

August 1, 1969

Dear Hassler:

I have just had a chance to learn from Mike Morgan about your negotiations with him in respect to the repurchase of your house. As far as your own situation goes, it is clear that the fair thing for the Institute to do is to buy the property from you for \$85,000, and I am writing to make plain our intention to do so, and to ask you to fix a closing date convenient to you.

However, I have another concern which will require a little more careful thought than I am capable of giving it without more time; namely, to consider how the precedent of this transaction will affect the Institute in its dealings with other faculty members. I will write another letter somewhat later, that will in effect be the formal contract under which we repurchase your house, and will contain some language to deal with the problems to which I wish to give a little thought. Please let me know if this is agreeable or whether it raises any problem for you.

Let me add that Annette and I are sorry to lose you and Mary as neighbors but are confident that the small change in geography between us will make no difference.

Cordially,

Carl Kaysen

Professor Hassler Whitney
Institute for Advanced Study

bcc: Mr. Morgan

Whitney

19 March 1958

Dear Professor Whitney:

This letter will put in writing the comments on the troublesome matter of the purchase of the Meritt house which we have made to each other in the last weeks.

As you know, the Institute is acquiring the house solely because of your earlier representation that you would wish to acquire it for your own use. Since the Trustees authorized us to acquire the house only if it could be obtained for a sum not to exceed \$65,000, we cannot go beyond that in what we give Professor Meritt. Since you undertook to add \$3,000 of your own, and since Meritt has made all his plans in the expectation of selling the house this spring for \$68,000, we have to ask you to contribute \$3,000 to the purchase of the house, even though it is of no use to you according to your present plans.

It is quite possible that the Institute will sell the house to an outsider. In the event that we sell it for more than \$65,000, we shall be able either partially or wholly to reimburse you for the \$3,000 that you have contributed. It seems likely that in the immediate future the Institute will rent the Meritt house, in the hope that an Institute purchaser will come along. I believe, though on this point I do not speak with the authorization of the Trustees, that if we are successful in finding an Institute purchaser, so that the property is put to a use similar to that which we contemplated when we undertook to acquire it, we should also reimburse you for the money you have put in. I regret that the future of your contribution must for some time remain uncertain. I shall let you know of any developments which determine or throw light on it.

Very sincerely,

Robert Oppenheimer

Professor Hassler Whitney
Institute for Advanced Study

Copy to Mr. Leidesdorf

Whitney

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

March 10, 1958

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS

Dear Professor Oppenheimer,

Thank you for your letter of March 19. I am of course very glad that the Trustees are willing to take the details of the Meritt house off my mind. And I am quite willing to invest the \$3000 pending a final arrangement.

If the Trustees decide to rent the house, I presume this is to be a temporary matter, as you state. If the house is held for more than a few years, one might wish to reconsider the arrangement.

Sincerely yours,

Hassler Whitney
Hassler Whitney