



540 Commonwealth Avenue

Boston University

Institutional Master Plan Notification Form

March 13, 2020

For Sixth Amendment to the Boston University Charles River
Campus 2013 - 2023 Institutional Master Plan

submitted to
Boston Planning & Development Agency

submitted by **Trustees of Boston University**

prepared by **Fort Point Associates, Inc.**

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PROJECT NARRATIVE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 80D-9 of the Boston Zoning Code, Trustees of Boston University (the “Proponent”) submits this Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMPNF) to the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) to amend the Boston University Charles River Campus 2013 – 2023 Institutional Master Plan (IMP). The sixth amendment to the IMP will include the existing building at 540 Commonwealth Avenue (the “Project Site”) as a new Proposed Institutional Project (PIP) in the Boston University Charles River Campus IMP. The Proponent intends to lease and occupy approximately 16,280 square feet (sf) at the Project Site for academic and administrative use (the “Project”).

2.0 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS

Since the implementation of the IMP in 2013, five amendments have been reviewed and approved by the BPDA, as described in the following sections.

2.1 FIRST AMENDMENT – CENTER FOR INTEGRATED LIFE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

The First Amendment to the IMP (the “First Amendment”) added the Rajen Kilachand Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering (CILSE), located at 610 Commonwealth Avenue, as a PIP. The First Amendment was reviewed and approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in November 2013 and by the Boston Zoning Commission in January 2014. The state-of-the-art neurosciences research facility was completed in 2017 and has become a centralized home to research programs formerly dispersed throughout the Charles River Campus.

2.2 SECOND AMENDMENT – 700 BEACON STREET

The Second Amendment to the IMP (the “Second Amendment”) added an existing building at 700 Beacon Street to the list of PIPs. Acquired by Boston University (the University) from another college in January of 2015, the three-story, 37,000 square foot space at 700 Beacon Street is being used to house various institutional functions such as art studios, labs, office and meeting spaces, and teaching rooms. The Second Amendment was reviewed and approved by the BRA in September 2015 and by the Zoning Commission in October 2015.

2.3 THIRD AMENDMENT – 1047 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

The Third Amendment to the IMP (the “Third Amendment”) allowed the University to lease the residential portions of an existing building at 1047 Commonwealth Avenue for a term of 22 months. This lease accommodated up to 350 students and resident assistants displaced by the Myles Standish Hall Renovation Project. The Third Amendment went into effect in May 2016. The lease of the property commenced in August 2016 and terminated in June 2018.

2.4 FOURTH AMENDMENT – BU CASTLE ADDITION

The Fourth Amendment to the IMP (the “Fourth Amendment”) allowed the construction of a small addition to the existing building at 225 Bay State Road (the “Castle”). The PIP provided expanded event space and accessibility upgrades on the first floor in addition to renovations to the exterior facade. The Fourth Amendment to the IMP went into effect in May 2017. The project was completed in early September 2018.

2.5 THE FIFTH AMENDMENT – CENTER FOR COMPUTING AND DATA SCIENCES

The Fifth Amendment to the IMP (“Fifth Amendment”): 1) increased the allowable building height and eliminated 300 proposed underground parking spaces for the previously approved PIP located at Site CC at 645 - 665 Commonwealth Avenue, and; 2) included digital signage, located at Warren Towers at 700 Commonwealth Avenue, as a new PIP. The University proposed to construct a new, centrally-located academic building (the Center for Computing and Data Sciences) to serve the departments and institutes focused on computational and data sciences. The project includes substantial off-site improvements and will be the largest fossil-fuel free building in Boston at the time of completion. The Fifth Amendment was approved by the BPDA in July 2019 and by the Zoning Commission in August 2019.

