To Sell Talbot House
By Tongyan Lin

LAMP To Return in Oct.

For about $400,000 to $450,000.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
By Beckett W. Sterner

Costs Too High, MIT
To Sell Talbot House

By Sottck W. Sterner

Necessary and expensive remo-

tions, as well as declining demand,

have led MIT to put the venerable

Talbot House up for sale.

Donated by Laurence Rockefeller

in the 1960s, the Talbot House,

located in Vermont, has served as a

retrainer for students, faculty and

staff for decades. However, it now

requires significant construction,

including making it handicapped-

accessible, improving the founda-

tion and exterior, and possibly drill-

ing a new well for a secondary water

supply in case of fire, said Director of

the Campus Activities Complex

Philip J. Walsh.

Adding handicapped acces-

sibility could “cost us more than

the property is worth,” Walsh said,

with a good-wheel-chair lift possibly

costing $100,000 alone. He said that

MIT is hoping to sell the property

for about $400,000 to $450,000.

Dean for Student Life Larry G. Benedict said that the proceeds

from the sale would be rolled back

into the student life budget, with the

intention of making leadership develop-

ment programs a primary use of the

funds.

“I envision a leadership insti-

tute,” he said, funded by an endow-

ment made from the proceeds and

private donations, as a “long term

prospect” for the money and pro-

grams at MIT.

Benedict said that one of the

major remaining uses of the Tal-

bot House was its leadership develop-

ment retreats for various student groups, and that MIT is looking into other possible locations for retreats, including MIT’s Endicot House, typically used more as a conference center.

Undergraduate Association Presi-

dent Harel M. Williams ’05 said that “if we spend enough time and

energy to find an alternative,” the sale of Talbot House would not adverse

ly affect student life, but it is “still sad, though . . . (Talbot) was a land-

mark.”

He said that the UA, the Gradu-

ate Student Council and Senior

Associate Dean for Student Life

Stephen D. Immelman, among oth-

ers, would form a committee to dis-

cuss uses for the proceeds, but it

was not clear whether proposals for

Talbot would be ready by fall term, when student groups often hold retreats with new recruits.

Talbot sees decline in use

Walsh said that the decision to sell Talbot House was not made

quickly. He said there has been “a trend that’s been going on for some

time” of “diminishing participation and attendance at the house.” He

said that while they had not found any specific reasons for the decline, he suspects the tos to three

hour travel time, and its consequent

high cost, had become more and

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Ruth Miller

My friends know I’m never happier than when I’m compiling another anecdote for my never-to-be-written autobiography. Being a fan of Fight Club, Rage Against the Machine, and of course, the usual spin about two men fighting, the riotous party was in the Constitution, someone apparently thought that this was a good idea and created one in a Boston for the DNC. It was a riot that the free speech zone must have been a Castle AAagh.

The zone was nearly invisible. If it hadn’t been for a special on the Daily Show weeks earlier, I wouldn’t have even known where to look. We stumbled onto the zone Monday afternoon, and under the chain link fence, overpass, and cars, there was a small collection of protesters, press, and other thrill seekers. The walls, side-walks, cars and sidewalks were covered in protest signs, banners, and slogans: “Democrats cage free speech,” “Terrorists are loose; patriots are caged,” “Pens are for animals, not Americans,” “2 Jews, 2 faced, no balls, more Bush,” “Palestine looks like this every day.” These weren’t the vegetable-oil-powered car hippies of Boston Common. These were well-spoken, well-dressed, angry protesters. Standing in such a cage was a surreal experience. Where there were so few people there with which to share it. Regardless of our feelings for Kerry or Bush, the left left the area ashamed of this obvious degradation of free speech. Aren’t Democrats supposed to protect our First Amendment Rights? Maybe they really aren’t any better than the Republicans. Is this why people flock to Ralph Nader?

Still looking for a fight, some of us returned the next day. The cage was still there, and it was still full of people. It had changed. These weren’t the same people as before, and there was more of everything: more signs, more protesters, and more press. The crowd surrounded and chanted of aban- donment and patriotism from the day before. I asked a representative of Boston 2004 who designated the free speech zone. Not surpris- ingly, Kerry did not hand down an edict to punish the freedom lovers. This was just the closest Boston’s Mayor Tom Menino would allow protesters to gather. Kerry and the Boston Common was covered in protest- ers, Flip, Flop and ‘Billibloons for Bush” and the city, “someone said that tonight there’s no cops on the streets anywhere between Boston Common and Cambridge. “Run Against Bush ran,” “Boycott Cyclops” and the “Kills Babies” van drove through the streets all week. These were all much more violent than the angry protest- ers big enough. I’ve noticed that the protests near the FleetCenter had chosen to assemble in a pen to protest being forced to assemble in a pen. Thursday, on what was to be a return trip to the free speech zone, I was sidetracked by a troop of minions demonstrating in front of a large police crowd at Quincy Market. At the exact moment I was stopping a peanut butter smoothie in Faneuil Hall, the protesters in the free speech zone were burning a John Kerry effigy, and waving a flag on the roof. The riot police showed up. The police estimated there were over 400 protesters. The press estimated about 150 police. The protesters lined up nose-to- nose with the riot cops. The riot police put their clubs in a single, graceful motion. The press looked on. Only a handful were injured, and the next day The Boston Metro published pictures of a riot cop standing on a bloodied protester. I love my First Amendment, but was this really the time most important thing they could speak of? People exercise their freedom of speech on a subject. It is a means toward an end. The more visible protesters scattered throughout the area, the more they appeared to be mensagemed with a message. While the scenary inspired emotion, the protesters below had conflicting messages. After the rally, the cops spoke, the press, and the crowd listened. It looks like I wasn’t the only one looking for a fight.

