

TO: THE BOARD OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BOSTON AND  
DR. MOHAMED A. ATTAWIA, DIRECTOR

FROM: MUHAMMAD ALI-SALAAM

RE: INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW ISLAMIC CENTER

DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 1999

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

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RE: INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE  
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**SUMMARY:** This memorandum seeks to accomplish the following: request approval of the development concept and budget; describe the nature and amount of expenses; recommend a strategy to maintain the facility once it is completed; and finally to keep the Directors of ISB informed regarding the pre-development planning, design and subsequent construction phase of the Project.

**BACKGROUND:** On October 29, 1998 the Islamic Society of Boston (ISB) won approval from the City of Boston (the City), acting by and through the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the Authority), and was designated developer for the construction of the Islamic Center of Boston. The land on which this Project will be constructed is currently owned by the Authority and will be transferred to the ISB through a negotiated sales agreement after the ISB has secured the appropriate regulatory approvals and provided evidence of firm financial commitments. This approval is also time sensitive, in that the ISB must satisfy and/or show good faith efforts at obtaining final working drawings and financial commitments by March 29, 1999. Failure to comply with this schedule could result in forfeiture of the designation.

While it is certain that ISB will not be able to produce all of the documents technically required by March 29<sup>th</sup>, it is clear that evidence of good faith and specific progress towards satisfying the requirements can be clearly demonstrated. Consequently, as long as the City feels we working cooperatively and making measured progress, then they will continue to work with us.

The Authority's vote on 10/29/98 was based upon three notable representations:

- the MCB's endorsement of ISB's role as the lead Ummah to build this Project;
- the encouragement of the United Bank of Kuwait; and finally
- the continued support of the local non-Muslim community for this Project.

While this memorandum is intended to be succinct, it is necessary that I digress momentarily in order to discuss options relative to post construction Project maintenance. Consequently, this memorandum shall also request consideration and approval of a specific recommendation on this Issue. This matter will be discussed subsequently in Part II of this document.

## PART I

### The New Islamic Center of Boston

**The Site:** The site is located in the Roxbury neighborhood of the City of Boston on approximately 84,000 square feet of vacant land. The City had previously zoned the site in a manner that facilitates the development of a house of worship and it is strategically located along a major rapid transit corridor. The site is located within 20 minutes of Logan International Airport, the central financial business district, internationally renowned colleges, universities and teaching hospitals, major municipal institutions and a receptive non-Muslim community.

The sale of the land to ISB will be based on mutually beneficial terms and conditions with the City. The determination of a negotiated selling price will be established upon conclusion of comparative analysis between the appraised value of the land in relation to the value of community benefits from the ISB.

In the interests of reaching a fair balance between the value of the land and the social/financial investment that is appropriate, ISB and the City have reached a tentative agreement on the following community benefits:

- an as of yet to be determined number of non-Muslim children will be given scholarships upon acceptance to the Islamic School;
- in conjunction with the City, maintenance of the abutting Senior's Garden Park and Clarence "Jeep" Jones Park will be provided in perpetuity;
- in partnership with the Roxbury Community College, the ISB will embark upon a fundraising campaign to endow an academic Chair in Islamic Studies.

Another consideration in determining the negotiated sales price for the land is the need to perform a preliminary geotechnical analysis of the subsoil conditions and to take appropriate steps to remediate any reportable environmental problems. Until ISB takes possession of the land, responsibility for remediation is the owners' burden. Consequently the City has also agreed to reduce the price of the land by an amount commensurate with the expenses paid for the land survey and the geotechnical/environmental analyses of the site.

**Preliminary Design Concept:** The Project has been conceived in four elements:

1. The Musallah. The area must be designed with separate entrances for the brothers and sisters and the main prayer hall should be sufficient to accommodate 900 brothers and 300 sisters and children in a screened area located above the main prayer hall; and as would be expected, separate coat rooms must be located near each entrance, with sufficient shoe racks.