3.0 EXPEDITED INSTUTIONAL MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW

The Proponent is submitting this IMPNF for the proposed sixth amendment to the IMP (the “Sixth Amendment”) in accordance with Section 80D-9.2, Amendment of Institutional Master Plan – Expedited Review for Certain Small Projects. The Project qualifies for the expedited amendment procedure as follows:

- The amendment proposes no changes to the IMP other than the addition of this single Project;
- The Project does not meet the size thresholds for Large Project Review, as set forth under Article 80B-2; and
- The Project is an exempt project, as provided in subsection 2 of Section 80D-2(1)(b):

- The Project is located within the Boston Proper District, which is not a district where the underlying zoning requires all institutional projects to be consistent with the Institutional Master Plan;
- The 16,280 sf lease will extend Boston University's Institutional Use by less than 20,000 sf;
- The Project is not a phase of another PIP, nor is it a high-impact sub-use; and
- The University elects to make the Project subject to the provisions of the IMP.

4.0 BOSTON UNIVERSITY MISSION AND GOALS

Boston University is an international, comprehensive, private research university committed to educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt, and lead in an interconnected world. The University is committed to generating new knowledge to benefit society.

The University remains dedicated to its founding principles: that higher education should be accessible to all and that research, scholarship, artistic creation, and professional practice should be conducted in the service of the wider community on a local and international scale. These principles endure in Boston University's insistence on the value of diversity, tradition, standards of excellence, and dynamic engagement with the City of Boston and the world.

The University comprises a remarkable range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs built on a strong foundation of the liberal arts and sciences. With the support and oversight of the Board of Trustees and through its world-renowned faculty, the University continually innovates in education and research to ensure that it meets the needs of students and an ever-changing world.

In 2007, the University completed its strategic plan, *Choosing to be Great*. The plan includes eight concrete goals in support of the University's mission. Each goal is the product of extensive discussions undertaken as a community involving its students, faculty, alumni, and friends.

Boston University's goals include:

- To support and enhance a world-class faculty whose members are dedicated to teaching and engaged in research, scholarship, and their professions.
- To continue to develop the special undergraduate educational environment that combines its commitment to a liberal arts and sciences education with professional opportunities, while creating flexible educational opportunities to leverage the depth of the College of Arts and Sciences and its other schools and colleges. To continue its

commitment to inclusiveness based on merit for all students, irrespective of race, religion, or economic status, and to raise the financial aid needed to do this.

- To expand and enhance the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) as the core of Boston University and its undergraduate programs. The University is committed to increasing the number of CAS faculty members and expanding and renewing the College's facilities.
- To enhance the residential campus and student life experience for its undergraduate students in the special urban environment of Boston.
- To strengthen scholarship and research throughout Boston University by support of key disciplinary graduate programs.
- To enhance its nationally recognized professional schools and colleges, including Medicine, Management, Law, and Fine Arts. The University's commitments to Medicine, Law, and Management are key to its prominence as a major urban research university. The College of Fine Arts offers a special opportunity for showcasing Boston University on campus, in the city, and around the world.
- To increase its emphasis on interdisciplinary research and graduate education in order to expand its leadership in important fields and the collaborative atmosphere across the University's campuses.
- To continue to foster the engagement of the University in the City and the world, through public service and by extending the reach of its educational programs, including both study-abroad opportunities for Boston-based students and the creation of new opportunities for students from around the world to experience a Boston University education.

In addition, the University strives to maintain and improve aging and historic buildings and infrastructure throughout the Charles River Campus to provide improved accessibility, living, and academic environments for students, faculty, and visitors.

5.0 PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT

5.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Project Site is an approximately 9,331 sf parcel in the Kenmore Square neighborhood of Boston. It is bounded by Commonwealth Avenue to the north, Brookline Avenue to the west, and Newbury Street to the south. The 26,850 sf, three-story building on the Project Site shares a wall with the abutting buildings to the east and west. All three buildings have commercial uses on the ground floor. The Project Site is located adjacent to the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's (MBTA) Green Line Kenmore Station and is in close proximity to the MBTA Commuter Rail Lansdowne Station. Although located near the IMP Area, this property is not currently

included in the Boston University Charles River Campus IMP. See Figure 1, Locus Map; Figure 2, Boston University Charles River Campus IMP Area; Figure 3, Aerial View of Project Site; Figure 4, Existing Conditions Photographs Key; and Figure 5; Existing Conditions Photographs – Exterior.

