

Appendix 3 – Boston Fire Department pleased with selection of Centre St. firehouse location on streetcar line

Dear Arborway Committee,

Deputy Fire Chief Kevin MacCurtain's testimony at the 2nd MEPA hearing made me curious about the particulars of JP's Centre St. station so I did some research reading through old JP newspapers. In case others shared my own lack of knowledge I put this together-

The station at 746 Centre (engine 28 and ladder 10) was built 1983- 1984 during Ray Flynn's administration when trolleys were still running . The planning started in 1979 but lack of funding caused delays in the start of construction. The contractor's representative was Eugene Kelly. There were at least half a dozen stories in the JP Citizen weekly in 1984 about the plans for the new station and the hoopla at the grand opening, not one mention is made of trolleys as an impediment or a concern. Captain Kevin MacCurtain made one of the speeches at the Dec. 8 opening ceremony. The installation of the "bookend" traffic signals was also part of the city project.

The former fire station where JP Licks is now located was more than 100 yrs. old. When the city planned the new station there was a lot of discussion about what should be done with the old building; three proposals were considered seriously including a plan to use the facility as a garage for EMS ambulances. In a Dec. 13, 1984 story on the opening of the new station, a Globe reporter interviewed a representative from the city Health and Hospitals Dept.,....." under pressure from state regulations requiring that ambulances be housed in heated garages, assist. deputy comr. Warren Tessler said 'its a good central location for us, its on a good route for access'.. the dept. would like to garage one or two ambulances in the firehouse". There were letters to the editor supporting the proposal for the ambulance garage including one from State Rep. James Craven.

It is also worth remembering how in the 80's there were a lot of fires; both occupied and abandoned buildings and vehicles. Arson was a huge concern. The Globe account of the 4 alarm fire at 28-30 Armstrong St. in Jan. 1984 did not mention any delay in responding (something fire dept. records are supposed to record).

Of course a year later, the MBTA was publicly considering the permanent shutdown of the E line from Heath to the Arborway , "because the Orange line reconstruction may change transit patterns " according to a Nov 9, 1985 Globe story. However since the firehouse was planned for Centre St. since 1979 and Health and Hospitals actually pursued the idea of an ambulance garage also on Centre it doesn't appear that trolleys were considered a safety hazard or interfered with response time.

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