boston

Phoenix called "ten years of relentless conflict" over Alewife's future, Salvucci now had to forge a compromise among a vipers' tangle of "obdurate parties," a situation some pundits likened to the Middle East.

Most of those parties found seats on the Alewife Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), a mandated public participation group. Unlike the ATF chair Larry Susskind, an independent advocate, the ATAC chairs were both loyal appointees of Salvucci. The group dutifully dug in, laboring for five years under the belief that their work would influence the outcome. Under Chair Linda Jonash, the group came to accord on the "Interim Access" plan which built the ramps and intersection that exist today. Under senior transportation official Michael Meyer, ATAC forged an unprecedented consensus on a "preferred alternative" for the permanent roadwork for the entire corridor from Belmont Hill on Route 2 to Fresh Pond Parkway. While some critics felt the ATAC plan was "a horse designed by a committee," it restored a semblance of the MDC's parkway, and restricted overall capacity while inflicting the least damage agreeable to all parties.

As importantly, recalls North Cambridge member Carolyn Mieth, "We felt great about reaching consensus. Then Fred threw the whole thing out; he rejected our work out of hand. We felt betrayed. People were absolutely furious."

Shortly after Salvucci had shattered the trust crafted by his own aide Meyer, a story circulated that he had been observed one Sunday morning near the MBTA station, sketching his new solution on a napkin. Soon he was back with the mother of all roadway fixes: four-phase, limited access, high-speed superhighway, in some places 11 lanes wide and almost 30 feet high, with fly-overs and frontage roads that devoured open space at Jerry's Pond. The price: \$45-\$60 million.

Outrage was spontaneous and universal in all three communities, which erupted with meetings, rallies, and protests that reached a tribal pitch of passion. The scheme was promptly dubbed "Salvucci's Wall" by local attorney Richard Clarey. With one bold stroke, the EOTC would permanently sever Alewife from rest of Cambridge, increase traffic 25 percent (the state's own projections), and move gridlock and pollution half a mile closer to the city's water supply, while reversing 20 years of transportation planning.

Events soon peaked in the formation of the tri-town Coalition for Alewife (CFA) to fight Salvucci: Not since 1776, insisted Cambridge Mayor Alice Wolf, had there been an issue strong enough to unite Cambridge, Belmont, and Arlington. Headlines, leaflets, and picket signs

1983: Spaulding & Slye opens office park in Triangle. 562,000 sq. ft. built by 1990.

1985: Red Line extension, Alewife T-Station, and interim roadwork complete.

1987: Permits approved for Alewife Center hotel-office complex on old Grace site. Only 10% of 900,000 sq. ft. has been built to date.

1988: Alewife-Davis Linear Park completed.

1989: North Cambridge Neighborhood Study recommends new study of Alewife area as real estate boom fizzles.

1990: Danehy Park opens.

1991: Alewife Steering Committee formed to develop new Alewife Master Plan.

1992: Interim Planning Overlay District to control growth at Alewife is proposed and defeated.

1993: City's growth policy document, *Toward a Sustainable Future*, defines overall growth guidelines as benchmark for planning decisions.

1994: City circulates drafts of new Alewife Master Plan.

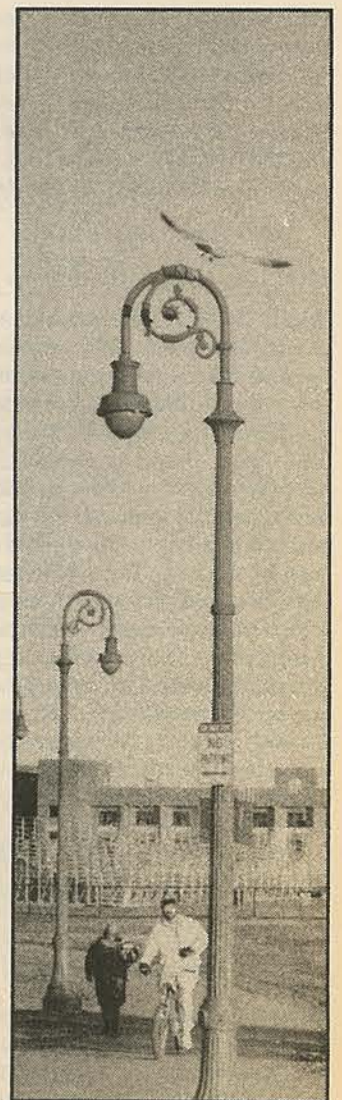
The Coalition for Alewife



The Coalition for Alewife gathers in 1993 beneath the old truss bridge for a "Citizens' Groundbreaking" to celebrate the new parkway and the last rites of "Salvucci's Wall," which it formed to fight in 1988. Comprising many community and environmental groups and municipal representatives, the ad hoc group forged an historic accord among Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont that averted "the long-standing threat of an ill-conceived, multi-layered road and bridge system that would have severely impacted the Alewife area wetlands and urban wilds." So said the Massachusetts' Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC), which honored the Coalition with its 1993 President's Award, shared with the three Conservation Commissions and MDC planner John Krajovic. Explains MACC board member Don McIver:

"Undesirable things tend to happen at town boundaries, areas that are often targeted for misguided state initiatives. Typically these pit local communities against each other. It's rare that towns collaborate successfully to define common goals and present a viable alternative. Because of this, the group has become a statewide model for towns fighting the [proposed] second [Logan] airport."

After emerging as a formidable grassroots power, the Coalition has continued informally as a brain trust and advocacy team for the Alewife bioregion, operating without budget or bylaws. Since 1992 it has relentlessly represented the public's interest in negotiations between the MDC and Arthur D. Little, Inc. on the proposed sale of park land for a parking lot—potentially of great benefit to the Reservation's future (page 28).



Historic lighting on the Russell Field pathway

described the regional mood: *Residents Seethe! Council Fumes! Free the Truss Bridge!* Coalition co-chair Carolyn Mieth recalls one Salvucci remark about the advantage of his plan that did more to ignite the common ire than anything else: "Wouldn't it be nice to drive from [suburban] Lincoln to the corner of Huron Avenue without hitting a light?"

Coalition members and city officials pressed state Environmental Secretary John DeVillars to demand additional studies on the impact of this new plan. Hoping to escape another scathing public review, Salvucci returned with a proposal to down scale the road plan, if the city would agree to curb development. In all fairness, Salvucci felt besieged, and to his credit, he came again and again to local meetings, presenting plans himself while his consultants watched. His task was to ensure that traffic demand on this regional corridor did not overwhelm supply (roadway capacity)—or his MBTA feeder buses would welter in Alewife gridlock with commuters and residents. And as Salvucci saw it, the city's wound was self-imposed. He wasn't the one who had issued permits for 4 million square of new development. Salvucci had no love for developers, who just dumped their problems on his roads. He'd gladly deny them access to his road if the city would help. (As it happened, the real estate market took a major dive, and most of those square feet were never built.)

By January 1990, after 63 different design proposals over 15 years, the MDPW presented its final, *final* "preferred alternative." Little had changed. What East Arlington's George Laite called "a visual monstrosity, a concrete jungle," was still wider than a football field. With flyovers and frontage roads, it promised to ruin Vickery's development, devour wetlands, and spill ever more petroleum into Alewife Brook, fresh from a \$140,000 cleanup.

The new plan was clearly a sham. Salvucci, the mastermind of the (now) \$7.7 billion Central Artery project and widely acknowledged as the single most powerful figure in the Commonwealth—the gentle, lanky man who lived in a Brighton three-decker, picked wild mushrooms, and made homemade wine—had drawn his line in the sand.

A.O. Wilson, 1923

When my dad (A.O. Wilson, steel fabricators) started out here in 1923, the place was a wasteland. There was nothing between Concord Avenue and Arlington. He paid 10¢ a square foot. Now the land is worth \$10, \$12 a square foot.

—Al Wilson, *Wilson Realty Trust*

Hodgins Junkyard, 1940s

Back in the 40s, there was a dump right down there where Adley's trucking is [in the Quadrangle]. As kids we used to love to see the fire engines come in to put out the rubbish fires. We used to spend hours down there, they'd let us hold the hoses. My father and Ray Mahoney used to go down there at night with the flashlight and shoot rats. The rats'd come out and stare right at you. Then there used to be Hodgins' junkyard where Mabardy's is today [Mooney Street]. They had fires in there, but the firemen wouldn't go in, because he had attack dogs. One night one of his men was out in the truck working, came in late, opened the doors to the yard. Next thing you know, whango. Dogs killed him. Finally the firemen shot one of the dogs.

—Jack Tennis
Cambridge Highlands

MDC Skating rink, 1957-1971

Now everything's all grown up with trees, but when I first moved here you could see clear over to Route 2 from my second floor window. My kids used to skate over at the MDC outdoor rink. When it was time for them to come home we'd put the second story lights on, they'd see the signal and come.

—Al "Snooky" Hayes
Cambridge Highlands

"These Salvucci people are like carpenter ants. You can't see them, you think you've got rid of them, but when you rip up the board, they're still there. They're not actually eating, they're just marking time. They're waiting for Freddy to come back."

—State Highway official

This time, the public furor grew even louder. Risking political *hara-kiri*, MDC Planning Director Julia O'Brien released a blistering attack on his proposal in what the press billed as an "intra-state war." While only one percent of the cost of Central Artery, the Alewife project was just as controversial, said the *Boston Globe*—and for Salvucci, even more personal.

He pushed the highway application through the federal approval, public be damned. The Coalition led a full-court press on the legislature, where local leaders Robert Havern and Charles Flaherty introduced a "no-build" bill and held Salvucci's transportation bond moneys hostage. Lame duck Governor Dukakis did his utmost to keep their bill tied up in committee while trying to forge a compromise among the MDC, DeVillars, and Salvucci.

Meanwhile, the EOTC's application was moving inexorably through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) pipeline. Every time Coalition member Bill Monahan asked about its progress, he heard the same thing from state officials: "Don't you locals trouble yourselves with those federal folks, you just leave that to us." Monahan, a Belmont Selectman, knew from an unimpeachable source that the FHWA's regional director had recently described the Alewife situation as "the greatest traffic boondoggle in New England." He smelled a rat and made a phone call. The FHWA apparently had absolutely no idea of the massive local opposition. "The state hadn't bothered to tell them," said Monahan, "so I put together a pile of documents a telephone book thick and sent them in."

Two weeks later, he got word that the FHWA was forcing the state to file an amended plan negotiated by the MDPW and MDC. Only the parkway and bridge would be rebuilt, an \$18 million project. Salvucci's Great Wall was dead. The Coalition for Alewife had killed the biggest giant of all. For the time being.

"Winning this," allows Carolyn Mieth, "was sweet indeed." But no Coalition veteran of the 30-year Battle of Alewife is naive enough to suppose this war is really over. They had hoped the new bridge would create "a permanent choke," but it's still wide enough for extra lanes. The completed Big Build designs for Phases II and III wait on the shelf, and there are growing murmurs of a major airport directly to the west. All this reminds Bill Monahan of something a new administration official told him after Salvucci had left:

"These Salvucci people are like carpenter ants. You can't see them, you think you've got rid of them, but when you rip up the board, they're still there. They're not actually eating, they're just marking time. They're waiting for Freddy to come back."

1995: Toward Alchemy at Alewife

Over three centuries at Alewife, we turned a lush wilderness into a disposable urban wasteland. Over the past three decades, we have labored to redress those sins by imposing some order on the remains of the landscape. The struggle for a transportation solution has dominated that period. It is easy to lose sight of the Alewife forest for the scarred trees, and important to remember that transportation is a means to an end. As Alewife advocate Steve Kaiser suggests, we may finally be positioned to find viable answers for this area's future because of our exhaustive struggles at Alewife. Among them, we have:

- Learned the worth of our urban wilds and set an agenda for its restoration;
- Formed a new vision of Alewife as a special place with *intrinsic value of its own*, where human needs, market forces, and nature might productively co-exist;
- Gained a glimpse of the enormity of this challenge and the great effort, care, and patience needed to achieve it;

- Leveled the playing field by balancing the many powers involved here;
- Forged a new level of cooperation and purpose among many of these players, who have proven they can unite in common cause, and should all take credit for their growth.

We should also tally what has not happened here—no car barns, no airstrip, no edge city, no freeway, no expanse of empty office towers; and to acknowledge the substantial achievements outlined in the Fishbook that are competed, underway, or in the works—Danehy Park, Alewife-Davis Linear Park, Alewife Brook Parkway, Russell Field, Blair Pond, the pedestrian & bike path network, the Alewife Reservation.

During the height of the "Big Build" brouhaha in early 1989, the North Cambridge Neighborhood Study challenged the city to refocus on this broader Alewife picture and to reexamine the 1979 Fishbook vision in light of new economic realities and the unmet needs of neighborhood and nature. As a direct result, the Community Development Department undertook a major new Alewife planning study in 1991.

If there is a collective vision for the future of Alewife, perhaps it is most eloquently expressed by naturalist René Dubos' phrase, "a sustainable marriage of people and place." Significantly, Dubos' key word echoes not only in the title of city's new growth policy document, *Toward a Sustainable Future* (1993), but in the Alewife opus itself: *A Plan for Sustainable Development* (1995).