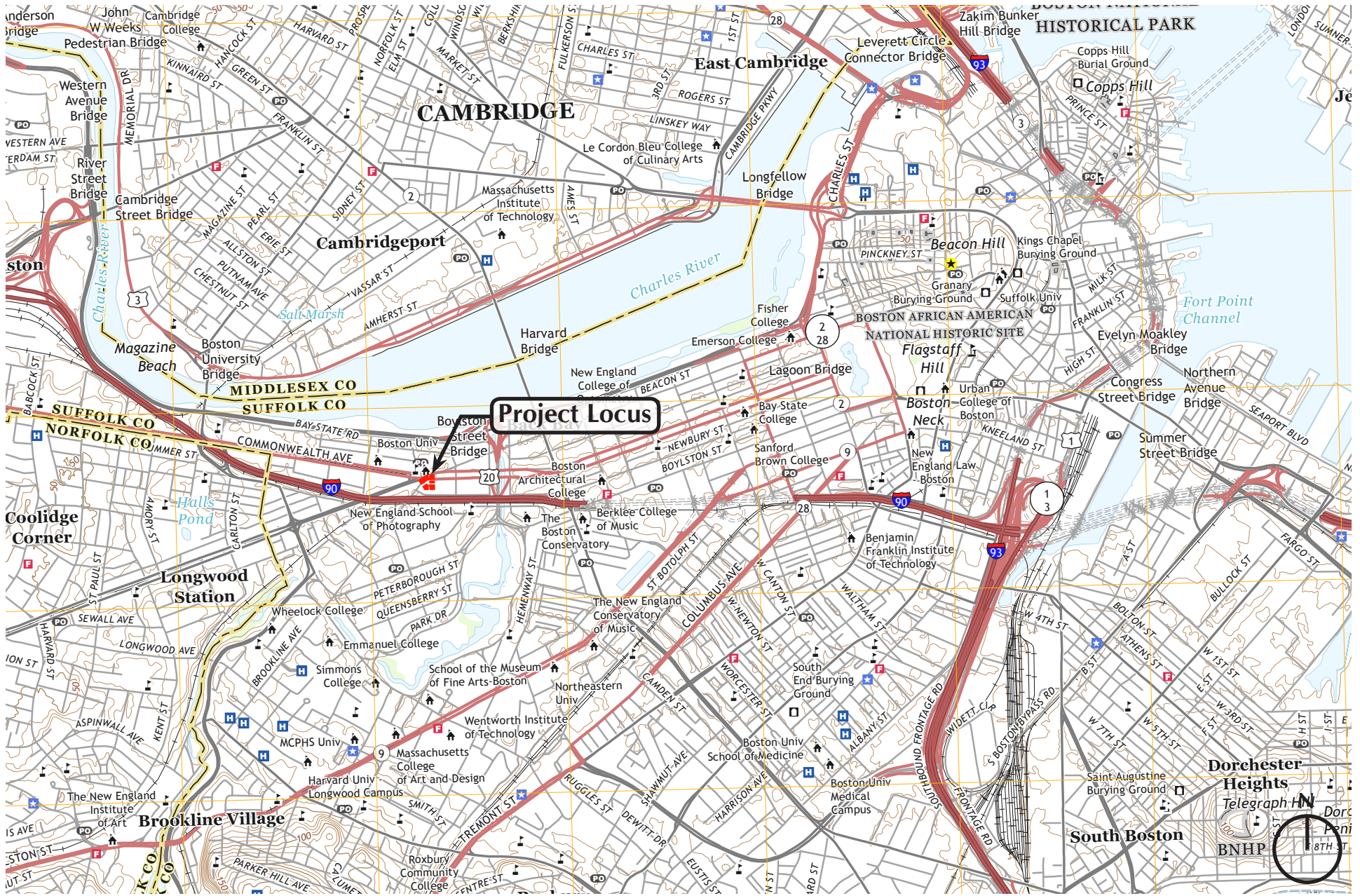
The upper two floors of the Project building were previously used as a Kaplan Testing Prep center. Each floor contains a variety of spaces previously used for instructional and conference uses as well as men’s and women’s restrooms. Stairs and an elevator serve each floor and are located toward the center of the floor plan. An additional fire stair is located along the south end of the building. The ground floor of the Project includes only the stairwell and a small lobby for the elevator. See Figure 6, Existing Conditions Photographs – Interior; Figure 7, Existing Ground Floor Plan; Figure 8, Existing Second Floor Plan; and Figure 9, Existing Third Floor Plan.

