

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**


**CITY OF NEWTON**

Massachusetts

**INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE**

DATE: November 28, 2012

TO: John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

FROM: Candace Havens, Director of Planning and Development   
Eve Tapper, Chief Planner for Current Planning  
Katy Hax Holmes, Land Use Planner

SUBJECT: **Administrative Site Plan Review – Section 30-5(a)(2)  
Boston College St. Mary's Hall**

CC: Mayor Setti Warren  
Alderman Scott Lennon, President of the Board of Aldermen  
Ward 7 Alderman Lisle Baker  
Ward 7 Aldermen-at-Large Marc Laredo and Ruthanne Fuller  
Dave Turocy, Commissioner of Public Works  
John Daghlian, Associate City Engineer  
Bruce Proia, Fire Chief

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with Section 30-5(a)(2) of the City's Zoning Ordinance, which requires *Site plan Review for nonprofit educational uses*, the Planning Department and other City departments have reviewed the proposed plans for the **BOSTON COLLEGE, ST. MARY'S HALL AND GARAGE, LINDEN LANE**, prepared by DiMello Shaffer, dated August 31, and September 14, 2012. The proposed project is located near the intersection of Linden Lane and Commonwealth Avenue and includes the restoration and interior reconfiguration of the historic St. Mary's Hall (1914) on the campus of Boston College. The plans were previously presented at a meeting of the Boston College Neighborhood Council on September 19, 2012.

Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 40A, Section 3, exempts agricultural, religious, and educational institutions from certain zoning restrictions, and is commonly referred to as the "Dover Amendment." It is a mechanism that allows exemptions from local zoning laws for the construction or alteration of a structure for certain uses. In Newton, the administrative site plan review procedure governs the review of Dover amendment eligible entities. Newton Zoning Ordinance Section 30-15, Table 2, lays out the dimensional standards applicable to such use, but existing conditions that vary from and pre-date the table adopted in 1987 are considered legally nonconforming. In addition, proposers of such uses may request and obtain waivers from the required dimensional standards from

the Commissioner of Inspectional Services, if the granting of such waivers is determined to be reasonable in order to provide such services.

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## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The subject parcel is located in a Single Residence 1 (SR1) District and is part of the Boston College Chestnut Hill Campus located in Newton, MA in an area of campus known as the Middle Campus. The proposed project is located on the east side of Linden Lane, just south of the Main Gate on Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed plans intend to address three changes on campus: 1) the deteriorated exterior stone and cast-stone work on St. Mary's Hall, which is in need of immediate repair and restoration; 2) the current resident population of Jesuit priests on the Boston College campus has declined; and 3) the relocation of faculty and staff offices is part of the larger Boston College Institutional Master Plan (IMP). The 87 rooms in St. Mary's that were occupied by resident priests will be reduced to 33 as part of the proposed plan. The remaining rooms will be retrofitted for use as offices. Existing parking on site was originally for use by the priests, who under the rules of their order did not own cars, but shared a small fleet. These cars were parked in a post-1964, below-grade metal garage addition that will be removed and replaced with a more permanent garage on the same site for exclusive use by the Jesuit residents. From submitted plans it appears that the garage would hold a total of 12 Jesuit-designated parking spaces, a reduction in capacity from the current garage, which houses 18 spaces. Site work will be performed on the entire parcel. Short-term effects on vehicular circulation on the site during construction are likely. Longer-term considerations should be made regarding vehicular access to this building, given the potential increase in number of drivers who will attempt to park around the building once construction is completed.

Changes to the building will include a complete restoration of the architectural detailing on the exterior of the building, including its cast stone elements. More specifically, these elements will include cast stone window surrounds; cast stone block; cast stone coping stones; cast stone panels; cast stone sculpture; cast stone bands; terra cotta tile roofing; copper roofing and flashing; cast stone mullions where needed. It appears from the plans that cast stone granolithic will be used as the sheathing material for the new below-grade garage.

Interior building systems will also be improved in an effort to bring St. Mary's Hall up to building code, and adapt what were formerly living quarters into modern office space. Reconfiguration of the interior space from 87 rooms for Jesuit living quarters to offices and 33 bedrooms is planned for the interior. The chapel on the first floor will remain a chapel. At a minimum, trenching, new pipe and drainage systems, and electrical work will disrupt the grounds surrounding the building.