While cynics insist that "sustainable development" is an oxymoron, many skeptics find it an intriguing idea, and others have embraced it as a mantra. Canon or cliché, *sustainability* needs to be carefully defined. As the city prepares to review this new plan for Alewife, two points are worth noting:

As planners and as a community, we are increasingly conscious that there is no magic bullet or quick fix for Alewife, and that our work here is an evolutionary process. By its very nature, evolution tends to be slow, difficult, and humbling—although it can proceed in quick bursts. Appreciating this truth as we proceed—with patience, persistence, and good humor—is itself evidence of evolution in progress. ☛



Cambridge Historical Commission

Aerial view of Cambridge Highlands looking east, 1948. Foreground: Blanchard Road. Former claypits 1) Blair Pond, lower left, and 2) Hodgins junkyard (smoking), center, now the site of Adley Express. Top center: Eastern States Farmers' Exchange (formerly Black Island), now rubble. Upper left, Little River and market gardens (now Arthur D. Little).

Living In Alewife



Belmont Historical Commission

Heustis Farmhouse, Belmont, near Perch Pond, 1910



Well into the 19th century, the Great Swamp was ringed with small farms. A few rural dwellings lingered well into this century along Blanchard Road, Little Pond, and Route 2. But with two exceptions, Cambridge's Alewife has not

developed as a major housing site despite abundant space, frequent efforts, and the city's chronic need.

Most of the ambitious schemes have failed here, usually because of government or community resistance. Reasons have included physical isolation; lack of access, transit, and public services; environmental and floodplain impact; hazardous materials in the soils; and more recently, land costs. Many areas that allow residential also permit commercial uses, which typically bring a higher return. The city's new Alewife master plan does not foresee significant opportunities for new housing in the area (see page 35).

Cambridge Highlands

Cambridge Highlands, subdivided during World War I and developed into 250 single and two-family homes mostly after World War II, is in the southwest corner of the Quadrangle. Historian Arthur Krim describes it as an "automobile suburb of modest pretensions similar to adjacent neighborhoods in Belmont, [where] the maze of streets and sudden dead ends provide internal variety,

animating the simple houses. The quiet ambiance is delicate, a residential scale easily disturbed."

Long home to many city workers, it remains a cordial, well-organized neighborhood that has recently welcomed a diverse mix of newcomers. Over the years, residents have zealously guarded their sanctuary against frequent incursions. These have included industrial development in their Quadrangle backyard; Sancta Maria Hospital (1966), which has had various expansion plans; and housing proposals for the Blair Pond site.

In 1969, Harvard University, under pressure to address city housing problems created by its students, proposed to fill Blair Pond to build 248 units of low- and moderate income subsidized housing. This seven-building, 850-resident complex would have almost doubled the Highlands' population and brought a huge outcry from nearby residents, pitting neighborhood and environmental groups against housing advocates. While Harvard's opponents were chastised for a hidden agenda of racial prejudice, they had plenty of viable issues: traffic, lack of public services, loss of open space, and especially loss of critical floodplain (for the role of Blair Pond in flood control, see page 18.) Ultimately, Harvard's plan succumbed to the Hatch Act, the state's new wetlands protection law.

In 1991, the MDC's purchase of Blair Pond as part of Alewife Reservation helped stabilize the Highlands.



Street Hockey, Cambridge Highlands, 1995.



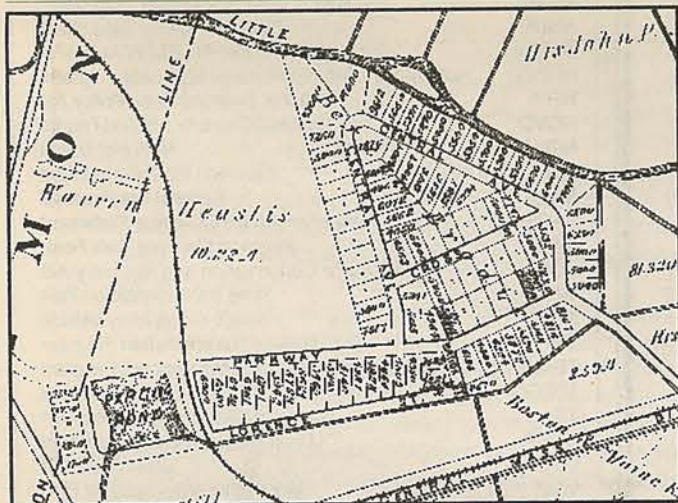
Monuments to Modernism: Rindge Towers

Alewife's colossal monuments to modernist planning are the three 22-story Rindge towers, the high-rise landmarks that dominate the horizon. Wrote historian Arthur Krim in 1977: "Bluntly functional in design... the towers are engulfed by parking lots to create an ensemble of desolate monoliths. Their immense size in this heretofore remote location was partly based on the expectation that the subway would extend to Alewife Brook from Harvard Square." A convenient answer to a city's housing crisis, the towers were built with federal subsidies by private developer Max Wasserman, completed in 1970—just two years before their prototype, the award-winning 1955 Pruitt-Igoe projects of St. Louis, were declared an uninhabitable disaster and destroyed with explosives.

For reasons that still elude many

citizens, the city allowed the towers to be built directly across the railroad tracks from a shopping center and cinema complex without requiring safe pedestrian crossings or protection from trains. This resulted in at least six deaths over the years, an oversight that activist Dan Geer has described as "a smoking gun of malfeasance." After repeated efforts to confront this problem, the city has recently mustered the will and found the funds to address this problem.

While high-rise life here is not without usual urban problems, the towers (now called Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook Apartments) have escaped Pruitt-Igoe's fate. Today the towers are home to some 3,000 people of almost 50 nationalities, a fact obvious to anyone who sticks a nose in a hallway here at dinner-time. These residents are also Alewife pioneers, colonists of a once uninhabitable land.



Bob Patterson, Cambridge DPW

Visions 1968: Alewife Brook Park

Seeking greener pastures in 1952, the international consulting firm Arthur D. Little, Inc. moved its headquarters from near MIT to Acorn Park, a strip of wet farmland between Little River and then sleepy Route 2. Just a stone's throw from many employees' homes in the western suburbs, this corporate campus offered charming views of the MDC's Alewife Reservation.

In the mid-60s, the state widened Route 2 almost to ADL's front door and announced imminent plans to extend the new freeway straight into Boston. The prospect of a major

interchange on one side and a new Red Line station with a 55-acre mass transit repair and storage facility in their backyard wilderness did not tickle the fancy of the nation's leading planning consultant.

"Such a vast and uninterrupted expanse of asphalt and open trackage... would in effect foreclose the creative development of Cambridge's western gateway," ADL wrote in a slim brochure that proposed a radical alternative:

Put the transit facility underground the 47-acre industrial triangle and build an

avant-garde "city within a city" above it.

Integrated by comprehensive planning and architectural design, Alewife Brook Park "would provide for living, working, and leisure... and contain a great variety of diverse activities in close proximity... yielding unique advantages."

ADL reasoned that the project would avert urban blight, increase the tax base, provide critical housing, transform the city's gateway, and create a national model for urban land use. Instead of trashing the MDC's wetlands, the scheme would preserve them as "a most desirable natural amenity."

All told, the huge, multi-level, mixed-use development was to include 4,000 units of housing, 3.6 million square feet of office, retail, and entertainment space, and 8,500 parking spaces, built in three phases as the market allowed.

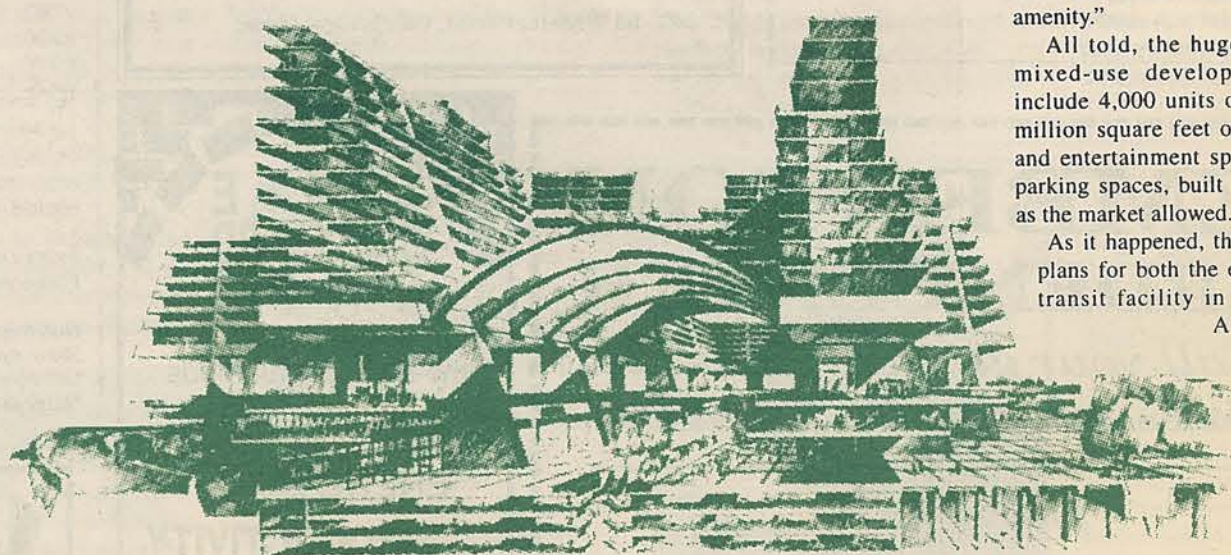
As it happened, the state dropped plans for both the expressway and transit facility in the early 70s.

ADL's provocative vision has since languished on a shelf.

ADL booklet, Al Wilson

Visions 1903: Malaria Manor

A detailed plot plan for a 101-home "ghost" subdivision deep in the Great Swamp appeared mysteriously on page 35 of the city's 1903 street atlas. Oddly, its publication coincided with the peak of the malaria epidemic that swept surrounding neighborhoods, prompting the state to purchase and drain the much of the land. This untoward scheme, no doubt the fantasy of a harebrained developer, did not appear in future editions of the atlas. The Little River was subsequently rechanneled through the area, now a cattail marsh.



Housing Timeline

1903

A 101-unit subdivision appears mysteriously in the city's atlas, deep in the Alewife swamp near Perch Pond. It was never built

1964-70

Hill Estates, 300-unit, 18-acre town-house and high-rise complex is built in Belmont west of Perch Pond

1967

Developer John Spinelli proposes high-rises for the 7-acre Blair Pond site. Zoning denied by the city.

1968

Arthur D. Little master plan proposed 4,000 units (see above).

1968

Rindge Towers built (see sidebar above)

1970

Harvard proposes 850-resident, subsidized low/middle income complex for Blair Pond that includes filling of pond. Approval for wetlands permit denied by state.

1970s

Two proposals for the Mugar site on Route 2 in Arlington include 695 units in three 20-story towers and a 2100 unit complex.

1977

City Urban Design Study for Alewife explored "residential emphasis" option, proposing 1,900 units mostly in the Triangle-rejected for more commercial approach.



Amaze Your Friends!

Do you Bureauspeak? Measure your BIQ with our RBFT!!!

Master esoteric cocktail chatter! Astound your neighbors! Impress elected officials! Get the momentary attention of government bureaucrats by speaking their own language! Memorize the scores of time-and-space saving abbreviations we've assembled over nine months' research on the Alewife area. Even better, make up your own, and brandish acronyms *they've* never heard! Remember, in the countless dialects of Bureauspeak, every random assemblage of letters must mean *something*.

First, test your own BIQ (Bureaucratic Intelligence Quotient) by taking this specially designed RBFT (Regional Bureaucratic Fitness Assessment).
Grand Prizes: Your score is your business. But even if you're a dunce, you can still win valuable prizes by entering our contest! Test your bureaucratic mettle by writing:

SCORE CHART	
1-5	Dunce
5-10	Dabbling
11-15	Resident
16-20	Citizen
21-25	Activist
26-30	Functionary
31-36	Mandarin

- 1) Best New Acronym**
- 2) Best coherent sentence** using the code language of bureaucrats, scored on a) most acronyms; b) least superfluous words; c) most clever, profound, absurd etc. Prizes include (winners' choice):
 - 11x14 Black & White archival photograph of Alewife Reservation or Jerry's Pond (in this issue), suitable for framing;
 - \$25 gift certificate for a gourmet vegetarian meal at Brick Yard Cafe;
 - Guided "behind-the-scenes" tour of Naked Alewife — everything we could-

Some globalists believe that MWCs join NGOs and IGOs in creating a web of ties that bind states together. Other analysts respond that even LCDs deal more and more successfully with MNCs!

The BRAMA standard can be found in the new MCP at 310 CMR 40.0190."



He: Continuity & Change in World Politics
She: EOEA/DEP press release, Aug. 12, 1993

n't print! Not for the squeamish!
Decisions of our anonymous, opinionated, and undoubtedly biased judges are final. Winning and runner-up entries will be published and may become property of an unspecified state agency.
ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JULY 31
All are eligible. Official bureaucrat entries welcomed! Mail your postcard to P.O. Box 342, Cambridge, MA 02140

The BIQ Exam

Cover the definitions on the right with a piece of paper (don't cheat, now!) and have at it. Score your own results (see chart at left) — one point for each correct acronym.