The ablution area must be designed in accordance with the building codes, however, in this instance we recommend that the code be exceeded to the extent that we have requested fifteen (15) toilets, with hand washing sinks and 30 ablution stations for the brothers and a proportionate number for the sisters. In addition, there must be one shower located for each area; and the

sisters' area shall also contain a station for changing and disposing of baby diapers.

The consensus opinion among the community is that there must be a special area dedicated for washing and refrigerating the bodies of the dead. This aspect of the plan must be coordinated by a local funeral director and approved by the Boston Public Health Commission.

2. The Community Center. This space must be designed in a manner sufficient to accommodate the administrative functions of the Center as well as to provide office space for individual and family counseling, community meetings, a day care center, a book store, a media room, several conference rooms, a small institutional kitchen and dining area to accommodate 1000 guests.
3. The Madressa. This space must accommodate approximately 200 elementary and middle school students (15/grade) along with faculty, administrators, and support staff. The school must be designed in a way that optimizes our ability to qualify for accreditation by the Massachusetts Board of Education.

The library that will be associated with the school must be multi-lingual and designed to contain the most extensive collection of manuscripts, books, visual aids and/or videos dealing with the full range of Islamic culture that we can assemble. This will be an invaluable tool for da'wah.

Due to the proximity of recreational facilities located at the Reggie Lewis Athletic Center, the playing fields at the Campus High School and the Clarence "Jeep" Jones Park, the building program does not anticipate a need to construct recreational facilities.

4. Landscaping. This building footprint is not expected to exceed 30% of the site. Consequently, we have an unprecedented opportunity to not only design a structure that will reflect the historic character of the setting within an urban setting, but an opportunity to establish a new standard of excellence through landscape architecture. Our goal is to expand upon the harmonic plan of the structures, while projecting a sense of order, unity and peace.

We fully expect that as a direct result of our efforts, the City will immediately initiate capital improvements to the surrounding streets and installing new street lighting, trees, sidewalks, as well as to re-name the surrounding streets.

**The Design Team:** The design team is made up of professionals with a proven track record for sensitivity to Islamic design and/or a thorough knowledge of the regulatory requirements needed to obtain the necessary construction document approvals. The Project design team is comprised of the following:

Lead Architect:

Sami Angawi, Ph.D.

assume that it would be significant enough for us to expect that out of pocket donations from the Ummah will be insufficient to meet all expenses. Therefore ISB is forced to look to other sources of funds that could serve as an endowment and underwrite these expenses. This strategy is also attractive to contributors to the Center in that they could be encouraged to make a significant one-time contribution; as opposed to many small contributions over a protracted period of time.

Staff took the liberty of anticipating this situation started a preliminary analysis of options. Since our expertise is more suited to real estate development, planning and finance, our focus was on the potential for development in the City with the dual aim of producing income for the Center, while relieving the critical housing needs of the Ummah. We began with the assumption that the annual operating costs of the new Center would be slightly more than \$1,000,000/year.

The City was contacted immediately and after informal discussions we were encouraged to jointly approach the United Bank of Kuwait to assess their interest. Discussions with the City and the UBK resulted in the City's offer of more than 100,000 sf of vacant land in the vicinity of the Center for development into affordable housing. Preliminary project analysis suggests that a mix of 80 rental and for-sale housing units could be constructed on this site and financing could be arranged in cooperation with the United Bank of Kuwait and the City. Our analysis further suggested that this project could generate up to \$300,000/year in income for the Center, and if successful there is enough vacant land in the City to suggest that we might be able to develop as much as 200 additional units. An added incentive for this approach is the number of professional property management, clerical and maintenance jobs that could be created for the Ummah. With your approval, an appropriate study could be undertaken.

**Approval votes follows:**

**VOTED:** That the development concept outlined above is approved and is in substantial accord with the wishes of the Ummah; and

**FURTHER VOTED:** That the above project planning, design and construction budget is approved and that the funds will be allocated by ISB and made available in accordance with the schedule described above; and finally,

**FURTHER VOTED:** That Staff is authorized to undertake and complete the necessary real estate analysis in support of a Waqf investment strategy for the Islamic Society of Boston.