12 January 2009

Pre-filed testimony of Sanjoy Mahajan

Docket No: 2008-128
In the matter of: BRA
File No: W07-2171-N (Boston)

Our family has lived and owned a home in the North End since July 2005, living first at 8 Moon Street, Unit 1, and now at 5 Jackson Avenue, Unit 2. My daughter Else, now 18 months old, and I would go frequently to end of Long Wharf when she attended the Mulberry childcare on Atlantic Avenue: When I picked her up, we would walk around this beautiful location as a way to end the day. The childcare center itself took the children for the morning walk that frequently included going to the end of Long Wharf. What makes the walk especially enchanting is the quiet, panoramic views unspoilt by privatized spaces. I go there now for the that reason, and I hope my daughter will be able to enjoy it as I have been able to.

The three diagrams in this testimony show the harmful effect that the proposed project would have on the panoramic views, and therefore on the public experience of the scenic and esthetic environment. The diagrams were generated by a few short programs that I wrote. I have programmed computers for over 30 years, in at least 10 computer languages, and I will gladly provide electronic copies of the programs and instructions on how to run them.

I used the map on page 11 of the Written Determination (17 September 2008) to digitize the coordinates of the current and possible structures on the end of Long Wharf. Then, for each configuration – no build, structure without outdoor seating, and structure with outdoor seating – the programs computed the unobstructed portion of the 360° field. For example, in a spot with no visible obstructions, the unobstructed portion would be a full 360°; and right next to a long wall, but with no visible other obstructions, the unobstructed portion would be 180°.

For the three diagrams, the possible obstructing structures are: the end of the custom house block, for all diagrams; the vent shafts and the glass-block wall, for the first diagram (no-build alternative); the enclosed shade structure, for the second and third diagrams; and the seasonal, outdoor restaurant-and-bar seating area, for the third diagram. In making the third diagram, I assumed that the seating area would be shielded with sun umbrellas obstructing sight lines.

The diagrams follow on the next three pages. At each location on a diagram, the color shows the quality of the view from that location on Long Wharf:

1. green, for an excellent panoramic view – a view field of at least 270°;
2. orange, indicating a moderately restricted view – a view field between 180° and 270°; and
3. red, indicating a severely restricted view – a view field between 90° and 180°.

No-build alternative: Panoramic views are extensive

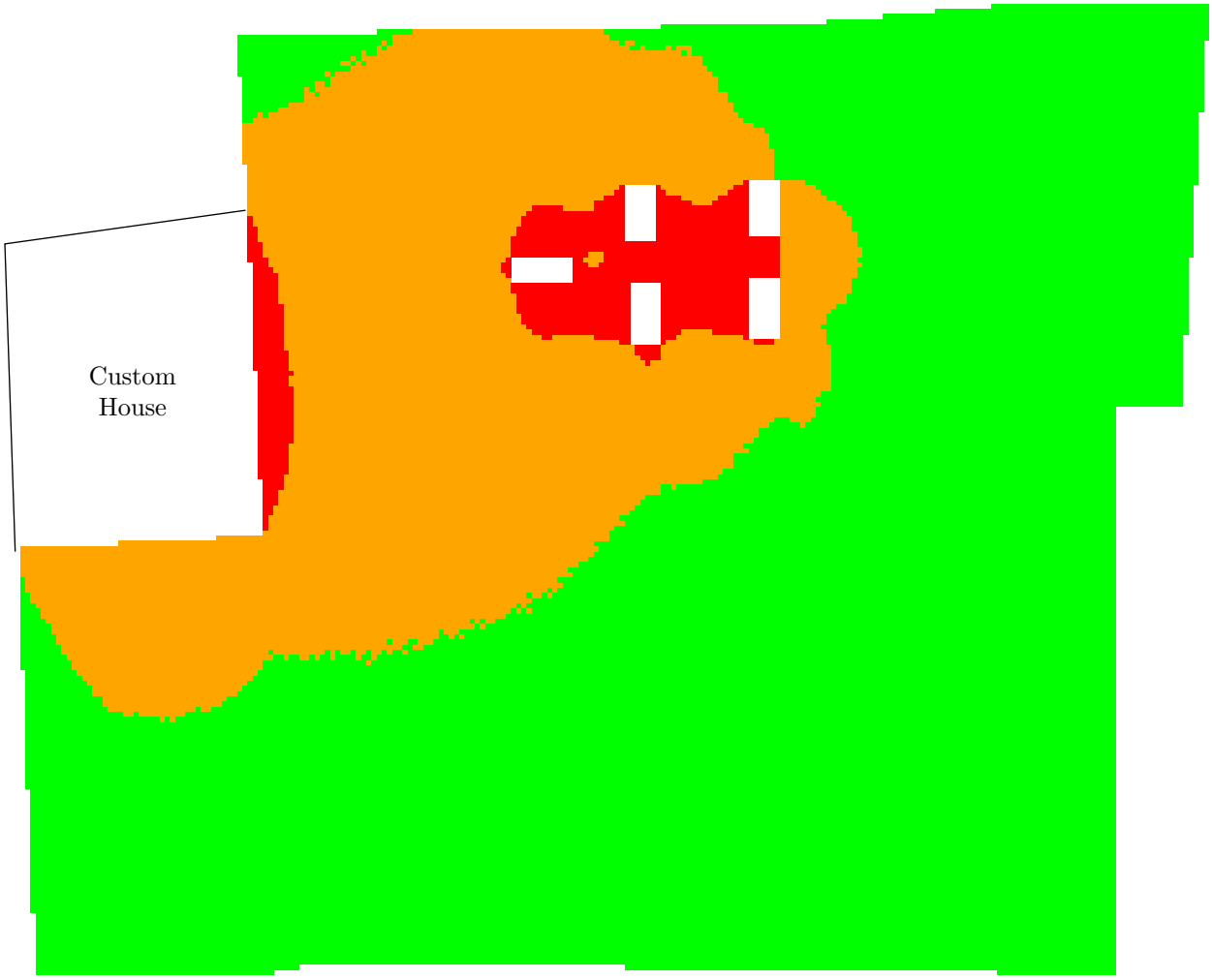

Figure 1 Views with the no-build alternative: There are small areas of red (obstructed views), mostly due to the vent shafts inside the shade structure (to which the public would anyway lose its unencumbered access, if the project goes forward). And the public enjoys outstanding panoramic views (green zone) from almost the entire end of Long Wharf *including the pavilion*.

Off season: Panoramic views are compromised

Figure 2 Views off-season (without outdoor restaurant/bar seating): The red zone has grown, and the orange zone of moderately restricted views has eaten a large part of the outstanding-view, green zone.

In season: Panoramic views are severely compromised

Figure 3 Views in-season (with outdoor restaurant/bar seating): The red zone has grown more, and the orange zone has eaten most of the green zone – the public is forced to hug the wharf's edge in search of the panoramic views enjoyed now and diagrammed in Figure 1.

As the diagrams show, from areas of 'concentrated public activity' [310 CMR 9.51(2)(b)], the current wonderful sight lines and panoramic views would be severely compromised by the proposed restaurant and bar at the end of Long Wharf.

Signed under penalty of perjury,

Sanjoy Mahajan