- ADL Arthur D. Little, Inc.
- ADT Average Daily Trips
- AER Automobile Efficiency Rate
- AGRO Alewife-Grace Residents Organization
- ALARM Arlington Red Line Action Movement
- ATF Alewife Task Force (1975)
- ATAC Alewife Technical Advisory Committee (1983)
- ATM Agreement for Traffic Mitigation
- B&MRR Boston & Maine Railroad
- BOD Biodegradable Oxygen Demand
- BRAMA Best Response Action Management Approach
- BTPR Boston Transport Planning Review (1971)
- CCC Cambridge Conservation Commission
- CCDD Cambridge Community Development Dept.
- CDM Camp Dresser & McKee
- CPS Controlled Parking Space
- CPFP Controlled Parking Facility Permit
- CSO Combined Sewer Overflow
- CFA Coalition for Alewife (1989)
- CMAQ Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality
- CWD Cambridge Water Dept.
- DEP Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection
- DEQE Mass. Dept. Environmental Quality Engineering
- CTPS Central Traffic Planning Staff
- EAF Environmental Assessment Form
- EAR Environmental Analysis Report
- EIR Environmental Impact Report (State, 1971)
- EIS Environmental Impact Statement (fed, 1970)
- EMRPP Eastern Mass. Regional Planning Project (1968)
- ENF Environmental Notification Form
- EOEA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
- ERM Executive Office Transportation & Construction
- FAR Emergency Response Manual
- FBN Floor Area Ratio
- FONSI Fly By Night
- FHWA Finding of No Significant Impact
- HVA Federal Highway Administration
- HWMA High Vehicle Occupancy
- IAP Hazardous Waste Management Act
- IPCC Intermediate Action Project
- IPOD Interim Parking Control Committee
- ISTEA Interim Planning Overlay District
- JRTC Intermodal Surface Transit Efficiency Act
- LEVS Joint Regional Transportation Committee
- LSP Low Emissions Vehicle Standard
- LTBI Licensed Site Professional
- LUST List to be Investigated
- MAPC Leaking Underground Storage Tank
- MBTA Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- MCP Mass. Bay Transit Authority
- MDFA Mass. Contingency Plan
- MDC Mass. Dept. of Food & Agriculture
- MDPW Metropolitan District Commission
- MOA Mass. Dept Public Works
- MRBC Memorandum of Agreement
- MRWA Mass. Regional Bureaucratic Complex
- MSDS Mystic River Watershed Association
- MWRA Materials Safety Data Sheet
- NPDES Mass Water Resources Authority
- NEPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
- NGVD National Environmental Policy Act
- NOI National Geodetic Vertical Datum
- PUD Notice of Intent
- RFP Planned Unit Development
- RAOS Request For Proposal
- RPTF Response Action Outcome Statement
- RCRA Regional Planning Task Force
- SIP Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- SOV State Implementation Plan
- STP Single Occupancy Vehicle
- TDMP Surface Transportation Program
- TEGO Transportation Demand Management Program
- TIP The Eyes Glaze Over
- UMTA Transportation Improvement Plan
- URO Urban Mass Transport Authority
- VMP Urban Run Off
- VMT Vegetative Management Plan
- VPH Vehicle Miles Traveled
- VTRO Vehicles per hour
- VSQG Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance
- WEW Very Small Quantity Generator
- WQS Governor's initials
- 21E Water Quality Sample
- 3-C Designates HWMA sites
- 4(f) Continuing, Cooperative, Comprehensive Process, Federal Highway Act (1962)
- 501(c)3 Protected public lands (1968)
- 501(c)3 Tax-exempt status favored by non-profits

Extra credit: Give yourself two points for every Bureauspeak Phrase you can correctly identify.

- Non-major action way to avoid EIR/S
- Storm event storm
- Orthodont filled tidal marshes/swamps
- Stationary hazard highway planner's definition of a tree



construction

High quality construction and renovation for residential, commercial and institutional customers since 1979.

For information or references, call Doug or Al at (617)876-8286.

52R Bellis Circle
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617)876-8286
fax (617)864-1850



Interface, leading holistic education since 1975, offers lectures, courses, workshops, and conferences presented by an international faculty each season at our center in the Alewife area of Cambridge.

**Summer Retreats,
Professional Trainings,
A Festival of Healing Music,
Summer classes in Yoga,
Massage Healing,
Meditation and much more.**

To receive our catalogue, please call
617-876-4600

55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, Mass.

PEMBERTON GARDEN CENTER

For all your gardening needs

2225 MASS. AVENUE • 491-2244

A wide selection of

Hanging Baskets • Perennials • Jumbo Annuals
Herbs • Pottery • Nursery Items • Supplies

Midsummer Special: 10% off With This Coupon
(does not include items on sale)



low-fat healthful foods

**FOOD=
ENERGY=
PRODUCTIVITY**

VEGETARIAN & NON-VEGETARIAN
TAKE-OUT OR EAT-IN • CATERING

Home Delivered, Child Friendly Meals
for Busy Families of All Kinds

Limited Enrollment. Call Now!
90 Sherman St.
868-6543 • 1-800-986-6543

Cambridge Greenhouse

Antiques and Collectables



VINTAGE FURNITURE

Estates Bought and Sold
2301 Massachusetts Avenue
(617) 876-1430

Traffic & Transit



Alewife Brook Parkway, looking south

In 1948, a state highway master plan for the Boston area included rebuilding Route 2 as an expressway from Route 128 to the proposed Inner Belt in Boston. In 1968, it was widened to eight lanes as far as the Cambridge's line at Arlington, where it died. Tremendous opposition from the city helped insure that it would go no farther. In the early 1970s, a new state administration dropped plans to complete the road and decided to extend the Red Line to Route 128 via Porter and Davis Squares and Alewife.

Despite that decision, Alewife Brook Parkway has remained a major regional transportation corridor, and the traffic bottleneck at Alewife has grown from bad to infamous over the years. Three factors have helped:

• **Through Traffic:** Commuter traffic on Route 2 has continued to grow steadily, as more suburban commuters use Alewife as a foyer to Boston and Route 128 development has lured urban residents westward.

Counts at the city's western gateway show traffic doubling between 1960 and 1992, with morning peak hour traffic quadrupling in that period. 1988 state transportation figures showed that some 60 percent of those vehicles had destinations beyond Cambridge.

• **MBTA Station Traffic:** The city fought to maintain original plans to extend the Red Line farther west, but had to settle for a terminus at Alewife when Arlington defeated the extension.

The Red Line has increased congestion at Alewife, but the MBTA's Alewife parking garage also relieves Cambridge streets of some commuter traffic. Up to 2,330 vehicles use the garage daily; 70 feeder buses deposit riders at the station each weekday morning, and 84 leave each afternoon.

• **Alewife Commercial Traffic:** In 1976, there were only 5,197 employees working in Alewife. The central goal of the city's 1979 revitalization plan was to increase economic development, and the city predicted that the net increase of auto use could result in an additional 24,000 cars a day. The 1990 census revealed that about 9,300 vehicles reported to work here.

Alewife Development

1978	3.863M sq. ft.
1993	3.886M sq. ft.

Alewife Employees

1976	5,197
1990	13,192

Traffic Count, Rt. 2, Cambridge Line

Average Daily Trips (one way)	
1950	11,036
1960	17,088
1970	20,577
1980	25,800
1882	30,000
1989	33,300
1992	37,500

Traffic Count, Fresh Pond Parkway

Average Daily Trips (one way)	
1980	25,000
1989	23,000

Alewife employees increased by 7,995 between 1974 and 1990 (252 percent); 62 percent of these workers (8,170) came alone in their cars. (There are no figures for other Alewife-bound commercial traffic.)

The net effect of these factors is that Alewife serves increasingly as a sponge for traffic, soaking up in the morning and releasing it in the evening. Fresh Pond Parkway seems to have benefited, as traffic has declined there almost 10 percent between 1980-1989.

Faced with growing congestion, resourceful commuters have found alternative ways around this bottleneck, impacting city streets. Trucks and buses have been forced to find other routes since 1973, when the old truss railroad bridge on Alewife Brook Parkway was closed to heavy vehicles. Relief is expected with the opening of the new bridge, five years after the MDC finally won federal approval to rebuild this road as a parkway in 1990 prevailing over the state's "preferred alternative," an elevated highway.

While a few Depression-era elders take comfort in the rush of vehicles on their neighborhood streets ("the sound of a healthy economic engine," one calls it) most find this traffic invasive and dangerous. Cambridge residents are part of this traffic problem. Cars per household increased 40 percent between 1970 and 1986, according to city transportation planner Dick Easler. With fewer neighborhood markets and less time, residents are walking less and driving more.

In Alewife, the commercial strip is so unfriendly and chaotic, so segregated from the human-scale texture of the city, that only the brave or desperate dare penetrate it on foot or bicycle. In the Quadrangle, one needs a map to tell streets from parking lots and storage yards.

Nonetheless, Alewife is widely regarded as one of the city's last frontiers for economic development. Compared to inner Cambridge or Boston, land is relatively abundant and cheap, parking is more available, and the area is easier to reach, especially from the north and west. While Alewife is reasonably accessible by subway and bus, connections within the Alewife area are poor to non-existent. Long walking distances and a pedestrian-hostile atmosphere discourage commuters from coming by transit, especially if they work in the Quadrangle.

Peak Hour AM Traffic, Rt. 2

	Inbound	Outbound
1980	1,061	625
1989	3,960	2,680

TRANSPORTATION TIMELINE 1948-1995

By Steve Kaiser

1948: State DPW produces first master plan for Boston expressways, including extension of Route 2 into Boston.

1950: Legislature directs MDC to reserve 55 acres of Alewife Reservation wetland for Red Line extension and train car barns.

1953: MTA plans Red Line extension from Harvard Square up Mass. Ave. to Alewife via RR Freight Cutoff (now Linear Park). Extension cost then: \$31.3 million.

1962: MDPW unveils plan to extend Route 2 as an elevated high-speed route through Alewife and along Fitchburg Line through Cambridge to proposed Inner Belt.

1968: State expands Route 2 into an 8-lane superhighway from Route 128 to the Cambridge line. Project takes 40 Arlington homes, filling wetlands and 4 acres of Spy Pond.

1968: Citizen anti-highway movement swells against Gov. John Volpe's massive state highway program.

1970: Gov. Francis Sargent kills Inner Belt and Route 2 extension. Cambridge begins to lobby state for Red Line extension through Alewife to Route 128. A new era of open process, citizen participation, and neighborhood and environmental concern begins.

1972: Federal Clean Air Act passed, forcing state to get serious about reducing auto emissions.

1973: State review board recommends Red Line extension through Porter and Davis Squares to Alewife and Route 128 via Arlington.

1973: MDC closes failing Alewife iron truss bridge to large trucks and buses, diverting traffic onto local side streets amid much protest.

1975: Alewife Task Force begins public advisory role to Red Line transit and Alewife roadwork, seeking joint planning solutions. State transport chief Fred Salvucci attempts to evade environmental impact study (EIS) for Alewife roadwork.

1976: Arlington's St. Agnes parish protests proposed MBTA parking lot near their church, a furor that killed any chance for Red Line extension beyond Alewife.

1978: Alewife T-Station construction begins. Noise, dust, and rodents provoke residents' outrage. Red Line Alert forms to sue MBTA. State concedes Red Line will terminate at Alewife (not official until 1981).

1979: City joins Red Line Alert suit, demanding new impact studies from MBTA. Gov. Ed King replaces Salvucci. Roadway planning on back burner.

1983: Under Gov. Mike Dukakis, Salvucci resumes roadway planning. Federal Highway Admin. (FHWA), fed up with no progress, refuses to fund further impact studies. Alewife Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) formed to represent public and environmental concerns.

1985: Red Line extension and Alewife Station completed. Drum ramp on east end of garage is never used. Signalized intersection at Route 2 and garage ramps are built as state's "interim access" solution.

1987: State proposes six permanent roadwork options for Alewife; ATAC reaches unprecedented consensus on its preferred choice.

1988: Salvucci deep-sixes ATAC's plan, proposing 4-phase "Big Build" elevated superhighway solution, a.k.a. "Salvucci's Wall." Cost: \$45-60 million.

1988: Massive protest erupts in Cambridge, Arlington, and Belmont. Three-town Coalition for Alewife forms to protect reservation and neighborhoods by opposing road plan.

1989: Salvucci returns in June with proposal for smaller "preferred alternative." **1989:** Salvucci's final road plan, issued in December, has changed little, and brings stinging critique from MDC.

1990: Massive public pressure mounts on state legislature to stop "big build" solution. Reps. Flaherty and Havern introduce bill H3558, calling for "no-build" option that rebuilds parkway and truss bridge only.

1990: Key Salvucci supporter, Belmont Rep. Mary Jane Gibson, requests that he withdraw his plan. Refusing, Salvucci pushes for FHWA approval.

1990: Gov. Dukakis seeks compromise among state agencies while Flaherty and Havern reportedly hold Salvucci's transportation bond bill hostage.

1990: FHWA discovers local opposition, tells MDPW: rebuild truss bridge and parkway only (cost: \$10 million).

1993: 20 years after truss bridge is condemned, state begins Alewife roadwork. New transportation chief James Kerasiotis celebrates with press conference. Not invited: MDC officials, Speaker Flaherty, Sen. Havern, and Coalition for Alewife. Coalition holds "people's" celebration at bridge.

1994: First half of new bridge opens for traffic in December.

1995: 1930 truss bridge is removed.

An MIT Ph.D., Steve Kaiser first got involved with Alewife in 1970 as a traffic engineer for the Metropolitan District Commission. Fascinated with transportation and land-use problems but disenchanted with the compromises required of a bureaucrat, he quit in 1974, choosing instead to participate as a "freeman." Since then he supported himself primarily as a part-time elementary school computer teacher.

Kaiser estimates that he has attended 95 percent of all meetings on Alewife over the past 25 years. He has offered his services as citizen gadfly, amateur historian, and pro bono consultant, regularly presenting unsolicited traffic studies and designs. Too often these have been pooped by the paid experts, many of whom dismiss him as a self-styled irritant or meddling crank.