A reassessment of the proposed parking per the IMP is recommended in order to show how the needs of the approximately 57 faculty and staff who will commute to St. Mary's Hall from other campus buildings in the near future will be accommodated. This reassessment should also address how planned demolition of Cushing Hall may affect traffic, parking, and pedestrian circulation in the Middle Campus for the long term. The Commonwealth Avenue Parking Garage on campus is located just east of St. Mary's Hall. Employees slated to have their offices moved to St. Mary's Hall are currently employed in Maloney Hall, a campus building located just south of the Commonwealth Avenue Parking Garage. At the conclusion of work on St. Mary's Hall, and in the event that Boston College personnel find it easier to commute to St. Mary's Hall from Commonwealth Avenue instead of from within the campus, a traffic and transportation analysis of projected increases in traffic at the Commonwealth

Avenue entrance to the college's Main Gate should also be prepared. Modes of public transportation should also be considered for moving personnel to and from St. Mary's Hall with minimal effect on the campus and the neighborhood.

**BACKGROUND**

Boston College, a non-profit educational institution in the Chestnut Hill section of Newton has operated at this location for approximately 100 years and has expanded its facilities over time. The proposed building renovation is the latest in a series of restorations, renovations and new construction on the Boston College Campus. The Stokes Building, under construction on the south side of the BC Middle Campus, was most recently reviewed by the City.

**TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Boston College is a non-profit educational institution. As such, in accordance with Section 30-5 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, plans for St. Mary's Hall are to be reviewed in accordance with the dimensional tables contained in Section 30-15, and with parking regulations contained in Section 30-19. In addition, the Director of Planning and Development will also consider the application in light of the Site Plan review Criteria listed in Section 30-5(2).

*I. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 30-15*

A technical analysis conducted by the Chief Zoning Code Official for the proposed renovation of St. Mary's Hall, with respect to the dimensional requirements for a Multi-Use Institution in a Single Residence 1 District, found no net change in the minimum lot area, setbacks, building lot coverage, open space, F.A.R., maximum building height or number of stories as a result of this renovation and restoration project as proposed. The new sub-grade garage as proposed is smaller in total area than the current garage, thus reducing the overall footprint of the project.

St. Mary's Hall	Ordinance Requirements	Existing Buildings	Proposed
Minimum lot area	50,000 sf	1,573,189 sf	No Change
Minimum setbacks			
• Comm. Ave.	60'	259.6 ft	No Change
• College Road	60'	294.4 ft	No Change
Max. Bldg. lot coverage	30%	28%	No Change
Minimum open space	30%	54%	No Change
F.A.R. (NA)	0.2 – 1.0	1.13	No Change
Max. bldg. height	36 ft	75 ft	No Change
Max. # of stories	3	4	No Change

*II. COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 30-19*

The number of off-street parking stalls proposed as part of this project will not change from its current total. Parking in the Jesuit resident-only garage will accommodate six fewer vehicles, reflecting a lower Jesuit population and resulting demand for fleet vehicles. A change is anticipated, however, on the demand for non-Jesuit parking spaces in the vicinity of St. Mary's Hall from other portions of Middle Campus. The Planning Department encourages Boston College to reassess the number and locations of existing parking spaces and garages on Middle Campus. This reassessment should also address the domino effect of parking issues on Middle Campus caused by the planned demolition of Cushing Hall.

### Site Lighting

Boston College has submitted plans showing proposed locations for lighting in the vicinity of the building and areas where lighting is to be removed, but no photometric plan for surface parking on the north side of the building or the planned sidewalk on the east side. Although exempted from these requirements, the Planning Department recommends that the College choose to upgrade lighting in its parking and pedestrian areas, and that all lighting be shielded or directed in such a way as to prevent glare.

### Bicycle Parking

The Planning Department encourages the College to provide bicycle parking at St. Mary's Hall. Though not shown on proposed plans for the St. Mary's Hall restoration, the College has in the past provided on-site bicycle parking upon completion of its other construction projects. The Planning Department recommends that final plans include the location of a bike rack to accommodate and encourage students and faculty who may bike to St. Mary's Hall.

### III. SITE PLAN REVIEW CRITERIA

As per Section 30-5 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Director of Planning and Development may consider this project in light of the following criteria:

A. Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site and in relation to the adjacent streets, properties or improvements

The overall parking count for daily on-site parking is slated to remain unchanged, but car trips to St. Mary's Hall may potentially increase. A parking analysis is recommended in order to accommodate the needs of the approximately 57 faculty and staff who will commute to St. Mary's Hall in the near future.