The Send Songs of Politics

Ken Nesmith

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Editorials are the official opinion of The Tech. They are written by the editorial board, which consists of the chairman, editor in chief, managing editor, opinion editor, senior editor, and an opinion staff.

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Letters to the editor are written by individuals and represent the opinions of the writer, not necessar- ily that of the newspaper. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be sent to lettermen@the-tech.mit.edu. Hand copy submis- sions may be dropped off at The Tech, 256 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139. Please print legibly. All submissions will be given higher priority once submitted, all letters become property of The Tech, and will not be returned. The Tech makes no commitment to publish all the letters it receives.

Guest columns are opinion articles submitted by members of the MIT or local community and have the author’s name in italics. Columns without italics are written by Tech staff.

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Democratic party delegates, guests, and members of the media packed the FleetCenter for the four nights of the Democratic National Convention.

(top right) Joe Macshane (left) and Ken Vezina (right), who served in Vietnam in 1969, protest against John Kerry on Thursday afternoon. The protest presented a stark contrast to the events that night inside the FleetCenter, where the crew of the Swiftboat Kerry commanded in Vietnam took the stage.

(above left) Boston Police Special Operations officers block the entrance to the FleetCenter on Thursday night. After the fire marshal closed the overcrowded FleetCenter, the officers forced members of the press, delegates, and other would-be attendees to the DNC out of the FleetCenter’s lobby.

(above right) Democratic vice-presidential nominee John Edwards delivers a crowd-pleasing speech on Wednesday night. Delegates cheered and held signs to highlight his message that “Hope is on the Way.”

(left) Delegates from New York show their support for their senator, Hillary Clinton, as she spoke Monday night.

(below) Attendees of the Democratic National Convention wave American flags during the speeches.

Photography by Jina Kim and Jonathan Wang
The Democratic National Convention is over and Bostonsians can finally come back from wherever they were hiding. The pundits have declared the very carefully scripted convention an undisputed success for the Democratic Party.

Inside the FleetCenter, Democrats all over the liberal end of the ideological spectrum, from the moderate Bill Clinton to the ultra-liberal Ted Kennedy to the almost Chomsky-like Dennis Kucinich, united behind the Kerry–Edwards ticket. There were no unending displays over the party, no riots akin to those in 1968, and no massive protests. In fact, it almost seemed there were no protesters at all. That would be because protesters were not allowed anywhere near the FleetCenter and unless you looked carefully enough, it seemed that this convention was missing something that is an expected element of all political conventions. Huddled underneath abandoned train tracks and behind chain link fences, a few protesters tried to get out their message. Not surprisingly, few delegates heard them. After all, they were relegated to a so-called “demonstration zone.” The zone has been likened to an internment camp or even Auschwitz. That may be a bit extreme, but an area bound by two chain link fences, separated by concrete barriers, surrounded by black mesh to repel liquids, and covered by another black net topped with razor wire is certainly no beacon of free speech. The protesters in the area look like nothing if not prisoners within this cell with no access to tables, chairs, and sanitary facilities, lacking even the ability to pass written materials to outsiders.

Groups have challenged the city’s right to limit protesters’ access to the FleetCenter area, but a federal judge agreed with the city in the name of homeland security. Even after calling the demonstration zone “an affront to the idea of free expression,” the judge ruled that the city’s actions were justified by the need to protect convention delegates from the “threat” that these demonstrators posed.

So because of the city’s sudden affinity for limiting the constitutional rights of protesters, all that the country saw on TV was an incredibly passionate and unified effort by the entire Democratic Party. But let us remember why the party is so passionate about defeating President Bush. It is because in an election in which he received less of the popular vote than his challenger, Bush won because the Supreme Court decided on an issue that according to the Constitution should have been settled by Congress. It is because Bush has bullied the country into a war by stifling dissent and then has dismissed the slightest opposition as being unpatriotic. It is because Bush and John Ashcroft forced the Patriot Act on this country, infringing on our basic constitutional rights like no legislation ever has before in our entire history. It is because Bush and his administration have, in clear violation of the Bill of Rights, arrested and detained people, including American citizens, for years without allowing them to have a trial or consult with an attorney simply because they were given the arbitrary title of “enemy combatant.” And let us recall one of the dominant messages of the convention — Bush has divided the country, refusing to allow the opposition to speak, but Democrats will unite all Americans, letting everyone be heard. Convention speakers railed again the president for his unconstitutional actions. After Sept. 11, they said, we were all Americans, not Democrats and Republicans, but President Bush antagonized the opposition and polarized our nation. Well, we Democrats are nothing but hypocrites and are no better than the administration we have condemned in the arena of protecting constitutional rights if we feel that we must stonewall as low as to force protesters behind razor wire and black mesh.

I understand the need for unity in order to beat the Republicans and I understand that the Democratic losses in 1968 could largely be blamed on the riots during the Chicago convention which revealed a divided party. But unity cannot be forced and putting protesters in cages will only make the Ralph Nader ticket seem like a more salient alternative to Bush. We need to remember why we are running against the Bush administration and what we find so distasteful about them. We have proclaimed that a belief in free speech is what differentiates us from them, but the Stepford Wives-like convention last week called our bluff.