As a measure of his skill and nerve, Kaiser volunteered to redesign State



Steve Kaiser

Transportation Secretary Fred Salvucci's notorious Scheme Z, the proposed 11-story high, 18-lane wide bridge across the Charles River. Kaiser buried the crossing under the river, freeing the skyline and 300 acres of open space. His alignment was so well engineered that top-level Central Artery planners began

to mutter about "the Kaiser Problem." Ultimately he was offered a job. He refused, explaining: "I'm not for sale."

His unpublished Alewife history (excerpted here) is a digest of some 25,000 pages of documents edited into a dense chronicle of transportation and land-use planning at Alewife.

What drives Steve Kaiser?

"So many good people have been burned trying to find rational solutions at Alewife, including Salvucci himself. They've written the area off as hopeless, beyond human solution, almost the same way people have given up on Eastern Germany, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, the Middle East. Then one day walls come down, there are cease fires. Alewife should be added to that list. In spite of the grim history, people still see the possibility of success. We have to credit the city with the courage to come back into this with a new plan. Alewife doesn't need to be a cynics' paradise."

Alewife 101: The Frozen City

In 1970 was Earth Day, and the word was Clean Air. That word went forth from the people to the government to the offending states, saying, "Thou shalt reduce thy noxious emissions into the atmosphere." The feds begat the 1972 Federal Clean Air Act, which begat the SIP (State Implementation Plan), which begat the Parking Freeze, which begat the VTRO (Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance), which begat the TDMP (Transportation Demand Management Program).

As the 1995 Congress busies itself savaging that historic environmental legislation, Cambridge continues to feel both its benefits and its regulatory sting.

The Clean Air Act gave the states specific goals for acceptable levels for various pollutants, but did not tell them how to attain them. The state issued (and has since amended) the State Implementation Plan, which uses a combination of carrots and sticks to induce state agencies and municipalities to reach clean air goals. Among the sticks was the notorious parking freeze.

"Build it, and they will come" — the maxim from the movie, *Field of Dreams* — is also credited to 1960s-era highway engineers, whom many still blame for today's urban traffic problems. By the 1970s, wise planners understood that increasing traffic capacity does not reduce congestion. It merely increases traffic, creating the "Field of Nightmares."

The idea behind the state's parking freeze, as activist Dan Geer explains it, is, "If you don't build it, they can't come: The more difficult it is to find parking, the more likely people are to use alternatives."

Initiated in 1973, the freeze was intended as a temporary measure to improve air quality by fixing the number of commercial parking spaces in Boston at the 1973 level. At the time, Cambridge had no residential parking policy. Fearing that the city could soon become a parking lot for Boston, the City Council voted to join in the freeze. According to city officials, it properly determined that there were 13,500 spaces in its off-street commercial parking bank, and enforced the freeze as required.

But according to Geer and Debra McManus of Cambridge Citizens for Livable Neighborhoods (CCLN), the city circumvented the law and allowed thousands of new parking spaces to be built during the 1980s development boom. CCLN challenged the city's implementation of the freeze in court. As a settlement, the city adopted a freeze ordinance in 1990 and entered an agreement with the state Department of Environmental Protection that established how the city would administer the freeze over an interim period — during which the city would develop a new program to replace the freeze, the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance (below).

Whatever their view, most agree that the freeze serves two unintended goals. It protects neighborhoods and curtails traffic, which is why some groups like it. It also limits development and tax revenues, which is why the city, its reluctant enforcer, wants the state to lift it.

Opponents claim that the freeze punishes business and unfairly targets the city. Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Director Jerry Oldach argues that since Boston doesn't enforce the freeze on its businesses, Cambridge is the *only* frozen city, putting it at a serious competitive disadvantage in the region.

Oldach and Liz Epstein agree that the freeze should be applied equally or not at all, and that the onus should be on employers, not cities. As director of the city's Environmental Program, Epstein heads municipal efforts to meet air quality standards. She asks, "How can one city's parking freeze work when cars and development can move to Allston, Somerville, or Arlington without penalty? The goal of the freeze should be to reduce vehicle trips and emissions, instead of hamstringing development."

"In theory," adds Dan Geer, "the freeze allocates scarcity with efficiency, but the ordinance includes no effective strategy to help get parking where it's most needed." Opponents and advocates alike agree that a better plan would encourage denser development around public transit nodes.

Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance

Developed by the city's Environmental Program with community input and approved by City Council in 1992, the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance (VTRO) is part of the city's strategy to show that Cambridge can reduce air pollution and comply with regional clean air standards without the parking freeze.

In an effort to change the state's policy, the city proposed a state-wide, employer-based trip reduction ordinance three years ago. Officials still haven't had an answer, but hope for relief soon: the new State Implementation Plan (SIP) (required by the feds' 1990 Clean Air Act amendment) is long overdue.

The VTRO aims to encourage employers and residents to use other means of transportation by making these options more attractive, while creating disincentives to drive. Among the strategies:

- **Commuter Mobility Program:** Includes a pilot survey of city-commuting habits, and vehicle trip reduction programs for city employees (mandatory) and private employers (voluntary)
- **Improving access** to and appeal of public transportation systems
- **Bicycle master plan:** Increasing routes, paths, safety, parking facilities
- **Pedestrian master plan:** Improving mobility, especially for the young, elderly, and handicapped
- **Other features:** Restricting parking passes; Zoning revisions; Regulating noxious vehicle idling; Incentives for multiple-rider taxi use; Expanding local employment opportunities.

The City's Challenge

The challenge facing the city is to find a creative way to resolve two apparently conflicting goals, limiting traffic and encouraging development. Some issues that need to be addressed:

- How to discourage through traffic while increasing local jobs and improving traffic circulation within Alewife?
- How to improve access to local businesses without increasing congestion in the Alewife area?
- How to preserve residents' access to their neighborhoods while preventing their streets from becoming commuter shortcuts?
- How to reduce isolation and fragmentation in Alewife without inviting more traffic?

There are now almost 3.9 million square feet of development in Alewife. Present zoning allows 10 million more square feet, though most observers concede that weak market conditions and other obstacles make it unlikely that even five million more feet will be developed here in the foreseeable future.

But because of the potential traffic impact, any further development is valid cause for concern in adjoining neighborhoods. Even retail businesses

that thrive on strip traffic understand the downside of too much of a good thing: no one wants to shop in a traffic jam.

The MDC's \$12 million Alewife Brook Parkway and bridge renovation, due to be completed this fall, will enhance the area and will provide the spine for other improvements and connections (for details, see traffic map). But it is not a traffic solution. The city's Community Development Department and Environmental Program offer a mix



Top: Concord Ave. rotary

Right: Hostile pedestrian crossing at Rindge Ave



of strategies they believe will get more people to and around Alewife more easily, without significantly increasing traffic. These include a blend of roadway improvements, physical connections, path networks, open space enhancements, improved public transportation, and employer-based transit incentives and services.

Residents and businesses alike are scrutinizing the city's new Alewife master plan traffic proposals (page 31). According to the "smart growth" citizens' group, 1000 Friends of Massachusetts, traffic policy is "the greatest opportunity to influence environment, economic growth, and quality of life," and close public scrutiny of any traffic plan is well advised.

Some doubt that it is possible to increase growth here without increasing traffic. Because so many complex traffic elements are at play in Alewife, and so many interest groups have different agendas, there is always danger that a plan that solves one group's problem will create trouble for another. While traffic pundits are divided on specific solutions, they do agree that the city needs all the information it can get and thorough public review before implementing changes. For this reason, neighborhood observers are especially pleased that the city has decided to commission a new transportation study as part of its Alewife Master Plan.

Strategies to Improve the Commute: TDM

Most Alewife commuters get to work and go home the way most Massachusetts commuters do — alone in their own cars. They're part of the problem. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is bureaucratic jargon for a complex of strategies to encourage alternatives. From shuttle buses and ride sharing to MBTA passes and telecommuting, advocates believe TDM can help reduce rush-hour traffic and air pollution, and save stress and money.

A key feature of the city's 1992 Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance, TDM also helps the city meet Federal Clean Air Act requirements. Transportation Coordinator Susan Goldwitz, who joined the city in 1989 to devise local TDM policies, works as a consultant with businesses, explaining the economic and environmental benefits of adopting voluntary TDM programs and helping them find the best mix of schemes for their employees. Non-bureaucratic by nature, Goldwitz approaches her task with a creativity and humor that breathe the new life into terms like "expanded commuter mobility."

Businesses that are starting, expanding, or relocating are the best candidates. TDM works best in areas like Alewife, where there are a concentration of transit nodes and employers. Goldwitz links firms with service providers or like-minded companies that can share services and costs. Among the corporate benefits of TDM, she says, are increased productivity, happier employees, reduced parking problems and costs (one factor driving Cambridge companies to the suburbs) and the satisfaction of being good corporate citizens. The city has already benefited from reduced parking demand.

Yet a good TDM program takes corporate time and money, and Goldwitz finds it a challenging sell. In good times, she says, more companies are willing to experiment, but as belts tighten, firms tend to drop T-Pass and van subsidies before eliminating jobs. Some companies resist any outreach by the city as "government interference," she says, and competitive corporate culture rarely encourages the collaboration necessary to solve problems with neighbors. "We've been trying to foster cooperation by holding forums where business leaders can vent frustrations and explore

TDM Strategies

- **Public Transportation:** Subsidized MBTA passes available at the workplace; improving pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- **Car/van pooling:** Can save time, gas, money; reduces parking; increases quality commuting time
- **Shuttles:** Transport employees from transit nodes to workplace and between work sites.
- **Bicycling:** Better pathways, secure parking, relaxed dress codes, on-site showers.
- **Walking:** Friendly street-crossing designs and hazard-free sidewalks and paths maintained year-round.
- **Flextime:** Work schedules that can accommodate employees' personal needs, allowing off-hour commuting.
- **Telecommuting:** Working at home reduces commuter trips, accommodates personal needs, requires increased trust.
- **On-Site Services:** Reduce need for off-site car use during business hours.

solutions," adds Goldwitz. "We see progress in Alewife, where there are some forward-thinking companies with big problems getting people to transit safely."

Employees must be persuaded to change behavior as well, as many perceive use of public transit as a loss of independence and status. As Cambridge's largest employer, the city is finally taking its own TDM medicine, hoping to demonstrate changes it wants to see happen citywide. Goldwitz and the Environmental Program have completed a commuting survey of 3,524 city employees, which revealed that while almost 12% walk to work, only 7.7% use public transit, and 56% drive alone. A city TDM plan is in the works. While quantifying the effect of voluntary TDM programs is difficult, says Goldwitz, the city's program should yield a range of informative numbers.

—Kelly Mendonca

Getting There is Half the Fun

If the city wants to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips in Alewife, it needs data to develop strategies. Where do Alewife employees come from? Do they drive alone, carpool, walk, bike, or take the T? Do they come by Red Line, rail, bus, or a combination? How many changes must they make? How many more might use transit with improved services and linkages?

In 1970, about three-fourths of Cambridge workers lived one transit stop away. By 1990, only half lived within that range. The rule of thumb says that with each change after the first transfer, half the riders quit: the more complicated the trip, the less incentive to take transit. To convert people, getting there must be easier.

Gathering specific and accurate information is difficult. Figures come from many sources, and even interpretations of the same data can yield conflicting results. Analyzing data for all Alewife employees between 1976 and 1990, city transportation planner Dick Easler found that:

- **Transit use increased:** 8.3% to 21%
- **Single-occupancy vehicle use declined:** 70% to 62%.
- **Access to transit increases use:** In the Triangle, near the MBTA station, 27.2% of workers used transit in 1990. Across the tracks in the Quadrangle, only 14.8% used transit (despite decent bus service from Harvard

"Traffic is like sewage: it's an inevitable byproduct of civilization that no one wants. We no longer dare to dump sewage, but we dump traffic onto public streets, into the hands of public agencies."

— Steve Kaiser, traffic engineer

Square, Belmont, and Arlington).

Alan Hoffman, an MIT urban design graduate working on a redevelopment plan for the Quadrangle, used 1980 and 1990 census material and found that:

- **Resident employees decline as city workforce grows:** The city's workforce increased 23% (from 86,500 to 106,800), while resident workers decreased both relatively (6%) and in real numbers (400). The biggest increase came from beyond abutting communities (15%).
- **Cantabrigians would rather drive than ride:** Of 13,000 Alewife workers, only 11% live in Cambridge. While city residents actually increased auto use by 10% in the decade that the Red Line was extended, the opposite was true for Alewife-bound residents (5% decrease), but transit use is low (20%), especially given the number who live near MBTA stops.
- **Carpooling declined:** Employee use of transit and car/van pools to Alewife each decreased 20% between 1980 and 1990, suggesting the

	1980	1990
mass transit	28.4%	24.5%
walk	26.2%	25.1%
bicycle	2.6%	3.2%

Red Line boarding count:	10,000
Parking Garage passengers: (2,300 cars x 1.5 riders)	3,450
Feeder bus riders	5,200
Walk, bike, drop-offs	1,350
A.M. buses:	70
P.M. buses:	84

Mode	Cambridge Resident	All Commuters
SOV	47%	63%
Pool	6%	12%
Bus	10%	7%
Subway	10%	1%
Rail	0%	3%
Bike	3%	1%
Walk	20%	3%

"A regular bus route from Harvard Square to the Quadrangle appears to mean little. Even [employees] with direct access to the Red Line prefer dodging the traffic on Alewife Brook Parkway to walking from the T station or bus."