The Commonwealth Avenue Parking Garage on campus is located just east of St. Mary's Hall. Most employees slated to have their offices moved to St. Mary's Hall are employed in Maloney Hall, a campus building located just south of the Commonwealth Avenue Parking Garage. Current parking trends for Maloney Hall employees should be studied and incorporated into a larger parking plan for the campus as buildings undergo changes in populations in accordance with the Boston College Institutional Master Plan.

Pedestrian access to the O'Neill library from the east side of St. Mary's Hall will be improved by installing a new sidewalk behind the building, adjacent to the new Jesuit parking garage. In accordance with Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Regulations and Standards, the new sidewalk must meet the most current standards, particularly where the new sidewalk will adjoin the existing sidewalks and curb cuts near the campus main entrance. All curb cuts must have an approved tactile warning plate at their termination.

No changes in access are anticipated on the west front side of the building. One handicap-accessible space is planned for the inside of the new parking garage for Jesuit residents, but there do not appear to be handicap-accessible spaces planned for the immediate vicinity of St. Mary's Hall. This should be addressed.

There are currently 18 individual garage doors leading to and from the corrugated steel garage for the fleet of Jesuit-shared vehicles. The new garage will have just two doors, one entering north and one existing east, limiting vehicular access to the garage and improving overall safety at the site. New directional signage to designated parking areas and handicap parking are recommended. Modes of public transportation should also be considered for moving personnel to and from St. Mary's Hall with minimal effect on the campus, traffic and the local neighborhood. Safety of pedestrian movement around the site should also be maintained and enhanced during, and upon completion of this project.

*B. Adequacy of disposal of sewage, refuse waste and storm water drainage*

The College does not plan to change the current sewer path after the building is restored and altered for interior office/bedroom use. Please refer to the memorandum written by John Daghlian, Associate City Engineer to Candace Havens, Director of Planning and Development on October 22, 2012 regarding required improvements to water and sewer for the rehabilitated building (see Attachments). Fire protection and domestic services must also be upgraded to meet current building code and Fire Department requirements. If the overall impervious coverage on site will be increased, Boston College should coordinate with the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works to ensure that all surface water is adequately managed before, during and after construction.

*C. Provision of off-street loading incidental to the servicing of the building*

Service to the building occurs on Boston College property, and will continue as it does currently. Delivery access to the building and other necessary service access should be incorporated into the CMP in order to accommodate potential temporary access issues during construction.

The parking configuration will see the removal of the metal garage used for Jesuit parking and replacement with a permanent parking structure with fewer spaces, also for Jesuit parking. According to current plans a small parking area will remain on the north side of the building, and there is on-street parking on Linden Lane at the front of the building. These are existing conditions and there do not appear to be other locations on site that will provide employee parking or service to the building.

*D. Screening of parking areas and structures*

The proposal includes some enhanced landscaping on the south side of the building. The three remaining sides are paved or bordered by walkways and might be less conducive to plantings or screening. Out of respect for the campus abutters, new lighting fixtures that are proposed for the perimeter of the building should provide the proper amount of illumination while also ensuring the safety of campus pedestrians at night.

Tree removal will occur from the vicinity of the metal garage. The College has stated that previously identified specimen trees will be protected. Additional tree removal should be avoided, if possible, or trees should be replaced on-site where removal is deemed necessary. Landscaping along the north side parking area should also be enhanced and maintained.

*E. Avoidance of topographic changes*

Due to the nature of the work planned on this building, there are no major changes anticipated to the topography of the site.

*F. Provision for location of utility service lines underground and site design*

All utility service lines will be located underground. As of January, 2009, all trench contractors must comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 82A, Trench Excavation Safety Requirements, to protect the public from unauthorized access to unattended trenches. A trench Excavation Permit will be required and a note to this effect must be incorporated into the plans.

The Chestnut Hill campus of Boston College is located near a residential neighborhood of early 20<sup>th</sup> century homes. The scale and design of this Collegiate Gothic campus building is an integral architectural element to the historic Boston College campus appearance and plan, and preceded many of the homes in the adjacent neighborhood. All facades of the building will be restored. There do not appear to be major alterations or additions planned for the portions of the building visible from Commonwealth Avenue. The rear east façade, which overlooks the Boston College campus, will have a metal parking enclosure removed but will be replaced with a more architecturally sensitive parking facility. In either case, views of this garage from the campus will be minimal due to its location on a hill that is obscured by the Commonwealth Avenue Parking Garage.