— Alan Hoffman, MIT

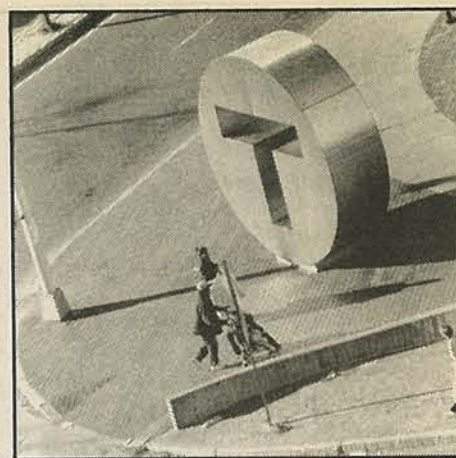
need for stronger incentives. (Nationwide, car-pool use decreased 40% in this Reagan decade.)

- **Commuter rail barely serves Alewife:** Of 1,056 who live on Fitchburg line, 478 live in Belmont; only 33 take the train. All rail users must switch to the Red Line at Porter Square.

Improving Transit

Some of the proposed improvements the city is pursuing and/or citizen advocates recommend:

- Improving physical connections and creating a pedestrian-friendly ambiance in Alewife, including such retail uses as cafés.
- Shuttle buses connecting all Alewife destinations with the MBTA station
- MBTA park n' ride facilities on Route 128
- Feeder buses from towns not served (i.e., Belmont, Winchester, Watertown, Newton)
- Close monitoring of local MBTA service and persistent lobbying for improvements.
- Stronger MBTA public information
- Evaluate an Alewife commuter rail stop.

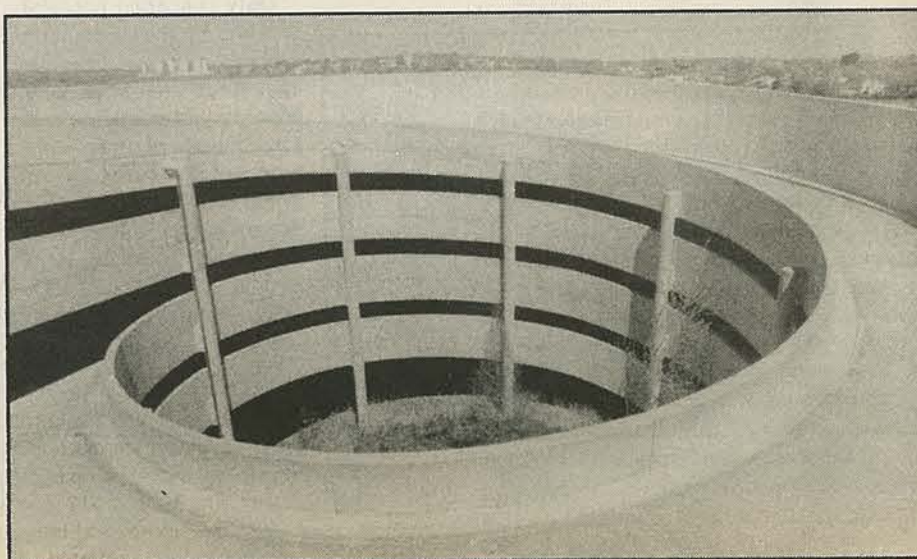


Alewife MBTA Buses (daily ridership)

62: Bedford VA Hosp. to Alewife	(1,234)
67: Turkey Hill, Arlington	(475)
76: Hanscom Air Base to Alewife	(774)
79: Arlington Hts. to Alewife	(6,528)
84: Arlmont Village to Alewife	(220)
350: North Burlington to Alewife	(1,220)

Other Bus Service to Alewife

83: Central Sq. to Rindge Ave. (Now turns at Russell Field; will turn at Fresh Pond Shopping Center later this year)
74: Harvard Sq. via Concord Ave. to Belmont Ctr.
78: Harvard Sq. via Concord Ave. to Arlmont



Working Entrance or Urban Ruins? The two Guggenheim Museum-like drum ramps on the MBTA parking garage were designed for rapid, congestion-free entry and exit, especially from and to Route 2. The exit ramp (viewed here from above) is open only at p.m. rush hours. But the western entry ramp and overpass, which almost doubles the length of the building's northern facade, are blocked with rusty snowplows, barrels, and chains. Trash and weeds give the overwhelming impression of disuse.

Genetics Institute: Where TDM Works

At first blush, one might think Genetics Institute ill-suited for a Transportation Demand Management program: a leading biotech firm with 1,000 employees at locations in Andover, Alewife, and nearby Bolton Street, it's a 24-hour operation with many employees who live beyond the range of mass transit.

But a few years ago, the company established a multi-pronged TDM program that turned communications technologies to its advantage.

"We were looking for ways to lessen traffic between our facilities," says William Lonergan, head of security and father of Genetic's TDM program. "We started this because we want to be a good neighbor. Alone, we may not have a big impact on clean air, but every little bit counts. And it sits well with our employees, who are concerned about the environment."

To develop Genetic's program, Lonergan worked with city Transportation Coordinator Susan Goldwitz and visited West Coast companies that have pioneered similar operations. "Cambridge is a city that encourages thinking outside the box, and Sue Goldwitz was terrific," he acknowledged. "We encourage our employees to leave their cars at home and offer certain perquisites for doing so, but ultimately it's a volunteer program." So far, it works well:

Shuttle Vans

Vans run by Caravans for Commuters operate hourly between sites 60 hours a week. Since 1993, they've logged 60,000 miles and carried over 11,000 passengers, including many who catch the van at the Porter Square commuter rail stop. Reliable schedules and on-board cellular phones are key, says Lonergan: "Our employees are confident the shuttles run on time, so they feel comfortable using them. And they're never out of range. While they ride they can work, have meetings, or enjoy some down-time. You can't do that behind the wheel."

MBTA Passes

Genetics offers employees a choice of fully subsidized T passes or free parking. Each month, 92 employees — 22% of their Cambridge workforce — use T passes.

Ride Sharing

The Rideshare program operates by company E-mail. Incentives include a free lunch drawing monthly and a \$100 gift certificate drawing annually. To date, 620 users have

logged on over 5,000 times.

On-Site Facilities

To reduce the need for daytime car use, each Genetics facility has its own cafeteria, gym, company store, and post office.

— Kelly Mendonca



Genetics Institute's van at waits at Cambridge Park Drive.

Galleria Shuttle: A Model

Many agree that Alewife urgently needs a shuttle service to help link its 200 businesses, 13,500 employees, and many shoppers to the Alewife MBTA Station. Some suggest that businesses might pool resources, perhaps even find some sponsor, to fund a service that all could share on a free or fare basis.

One finds a model across town at the Cambridge Galleria Mall, where a shuttle service links the Kendall Red Line stop with many mall stores. Lotus Development Corporation recently joined New England Development as a sponsor and user.

Required by the Planning Board for the mall's special permit, the free shuttle began in 1990, and runs every 15 minutes from 7 am to 10:30 PM (11-7 Sundays). In 1993, 651,000 people rode the shuttle, which won the 1994 Governor's Energy Award. The service enables major economic benefits without the traffic congestion and air pollution generated by malls elsewhere, sparing the neighborhood the blight of parking lots and motor vehicle intrusion as well.

— Kelly Mendonca

Extra! Getting Around in Cambridge

Designed to help residents and visitors alike "get around easily, safely, and enjoyably," this attractive fold-out pamphlet published by the city's Environmental Program is a comprehensive guide to moving by any means other than car. It includes a large map with complete street index, showing bus routes, subway stops, recreation sites, public buildings, useful phone numbers, and other resources. It explains how public transit works, where to get T passes, and how to take your bike on the T. It also features sections on:

- The benefits of walking
 - Secrets of safe cycling
 - How to foil bike thieves
 - Safety tips for walkers
 - Tips for parents with children
 - Sage advice to drivers
- Copies are available at libraries, City Hall, or City Hall Annex.

MBTA Travel Information:

1-617-722-3200
1-800-392-6100



Like to walk?

Want to make Cambridge a more walkable city for your kids? For your elderly neighbors? For yourself?

The Cambridge branch of WalkBoston is now forming. For more information or to be placed on the mailing list, call 354-6553.

WalkBoston: Pedestrian advocacy for Greater Boston

Railroad Safety Projects in Pipeline

For over two decades, 3,000 North Cambridge residents have lived directly across the tracks — unprotected MBTA railroad tracks — from a major shopping center, elementary school, bus line, and (since 1990) Daneyh Park. For many, there have been no reasonable alternatives to walking across the tracks to get to school, work or to shop — and no reliable protection from 32 commuter trains each weekday. In 20 years there have been at least six pedestrian deaths here, and many failed efforts to address the issue.

After the death of Elizabeth Richer, 45, on March 11, 1993, a 20-member North Cambridge Railroad Safety Task Force went to work with Community Development and consultant Wallace Floyd, developing a package of long-term proposals including overpasses at Rindge Towers and Jefferson Park; an impervious fence; a path along the right-of-way linking Alewife with Porter Square; and an underpass between Walden Square and Yerxa Road (where almost 100, including many children, regularly cross the tracks each morning).

With unanimous support of the City Council and help from Speaker Charlie

Flaherty and Senators Bob Havern and Mike Barrett, the city received \$5 million in state TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) construction funds last fall. There's a rub: Cambridge must raise another \$500,000 for design costs to be ready to build by fall 1996, or lose the cash. The city has just voted \$50,000 to begin preliminary design work this summer and has asked the MBTA for the rest.

The T also promised short-term remedies — safety signage, education programs, and a free shuttle service linking the three housing developments to the shopping center scheduled to begin last fall. So far, there has been no action on any of these fronts. The T now tells city officials that the shuttle service won't really be needed after all, because the #83 Rindge Avenue bus will again be able to cross the new bridge by next fall, providing equivalent service. City officials hope to persuade the T to start using the new bridge sooner.

Many task force members are incensed. Stressing this was a "done deal," they insist it's not a matter of if, but when an MBTA train claims its next victim. (A close call was reported in April, when a man pushed six youngsters out of the way of an oncoming train.)

Only concerted political pressure by the community and city and state officials can force the MBTA to honor its agreement, say task force members, (who were heartened that senior staff of Speaker Flaherty and Senator Warren Tolman, who attended a recent meeting, have agreed to write the T). They encourage citizens to contact the MBTA's interim manager, Robert L. Mabardy, at Room 3910, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 02116. Phone: 722-5176.



Crossing the tracks near Yerxa Ave.

CityWorks Students Tackle Alewife

Each spring, ninth graders from the Rindge School of Technical Arts' CityWorks program work with community agencies and organizations to solve real-life city issues.

This year, they've tackled a smorgasbord of Alewife-related community development projects that could lead to a more bicycle- and teen-friendly Cambridge.

Divided into 16 groups called "CityTeams," 120 students in this innovative Cambridge Rindge & Latin program are getting a crash course on Alewife while they learn on-the-job math, writing, research, drafting, design, graphics, computer, video, and critical thinking skills. Most exciting about this year's projects, says program manager David Stephen, is the good chance that two could really become viable, long-term enterprises.

RIMS Bicycle Shop:

A student-managed bicycle shop named RIMS (Repair-In-Minutes Service) — possibly located at the Alewife T station — would sell, repair and rent bikes and roller blades and serve as headquarters for the bike patrol (below). Students are creating a business plan and feasibility study, and designing and building a storefront facade and shop furniture.

DRAFT Bicycle Patrol:

DRAFT (Directions, Repair, And First Aid Team), a community service, non-profit extension of RIMS, would sponsor a uniformed teen patrol to ride greater Cambridge paths and streets. DRAFT would help cyclists with repairs, give directions, render first aid, and serve as safe cycling advocates. Stephen hopes CityWorks can get funding from foundations and businesses to launch DRAFT next spring, offering students part-time jobs between May and September. To build interest and community support, CityWorks teacher John



Shea will lead students on a 135-mile bike trip to Provincetown this June.

Students are also designing signs, logos, ad campaigns, print materials and video commercials to promote RIMS and DRAFT, including a guide to getting around Cambridge by bicycle — with tour routes, safety tips, teen activities, and friendly businesses.

Students are also building architectural models of things they would like to see at Alewife, including a sports club, teen center, and new Galleria-like shopping mall with indoor theaters. Another group is designing a plan for new athletic and community facilities at Russell Field (a challenge that city itself will begin this June).

These projects are brainchildren of 16 teachers, including North Cambridge's Phil Dussault, with help from resident Thomas Sullivan, a volunteer consultant from Innovation Associates; local businesses; and the city's Community Development Department. Donations of repairable bicycles and in-kind support are welcome. For information about the program, call David Stephen at 349-6751.



Emerging Regional Path Network

Organizing a comprehensive system of routes for "non-motorized users" that connect throughout Greater Boston is a major regional transportation goal, consistent with the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Program. These paths would serve a vast range of users who commute, play, or travel for other reasons, in various configurations and levels of skill: veteran cyclists, families with children, people in wheelchairs and strollers, walkers, skateboarders, etc.

Many municipalities and agencies are involved in establishing this network. Because these paths provide desirable "intermodal" connections, funding has been available. Landscaping and environmental restoration are often included.

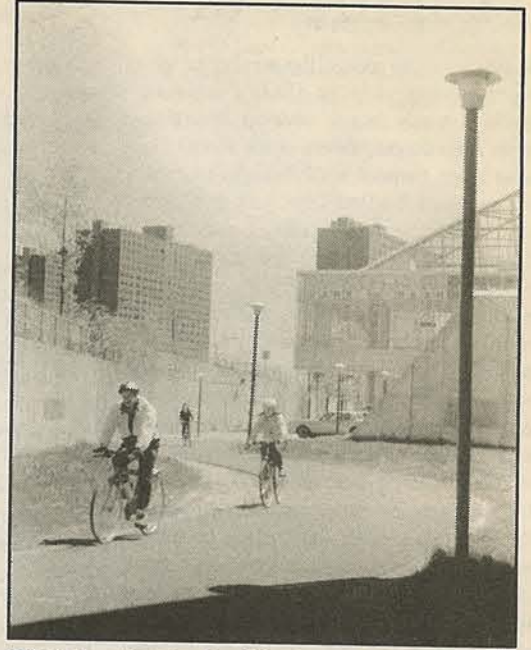
But moneys come at different times for various segments, one factor that makes it challenging for planners to create an integrated, attractive functional system in a complex area like Alewife. Paths from Bedford, Lexington, and Arlington (the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway); Belmont; and Davis Square now meet here. All will be connected to the Alewife Brook Parkway path, now under construction.

Because these paths often cross borders and jurisdictions, deciding who will build, own, and manage them is a challenge. How to accommodate cyclists and skateboarders while protecting pedestrians, especially in congested areas, is a critical issue to be resolved in the public planning process. Many users prefer separate paths for the wheeled and non-wheeled.

Cara Seiderman, the city's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, is developing master plans to improve conditions for these modes of travel and is working on path development in Alewife. Mass. Highway will also begin a \$250,000 design study to improve path connections from Belmont through Alewife to Davis Square and points east.

Other paths in the works, which will all connect to Alewife:

- **Fresh Pond to Charles River (MDC):** This path will extend south along Fresh Pond to the Charles River, connecting with many destinations. For a route, area planners hope to obtain the rail right-of-way that runs from Fresh Pond to Watertown's Arsenal Square, which the owner has petitioned to abandon. If approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission, it becomes available for purchase.
- **Mystic River Valley Path (MDC):** From Alewife to Medford Center via Mystic



Bikers heading to the Minuteman Bikeway

River, this is part of a new MDC master plan, probably years away. Eventually it will connect to Charlestown via Somerville.

- **Alewife to North Station:** Via Linear Park to Davis Square, continuing along an old rail right-of-way to Cedar Street, joining the active rail main line to North Station (use of this active right-of-way not yet approved).

- **Alewife to Daneyh Park and Porter Square:** Railroad safety funding includes money for a path along this right-of-way, possibly as far Yerxa Road, a short hop to Porter Square.

Minuteman Bikeway

Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, an 11-mile path from Bedford through Lexington and Arlington to Alewife, may be the most heavily used bike path in the country. Built on an abandoned rail right-of-way by Mass. Highway in 1993, it is owned by the MBTA and is maintained by its towns. As many as 9,000 people enjoy it on a busy day (65% bikers, 20% roller bladers, 15% walkers/joggers), says Arlington's Planning Director Alan McClennan, Jr. — who gets calls from interested communities all over the country, (and who, according to Elsie Fiore, was the driving force behind the entire Bikeway project). There is one problem: the last 600 feet (from Route 2 to the Alewife Station) shares a narrow sidewalk with pedestrians, and ends unceremoniously at a dangerous intersection beneath the MBTA parking garage (see photo). Arlington and Cambridge consultants are now designing a separate bike path and bridge for this stretch, within the existing MBTA right-of-way. They're also developing plans for a safer crossing and an appropriate entrance marking the start of the path. People have suggested a historical-style marker and a kiosk where users can get information on Alewife and the Bikeway. Planners hope construction will begin this fall.

Funding Sources

For decades, public funding for transportation projects and related improvements flowed generously from Washington via Beacon Hill. The late Speaker Tip O'Neill has been credited for this bounty. With his retirement and the 1990s recession, federal pockets shrank quickly, and all signs from Washington indicate that this will continue. Limited money has been available to fund existing mandates, such as the federal Clean Air Act. Among municipalities, Cambridge enjoys an enviable record in obtaining such funds. Last year the state approved various city projects estimated at \$23.6 million, including \$8 million for Alewife, to be funded over the next three years as part of its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes construction costs only. The city must fund or find other moneys for design and right-of-way purchases. A coordinator will soon be hired to oversee TIP projects.

Traffic: Highlights and Hotspots

1 Frontage Road, Route 2

City planners want to improve this key city gateway area, but present owners are not ready to consider changes. The Alewife master plan proposes eliminating curb cuts (driveway entrances) on Route 2 and creating a frontage road, possibly entering from behind via Acorn Park Drive. There is concern that this would impinge on wetlands.

2 Mugar land, Arlington

State approval for Route 2 access appears highly unlikely, after 40 years of failed efforts by developers.

3 Route 2 & 16 Intersection

This "interim" intersection, with "interim" ramps and traffic signals, has a good chance of becoming permanent. Traffic now backs up as much as 15 minutes here at rush hour, as it has for years.



Traffic approaching Fresh Pond Rotary

4 T-Station Parking

This five-level garage can be expanded two more levels, which the MBTA has promised to do when daily demand passes the capacity of 2,331 cars (increased by 131 after line restriping last June). While weekday use averaged 1,800 between 1989-1994, the T now reports current use at capacity, but claims no plans for expansion. A preferred alternative is to build another structure nearby, preserving the scale of this facility and limiting developable land and traffic in the Triangle.

5 Alewife Center

The former W.R. Grace site is reached from Route 2/16, Whittemore Ave., and Alewife Station exit ramp. A supermarket, retail stores, and hotel (total 300,000 sq. ft.) are now proposed for the site, which would include access from the parkway across from Cambridge Park Drive. While this use is much smaller than the office park approved in 1987, traffic impact remains a major concern.

6 Pathway Connections

Major pathways from Belmont, Lexington and Arlington (Minuteman), Linear Park, and Alewife Brook Parkway intersect at the Alewife T Station. While paths provide good access, circulation through and around the MBTA station is confusing and daunting to both cyclists and pedestrians, who must now contend with turning cars and buses. Plans to improve path approaches and to enhance connections with signage, landscaping, and environmental restoration are in the works. The city has \$1.75 million in state TIP funds for path work in the Alewife and Fresh Pond areas. Design work is underway to upgrade 600 feet from the end of the Minuteman path to the T station. Mass. Highway will complete the path along Alewife Brook Parkway from Rindge Avenue to Concord Avenue this fall.

7 Rindge Avenue Intersection

In 1984, the Rindge Avenue/parkway intersection was split into two T-intersections, preventing inbound parkway traffic from turning left on Rindge and using North Cambridge as a shortcut. Outbound traffic still backs up here at evening rush hour. The pedestrian crossing to the T station remains a problem as the light is too short. Pedestrians deserve equal access. One solution: whenever traffic stops, give the light to pedestrians.

8 Alewife Brook Parkway & Bridge

The reconstruction of the four-lane parkway and 1929 steel truss bridge, due to be completed by late 1995, includes a median strip, bike and foot paths, plantings, and parkway lighting fixtures originally designed for Memorial Drive in 1907. The new parkway will be more attractive and less intrusive than the superhighway the state DPW wanted to build here, but local residents remain wary because the new bridge will be wide enough to add extra lanes later. Nonetheless, this improved passage should transform the ambiance of the area, and opening the bridge to heavy vehicles after a 22-year ban will be a blessing for nearby neighborhoods. The new median strip will prevent left turns into the Fresh Pond Shopping Center, but a loop ramp under the new bridge will permit inbound drivers access to the center without having to drive around the rotary. The existing pedestrian-activated light that connects the shopping centers will remain.

9 Railroad Safety Improvements

A determined city task force has finally secured \$5 million in funding for major safety measures on the tracks between Alewife Brook Parkway and Yerxa Road that will give residents three safe passages over or under the tracks; an impervious fence beside the tracks; and a path along the right-of-way, connecting Alewife with points east (see related story).

10 Freight Yard Tracks

Some intrepid employees routinely risk crossing the tracks here as short-cut from the Quadrangle to Alewife Station, underscoring the need for secure fencing and viable crossing options for thousands of employees.

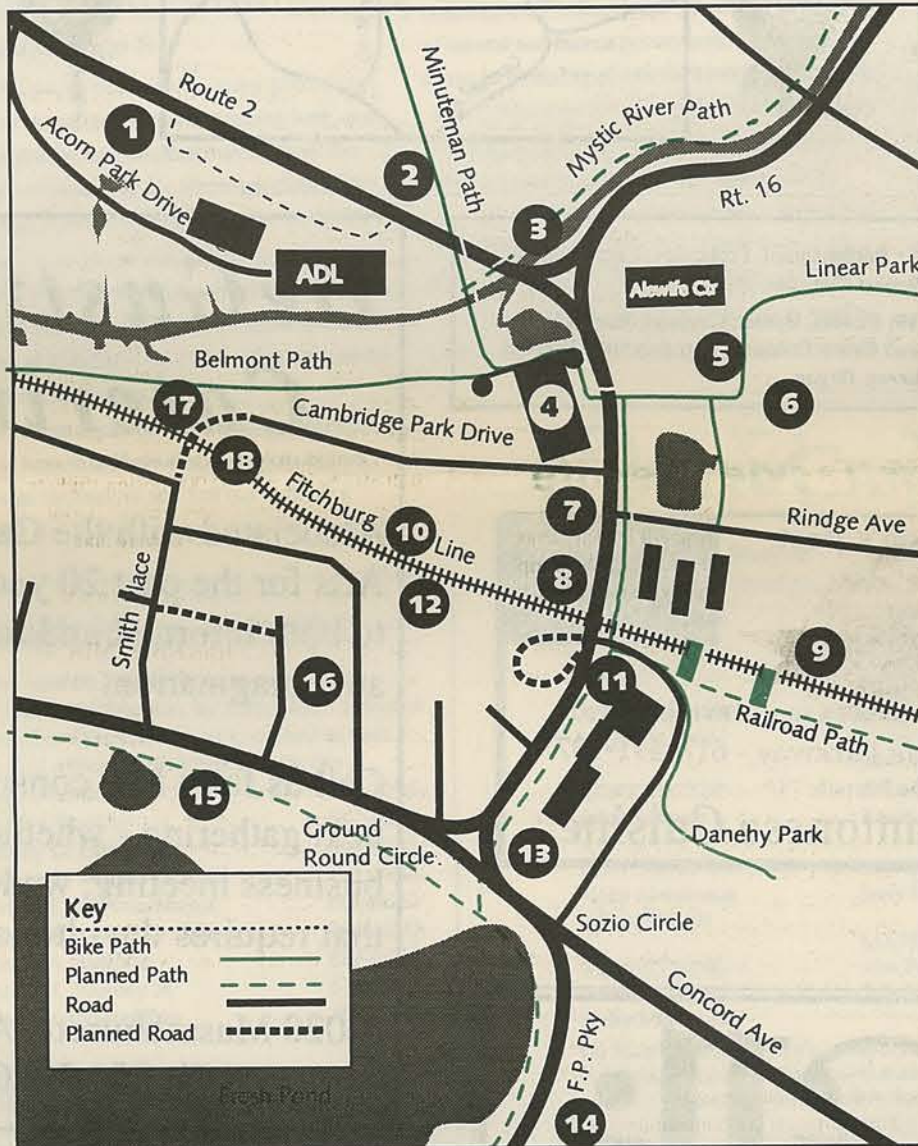
11 Fresh Pond Shopping Center

This expanse of macadam has become much more than a parking lot for 31 businesses and the Sony Theaters. Local drivers use it as a bypass to avoid the morass between the traffic circles, because it offers a quicker escape to points east. It now serves as a construction staging area, a bike path, and a shortcut for many pedestrians (including children) who cross the railroad from housing developments to movies and stores (snow plows clear paths to holes cut in the fence). The lot is also proposed as a turn-around for the #83 Rindge Ave. bus. The parking area has no traffic islands, marked routes, or warning signs. Extreme caution is advised. The shipping center management has shown little interest in working with the city on these issues. Beginning next fall, the loop ramp



13 Concord Avenue Rotaries

Officially parts of the MDC's parkway system, the so-called "Ground Round" and "Sozio" rotaries have been changed little since the 1930s. How to improve this nexus may be biggest single challenge for planners at Alewife. Without lights or required stops, traffic usually keeps inching through here even in the crunch, and U-turns are possible. Pro and con, rotaries tend to stir strong feelings among planners and users alike. These busy circles intimidate many drivers and are impossible for pedestrians and cyclists. The city will soon start a formal planning process with the MDC and public to determine what changes will make this corridor easier to use for all parties,



from Alewife Brook Parkway inbound lanes will feed into this lot. Safety issues have been ignored here and need to be addressed.

12 New Street Connector

Some propose a new road from Smith Place along the rail right-of-way under the new parkway bridge through the Fresh Pond Shopping Center to New Street and Bay State Road. They argue that this would bypass main arteries, relieving stress on rotaries and improving local access to the Quadrangle. Others fear that this would jam side streets. Because easements from the MBTA and MDC are required, many expect trouble getting this connector through, although some predict political pressure from developers will prevail. As the underpass is so narrow, this use would severely hamper operation of the loop ramp.



without increasing vehicle capacity. Options include enlarging the rotaries; signaling T intersections; partial or full signaling of rotaries; or combinations of the above. Location of a safe foot and bike crossing is a key question.