The Planning Department received conceptual elevations and material specifications, which are subject to change during the design process. Final specifications of materials, manufacturer information, colors, and landscaping should be submitted to Planning Department for review prior to issuance of a building permit.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

It is the policy of Boston College that all new buildings on campus be LEED Silver or higher where practicable. Though the proposed project at St. Mary's Hall is a restoration and reconfiguration of the interior, the Planning and Development Department strongly encourages the College to repair architectural features and material in kind where possible and to replace them only where deemed necessary. For interior work on the building, a goal of LEED-quality materials and construction techniques should be considered. Post-occupancy verification measures should also be taken to ensure that the replaced systems for new office space, bedrooms, and other building elements perform to their optimal environmental targets.

As a stone building, St. Mary's Hall has a high insulating value in its exterior walls that will reduce heat loss in the winter and stay cool in the summer. In addition the College should recycle as much construction waste as possible. The College has, in the past, stated that an educational signage program would be provided near subject buildings that would highlight sustainable measures undertaken there. The Planning and Development Department encourages the College to incorporate this signage program at St. Mary's Hall as well.

### **CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

Boston College must perform all construction in accordance with the conditions of a Construction Management Plan (CMP), which has yet to be submitted to the City by the College. For the duration of the project, area residents will be concerned about the effects of truck traffic, noise and dust on the streets and in the neighborhood, contractor parking during construction, and wear and tear on City streets. These issues, along with the security of the site, should be emphasized in the CMP. This CMP should be submitted to the City Engineer, City Traffic Engineer, Director of Planning and Development, and Commissioner of Inspectional Services for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit for this project. The CMP should be expected to include all items listed below, as well as any additional requirements contained in the Associate City Engineer's memorandum:

- a) Designated contact person for the construction along with 24-hour contact phone numbers distributed to area residents every month
- b) Monthly construction updates for distribution to neighbors
- c) Security fencing around the entire construction site
- d) Stabilized driveway entrances with a tire wash and mud removal to ensure city streets are clean
- e) Designated truck routes and truck access points to the construction site, including the hours of delivery of any materials
- f) Plans designating on-site parking for contractors and subcontractors
- g) Provision to control construction debris and dust on neighborhood streets
- h) Hours of construction
- i) Statement regarding noise control. Noise levels at the site must comply with the City's Noise Control Ordinance, Section 20-13.
- j) Plans designating on-site construction staging area and an on-site holding area of sufficient size to prevent queuing of trucks waiting to deliver materials
- k) Erosion control measures
- l) Material storage area(s)
- m) Construction phasing plan with anticipated completion dates and milestones
- n) Tree protection plan

#### **BOSTON COLLEGE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

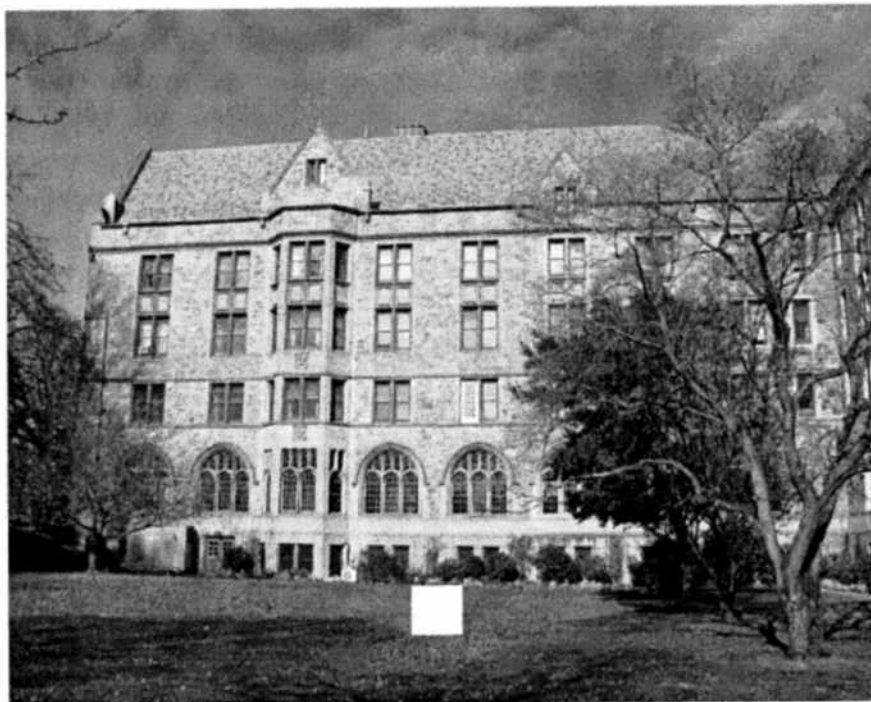
The Planning Board strongly recommends continued communication with the Boston College Neighborhood Council. Though anticipated effects from this project on the surrounding neighborhood are expected to be minimal (with the exception of possible increases in auto volume), this Council nevertheless provides a forum to discuss issues of general and mutual concern to the City of Newton, Boston College, and area neighbors.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In consultation with Boston College, and prior to issuance of a building permit, we recommend that the College consider the following recommendations:

- Plans for the restoration project do not specify the number of windows to be repaired or replaced. This is also true for the doors. An indicator arrow points to one window per page with "Replacement aluminum windows." The number of windows to be replaced should be identified, as should the name of the manufacturer and the type of aluminum window being proposed. A disposal or recycling plan for these windows should also be identified;

- One handicap-accessible space is planned for the inside of the new parking garage for Jesuit residents, but there do not appear to be handicap-accessible spaces planned for the immediate vicinity of St. Mary's Hall. This should be addressed;
- Notations on the proposed plans also show "Replacement oak wood door." It is unclear whether an oak door is being replaced, or if oak doors would be used as replacement doors. If so, more information is necessary as to their manufacturer, appearance, and placement on the building, and what material/style of hardware would be used for their installation and design;
- No sculptor or restorer names are included on the list of personnel who would be participating in this project. This information, if known, should be added;
- It is not clear whether cast stone granolithic is proposed for any other location on the building besides the new garage;
- Trash storage should be no less than 25' from the building, and properly enclosed;
- New lighting fixtures located at the perimeter of the property should have shields to focus light onto the building;
- Best practices for this project should take advantage of existing resources and materials to replicate details on the historic building;
- Traffic mitigation should be a high priority during high-use times of the academic day;
- Plans submitted for review by the Planning and Development were neither signed nor stamped. All plans submitted to the City of Newton in the future for departmental approvals must be both signed and stamped.



***Attachment A: Memorandum from Associate City Engineer, dated October 22, 2012***

The following plans were reviewed as part of the St. Mary's Hall Administrative Site Plan Review process:



- Plans for "Boston College St. Mary's Hall: St. Mary's Hall Jesuit Residence" all dated August 31, 2012 and September 14, 2012, ***neither signed nor stamped:***

**Civil**

C0.0	Notes Sheet
C1.0	Site Utility Plan
C2.0	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
C3.0	Site Utility Details 1
C3.1	Site Utility Details 2
C3.2	Erosion and Sediment Control Details 1
C3.3	Erosion and Sediment Control Details 2

**Landscape**

L1.0	Site Demo and Preparation Plan South Garden & Entry
L1.1	Site Demo and Preparation Plan Courtyard Garden & Sidewalk
L2.0	Materials Plan South Garden & Entry
L2.1	Materials Plan Courtyard Garden & Sidewalk
L3.0	Layout Plan South Garden & Entry
L3.1	Layout Plan Courtyard Garden & Sidewalk
L4.0	Grading Plan South Garden & Entry
L4.1	Grading Plan Courtyard Garden & Sidewalk
L6.0	Planting Plan South Garden & Entry
L6.1	Planting Plan Courtyard Garden & Sidewalk

**Architectural**

A1.0A	Sub-Basement Plan
A1.0B	Ground Level Plan
A1.1	Level 1 Plan
A1.2	Level 2 Plan
A1.3	Level 3 Plan
A1.4	Level 4 Plan
A1.5	Level 5 Attic Floor Plan
A1.6	Roof Plan-Mechanical Well
A1.7	Roof Plan
A3.2	West Elevation
A3.3	North Elevation
A3.4	East Elevation
A3.5	South Elevation