14 Fresh Pond Parkway

Restoring parkway character between Alewife Brook Parkway and Huron Avenue and reclaiming MDC land co-opted by adjacent businesses will also be part of the city-MDC planning process. Work will include a landscaped sidewalk on the east and bike path on west (pond) side. Planners hope to obtain the existing railroad right-of-way for this path. A pedestrian-activated light halfway between Huron and Concord Avenues is a high priority for neighborhood residents who routinely risk life and limb crossing to Fresh Pond. The state will also replace the Kingsley Park auto access bridge, coordinating that with construction of the city's new water treatment facility.

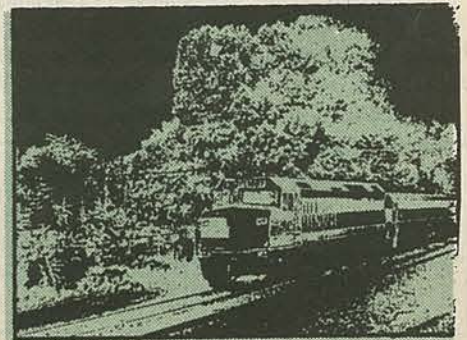
15 Concord Avenue / Smith Place

The city will get \$1.5 million to improve Concord Avenue and its dangerous intersection with Smith Place, a 17th century cowpath turned industrial alley that disgorges the Quadrangle's heavy truck traffic onto this busy route at an awkward angle across from a bus stop. Plans include straightening and widening Smith Place at the

intersection, and adding a traffic light and crosswalk that gives Quadrangle employees a safe crossing to Fresh Pond. The avenue will be repaved and upgraded with bike lanes, or a better bike path will be added on the Fresh Pond side.

16 Quadrangle

Finding one's way through this maze of narrow streets, parking lots, and warehouses takes grit and savvy. A priority of the proposed master plan is to improve the street layout, upgrade roads, and add sidewalks in this old industrial area, now becoming an office park and emerging technology center. However, planners see few public funds or private projects that will pay for improvements in the short term. One exception: Wilson Road, connecting Smith Place and Moulton Street, will be paved and curbed this year.



17 Smith Place Connector

The 1979 master plan (Fishbook) proposed a grand boulevard and bridge uniting the Triangle and Quadrangle, connecting Smith Place and Cambridge Park Drive. Many businesses want a direct route across the tracks to the T station and Route 2. While this crossing could increase public transit use, it would also enable motorists to bypass congested Alewife Brook Parkway and cut through adjacent neighborhoods. For this reason the proposal has some fierce local opposition, especially in Cambridge Highlands and Belmont. City planners propose a compromise: a smaller connector road with restricted access, available only to approved buses, vans, and carpools. Opponents argue that once any crossing is established, political pressure will force it to open to all. New federal policies may make approval of an at-grade RR crossing difficult, unless there is an associated rail stop.



Traffic approaching Alewife station

18 Commuter Rail Stop

Adding an Alewife commuter stop on the Fitchburg line has been proposed for years. Favored by developers, the stop would allow an at-grade crossing and encourage unwanted cut-through traffic. Yet it would also slow down trains between Alewife and Porter Square, a neighborhood goal. Adding this stop is a low priority for the MBTA, which does not foresee a gain in ridership to offset lost running time between Fitchburg and North Station. About 1,000 Alewife employees live on this line, but almost half live in Belmont and aren't likely to use the train. The city proposes to study the demand and feasibility for the stop.

Restaurants in Alewife

1. Fusilli Cafe Italia

The newest restaurant in the Alewife/Fresh Pond area, Fusilli is fast becoming a favorite dining spot for residents and business professionals alike. Serves gourmet Italian cuisine. Beer and wine selection, new outdoor terrace, and take-out. Lunch Mon-Sat, 11:30-4, dinner (Mon-Sat, 5-10 pm), Sun 4-9 and take-out. 773 Concord Ave. 547-0200, fax 497-0134.

2. D'Angelo Sandwich Shop

Fresh "Super Salads" and new D'Angelo D'Lite's, pockets or subs stuffed with six low-calorie options (i.e., Chicken Stir Fry and Crunchy Vegetable) plus the regular menu with 25 choices. Party platters for any occasion. Hours: Mon 11-10, Tues-Sat 11-11, Sun 11-9. 211 Alewife Brook Parkway. 547-9444.

3. Aku-Aku

Aku Aku offers a huge selection of Szechuan & Cantonese cuisine and full bar serving the city's most exotic drinks. Now serving a lunch buffet with over 40 items, perfect for hard-to-please business clients. Take-out available every night until 1 a.m. For free delivery (\$10 min.order) call 278-2100. Hours 11:30 am-2 am, Sun/Holidays, 12:00 am-2 am. 149 Alewife Parkway. 491-5377.

4. Joyce Chen Restaurant

Continuing the tradition of authentic Northern Szechuan cuisine, son Steven Chen and grandson Mark offer a wide array of gourmet choices. All-you-can-eat Luncheon Buffet (Mon-Fri 12-2, \$6.95) Tossed Noodle Dinner Buffet (Sun-Wed, \$7.95 adults, \$3.95 children 12 & under). Dinner until 9:30 Sun-Thu, 10:30 Fri, 11:00 Sat. Take-out and limited delivery. 390 Rindge Ave. 492-7373, fax 576-6539.

5. Jose's Mexican Restaurant

Offering South-of-the-Border ambiance, Jose's is a Globe "Cheap Eats" winner offering memorable portions. Flautas, quesadillas, burritos, and vegetarian specials, including rice and refried beans cooked without meat or MSG. Celebrated margaritas, imported beers. Corporate fajita parties. Lunch Mon-Fri 11-3, Sat 12-3. Dinner Mon-Thu 4-10, Fri-Sat 4-11, Sun 4-9. 131 Sherman St. 354-0335.

6. De Custobis Catering

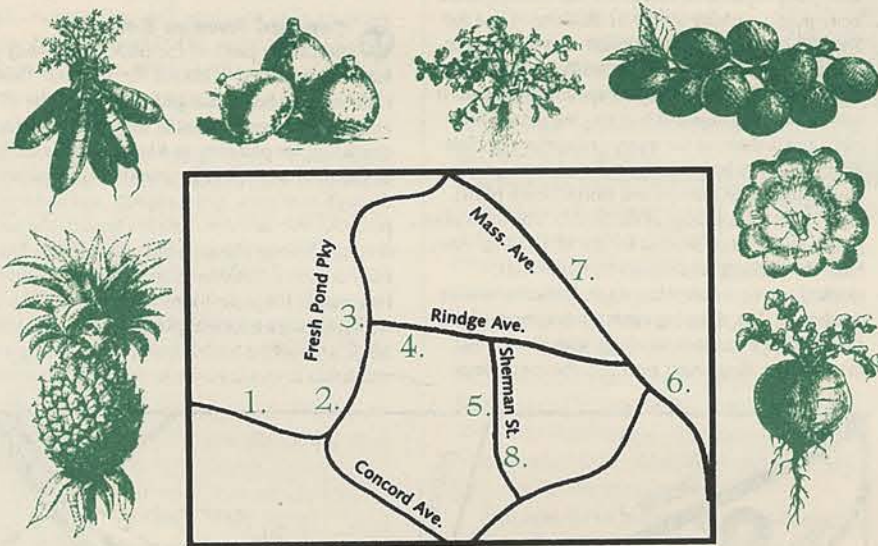
De Custobis takes pride in its catering for any occasion or budget, from the simple to the gourmet. Based at the fully accredited Cambridge School of Culinary Arts, where classes are offered in baking, grilling, desserts, etc. Specialized cooking classes offered to groups of 12 or more. Open weekdays 7 am-10 pm. 2020 Mass Ave. 354-2020.

7. Frank's Steak House

Since 1938, Boston's oldest steak house features prime ribs, seafood selections, and the famous sizzling steak platter (\$12.95). Now open for lunch with fresh daily selections. Live piano bar and entertainment Wed-Sat. Take out. Hours 11:30 am-10 pm Mon-Fri, Dinner 4-10 every day, Sunday brunch 10:30-2. 2310 Mass. Ave. 661-0666.

8. The Brickyard Cafe

A neighborhood treasure with award-winning vegetarian and non-vegetarian yummys in that trompe-l'oeil location on Sherman Street. Offering soups, salads, protein pleasures, and fabulous desserts in a child-friendly atmosphere with affordable prices. Linger encouraged. Take-out. Hours Mon-Wed 9-5, Thu-Sat 9-9. 90 Sherman St. 868-6543, 1-800-986-6543.



FREE LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

St. John the Evangelist Church
Wednesdays, 12:15-12:45 p.m.
2254 Mass. Ave. 547-4880

July 5: Rachmaninof, Prokoviev, Liszt, Brahms
Rev. Robert Congdon, Piano

July 19: Strauss, Barber, Copland, Burleigh
Deborah Grace Coleman, Soprano, with Edmund G. Murray, Organ



Over 40 Items! Boston's Best Buffet Value
(Cambridge Location Only)
Lunch Daily: \$5.99 Dinner: Mon-Thurs \$8.99
Dinner: Fri & Sat \$9.99
Sunday's & Holiday's \$9.99 (All Day)

16 Oriental Items Changed Daily

ORIENTAL FOOD • SALAD & DESSERT BAR • CARVING STATION
Cambridge - 149 Alewife Parkway - 617-491-5377
Next to the Alewife "T"

Szechuan & Cantonese Cuisine

DeGustibus Catering



Associated with the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts for the past 20 years Degustibus has catered to both informal and formal events with taste, flair, and imagination.

Call us for a free consultation when planning your next gathering - whether it be a birthday party, a business meeting, wedding, or for any occasion that requires the ultimate in food and service.

2020 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 354-2020 Fax (617) 576-1963

Fusilli

Café Italia

Traditional and Contemporary Italian Cuisine

ZUPPE • INSALATE • ANTIPASTI
PANINI • PASTAS • BRICK OVEN PIZZAS

773 Concord Avenue • Cambridge, Mass. • 547-0200

Est.
1938

Greater Boston's Oldest Steak House. Right here in North Cambridge.

\$6.95 SPECIALS

(SUNDAY-THURSDAY)

- Roast of the Week
- Shrimp Scampi
- London Broil
- Chicken Supreme

(Served with potato and vegetable)

*Boston's oldest
Steak House
serving the best
prime rib and steaks
7 days a week.*

FRANK'S STEAK HOUSE

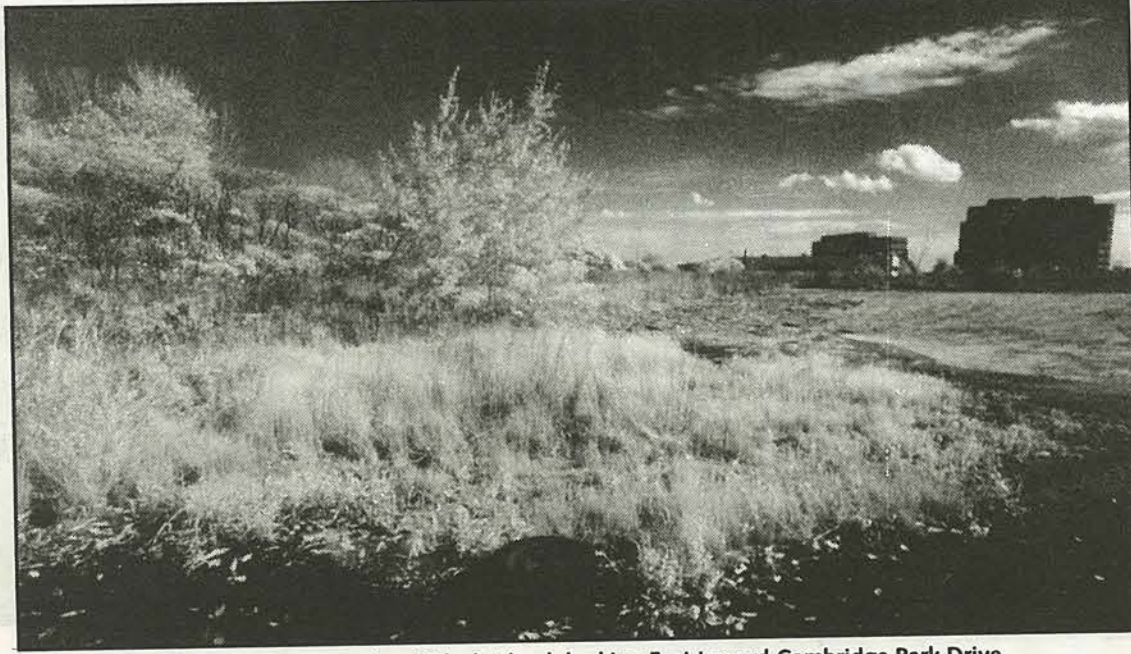
2312 MASS. AVENUE • 661-0666 • PARKING IN REAR

Black Island Saga

(Continued from page 1)

south by circuitous cow paths known today as Rindge Avenue and Smith Place... **1673:** Justinian Holden, carpenter and yeoman, begins to ditch and drain the wet meadow land he has acquired near Black Island as pasture for his hungry cows... **1703:** On May 17, Newtowne Selectmen vote to sell Black Island "for defraying charges arising upon said proprietors." A year later, Benjamin Goddard buys the land for £8... **1824:** Entrepreneur Frederic Tudor, the "Ice King," builds deep earthen vaults on Black Island to store ice cut from Fresh Pond. As demand requires, it is hauled by cart out Smith Place and Concord Avenue to the wharves of Charlestown, and shipped to hotels and plantations in the South... **1900:** Boston & Maine Railroad buys Black Island and levels it to build the West Cambridge freight yards beside the Fitchburg Main line... **1937:** Eastern States Farmers' Exchange acquires the land and operates a fertilizer distribution plant until 1965. It sells the 6-acre site to Arthur D. Little, Inc. in 1969... **1984:** Commercial developer Spaulding & Slye acquires this choice parcel at the tip of the Alewife Triangle for \$1.8 million... **1995:** Plans remain uncertain for this vacant lot, where lichen and shrubs return and woodcock mating rituals can be observed in spring. City planners propose the site as the route for a new street across the railroad that would connect the Quadrangle and Triangle for business use—also reconnecting two old cow paths known today as Smith Place and CambridgePark Drive. Fearing more traffic, some residents strongly oppose this plan. Many see the land as an ideal site for an Alewife museum, where future generations could learn about the area's rich natural and industrial history

— Jerry Howard and Kelly Mendonca



Nature reclaims its own: Former site of Black Island, looking East toward Cambridge Park Drive

Perhaps there are no inherently special places, only places made special by the relationships people sustain with them. In this sense, all places on earth are equal and identical, waiting only to be known.

— George K. Russell, *The Island Within*

Alchemy at Alewife

(Continued from page 1)

As this special issue details, many good things planned years ago are finally happening here, and many bad things have not happened. It is all too easy to get caught up in the molar-grinding of traffic jams and political friction, and miss the greater truth that—however slowly and imperfectly—we are transforming urban blight, changing transportation habits, improving neighborhoods, and redeeming nature at Alewife—and that active citizens are impelling these changes.

As we forge ahead on the numerous projects described here, it is likely that more possibilities will present themselves and that our collective vision will clarify. Who's to say that Alewife might

not become a tourist destination? Why not a civic concert center with outdoor grounds, or a museum of natural and human history and technology, or a nexus of gathering places for strollers and cyclists?

It is important not to miss the spectacle of evolution in progress here. Alewife, once one vast swamp, became many different places. Today becoming whole again, a unique place with a character that is richer, both for its suffering and for a growing constituency that cares about it deeply.

This is new. It is reflected in the more modest scale of the city's 1995 plan, and can be observed

a working cell in the complex organism called Alewife, striving to become aware of itself and to shape its own destiny.

We indulge in this speculation only to offer a longer view of the planning now underway—and to invite you to read this issue, not hastily over your breakfast cereal, but leisurely, on a breezy porch or distant beach. Digest it leisurely as summer reading. Then come back and weigh in as a player.

— Jerry Howard, editor

Weigh in on Alewife!

If you have an opinion or suggestion on the city's new Alewife plan, let your public officials know. City Councilors can be reached at their City Hall offices (349-4280) or at home:

Kathleen L. Born	491-2676
Francis I. Duehay	547-0271
Anthony D. Gallucio	868-4393
Jonathan S. Myers	491-8745
Kenneth E. Reeves, Mayor	661-6047
Shelia T. Russell, Vice-Mayor	354-1900
Michael A. Sullivan	864-0554
Timothy J. Toomey Jr.	576-6483
Katherine Triantafillou	497-2155

Or call:

Stuart Dash, Director of Community Planning	349-4638
---	----------

NORTH CAMBRIDGE NEWS

Gately Shelter • 70 Rindge Avenue • P.O. Box 342
Cambridge, Mass. • 02140 • (617) 661-6121

EDITOR
Jerry Howard

ART DIRECTOR
Megan Hanna

COPY EDITOR
John Harmon

EDITORIAL INTERNS
Kelly Mendonca
Alissa Dubois

ADVERTISING
Jim Kanweiler
Kelly Mendonca

CONTRIBUTORS
Russell Cohen
Astrid Dodds
Sylvia Gilman
Emily Hiestand
Steve Kaiser
Kelly Mendonca
Kevin Rothstein

PHOTOGRAPHY
Jerry Howard

MAPS & ILLUSTRATION
Arn Franzen
Sylvia Gilman

MAILING
Germaine Valentin

EDITORIAL BOARD
Michael Brandon
Dottie Giacobbe
Joe Joseph
Carolyn Mieth

PUBLISHER
North Cambridge
Stabilization Committee

PRINTER
Turley Publications
Palmer, Mass.

The North Cambridge News is a community newspaper funded by the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee with crucial support from local advertisers. It is written, edited and produced by one part-time editor and a cadre of volunteers. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of the NCSC.

© Jerry Howard / North Cambridge News 1995

Bonny's Garden Center

~Since 1947~

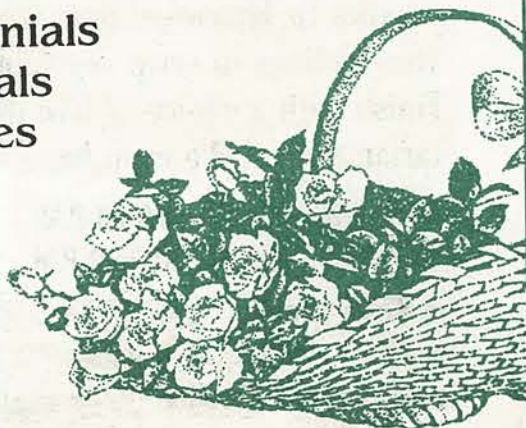
Complete Garden Center • Landscape Estimates

- Classic Perennials
- Jumbo Annuals
- Gorgeous Roses

- Trees
- Shrubs
- Evergreens

Open 7 days

41 Bay State Road, Cambridge • 547-1585



NATURE-ORIENTED GIFTS AND TOYS

An amazing assortment of craft kits and unique gifts

ANIMAL
VEGETABLE • MINERAL

BALLOONS • PARTY IDEAS • TEACHER GIFTS

Visit Our
DROP-IN CRAFTING CENTER
MAKE IT HERE OR TAKE IT HOME!

Call or check listings for classes and special events

FREE PARKING BEHIND STORE

2400 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140 (617) 547-2404

The Great Swamp

by Emily Hiestand

A curious kind of travel occurs if you stand at the site of your present dwelling and sink a plumb line into time. By this means I recently encountered a towering blue-white glacier, the tribes of Massachuseog, gentlemen ornithologists, and a former slave — a venerable lady whose beloved red rose still bursts into bloom each June on the street where I live.

Not least among my discoveries on these excursions: that our dense, urban neighborhood of worker's cottages, markets, and pizza parlors exists on the very rim of what was—not so very long ago—a vast and ancient swamp, a maze of meadows, ponds, kames, and kettle-holes that were home to heron rookeries and robins' roosts.

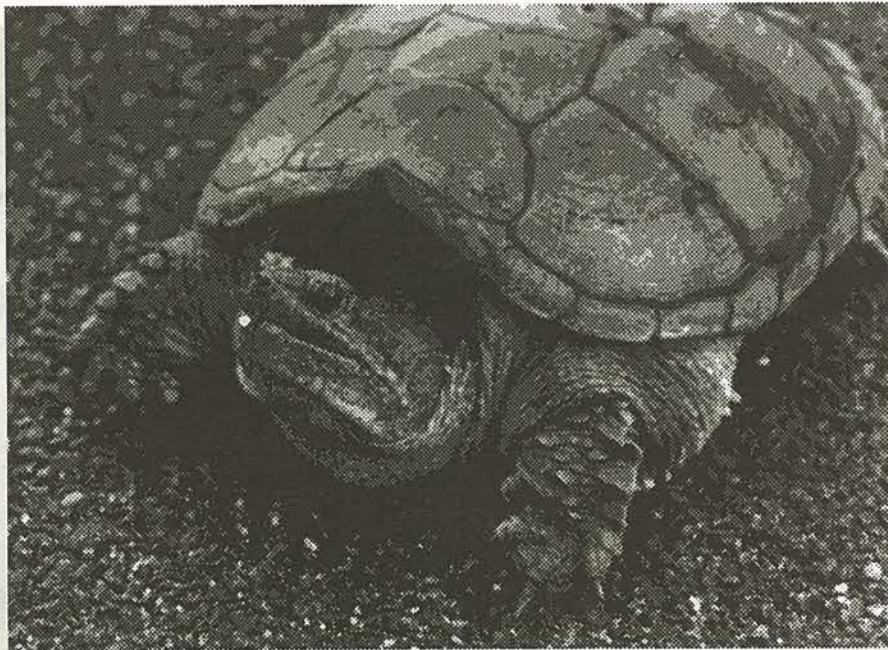
Scant blocks to the west of our house can be found the last remnants of the marshes and streams that, for 20,000 years—from their creation during the last glaciation until the industrial century—sprawled between the two largest bodies of water in the swamp. This enormous wetland was long the most spectacular, vital feature of our corner of our world. The two great ponds that defined its north and southmost points have endured, and are named Fresh and Spy.

For the better part of 20 years I have run and meandered at Fresh Pond, knowing nothing of the larger whole in which it

was once embedded, although if you had asked me I suppose I would have said that something must have existed where now is the parking lot for our local megaplex cinema and for the stationer where I buy pens, envelopes, and writing paper. Soon after learning about the former swamp, I had occasion to drive to the mall, and there, in the parking lot, noticed, with a touch of embarrassment, that my mind was half trying to believe that, if we were to jackhammer up the asphalt, underneath we would find, oh, not full grown maples or even flattened blueberry bushes, but some incipient elements of a boggy fen, or fenny bog, a slough or quagmire, marshy sponge or squashy mud—the whole exchanging liquid world lost to the single, dry, abrupt syllable: mall.

To discover remarkable new information about the most familiar, ordinary locale of one's days, (sitting there all this time! right under one's nose!) is a happy alert: how much else is one missing? Lured by the ghost of a swamp near my front door, I began to slosh around the tattered remains—tracing and following former river beds, figuring out where groves had stood, where animals gathered—trying to comprehend a former reality. The walks were over railroad tracks, through maintenance yards, by rusting subway cars, along slippery gullies flanked by tall, gray wands, the first pussy willows I had touched since I was a child.

One late afternoon recently, as I was



driving home by a road that runs alongside a mucky reedish remains of the former swamp, something huge began to lumber across the road 20 yards ahead of my car: it was a low, round, dark creature walking sweetly, serenely, ever so slowly towards a roadside barbershop. The turtle was so immense, with a shell easily four feet around, that it seemed it must be transplanted from the Galapagos. Worried at what an ordinary human day could hold for an old amphibian, even more I was astounded to discover that our present-day city contains such a being. It walked deliberately, unaware of the dangers on every side, huge and unassimilated, darkly radiant, a tragic-comic amalgam: Mr. Magoo and Oedipus at Colonus. All the cars came to a halt, and all the drivers sat and stared as the creature stumbled across our macadam.

Part of what we mean by memory too may be an old animal that lumbers, with a kind of helpless power, out of a mostly

unseen quarter. And to remember a place—to call it vividly to mind, to come to know its aspects, its fluxing geographical and temporal faces, to take note of its airs and waters, to glean how we and other creatures engage with its nature, to see something of its whole—all this is the imaginative analogue to the new field of restoration ecology, whose practitioners reason: if we can undo marshes and prairies perhaps we can also put them together again—a proposal which does, it must be admitted, bring to mind a certain cautionary nursery rhyme.

©1995 Emily Hiestand. Adapted from *Travels At Home* (forthcoming, Beacon Press). Dudley Street resident Hiestand is the author of *Green the Witch-Hazel Wood* (Graywolf, 1989) and *The Very Rich Hours* (Beacon, 1992). *Travels At Home* is a story-in-progress about memory and landscape. The author wishes to talk with area residents who have memories of the Fresh Pond and Alewife area, Jerry's Pit, the old Reed Street Trotting Course, and the neighborhood in general. Call her at 497-1225.

FAIRCHILD & SANCHEZ ELECTRIC

wiring homes in Cambridge since 1980

• 358 Washington Street, Cambridge MA •
Tel. 876-2422 • FAX 497-6831
Master's License A 14488

(617) 492-0417
(617) 492-4825

Cambridge Glass and Mirror

Commercial and Residential
A complete glass service
You Smash Em We Sash Em

Ed MacAskill
152 Rindge Ave
Cambridge, MA 02140

Harry Diamandis

THOMAS F. GIBSON

ATTORNEY AT LAW
2400 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02140

(617) 576-2400
FAX: (617) 576-2876



See and Buy...

A Guide to the MDC Alewife Reservation

by Stew Sanders
illustrated by Sylvia Gilman

Get to know flowers, birds, fish, and viewing places with help from maps and more.

Guide books may be purchased at Animal Vegetable Mineral, 2400 Mass. Ave. at Cameron Ave.; at the Bookcellar Cafe, Porter Square; and at the Alewife Station newsstand. Or send \$6 payable to MRWA to A. Jurow, secretary, 34 Hamilton Rd. #510, Arlington, MA 02174.



All You Can Eat

Asian Noodle Buffet

INTRODUCE THE WHOLE FAMILY TO THE WORLD OF ASIAN NOODLES.

Create your own low fat noodle dish from our buffet table with your choice of four different noodles ranging from Chinese wheat and rice noodles to Japanese Udon. Garnish your noodles with 18 selections of crisp vegetables and savory herbs. Finish with a choice of five different meat and vegetarian sauces. We even have one that kids will love!

Served Sunday: Noon-9:00 P.M.
Mon-Wed Nights: 5:30-9:00 P.M.

- \$7.95 adults
- \$3.95 children 12 & under
- Children 6 & under are FREE.

JOYCE CHEN
RESTAURANT.

390 Rindge Avenue • Cambridge, MA 01240
Tel: (617) 492-7373 • Fax: (617) 547-9877