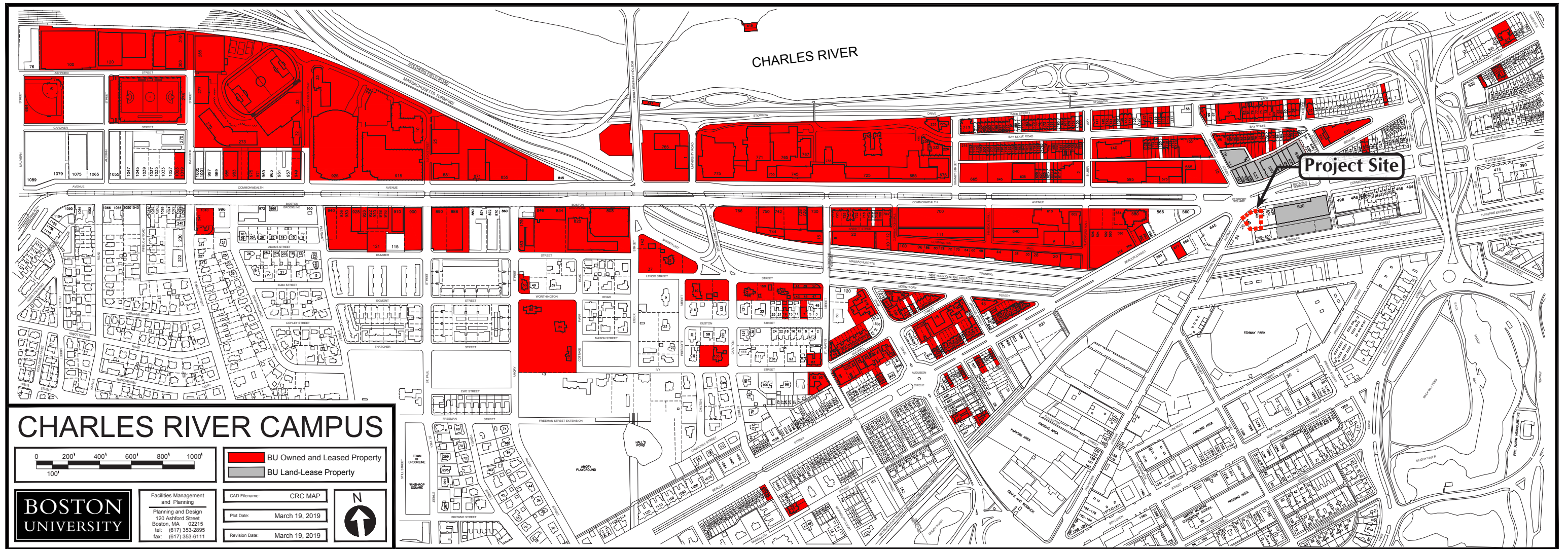
5.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Proponent proposes to lease 16,280 sf on floors two and three of this three-story building for academic and administrative uses to support the University’s on-line programs. The Project will include minor interior reconfiguration to best suit these programmatic needs.

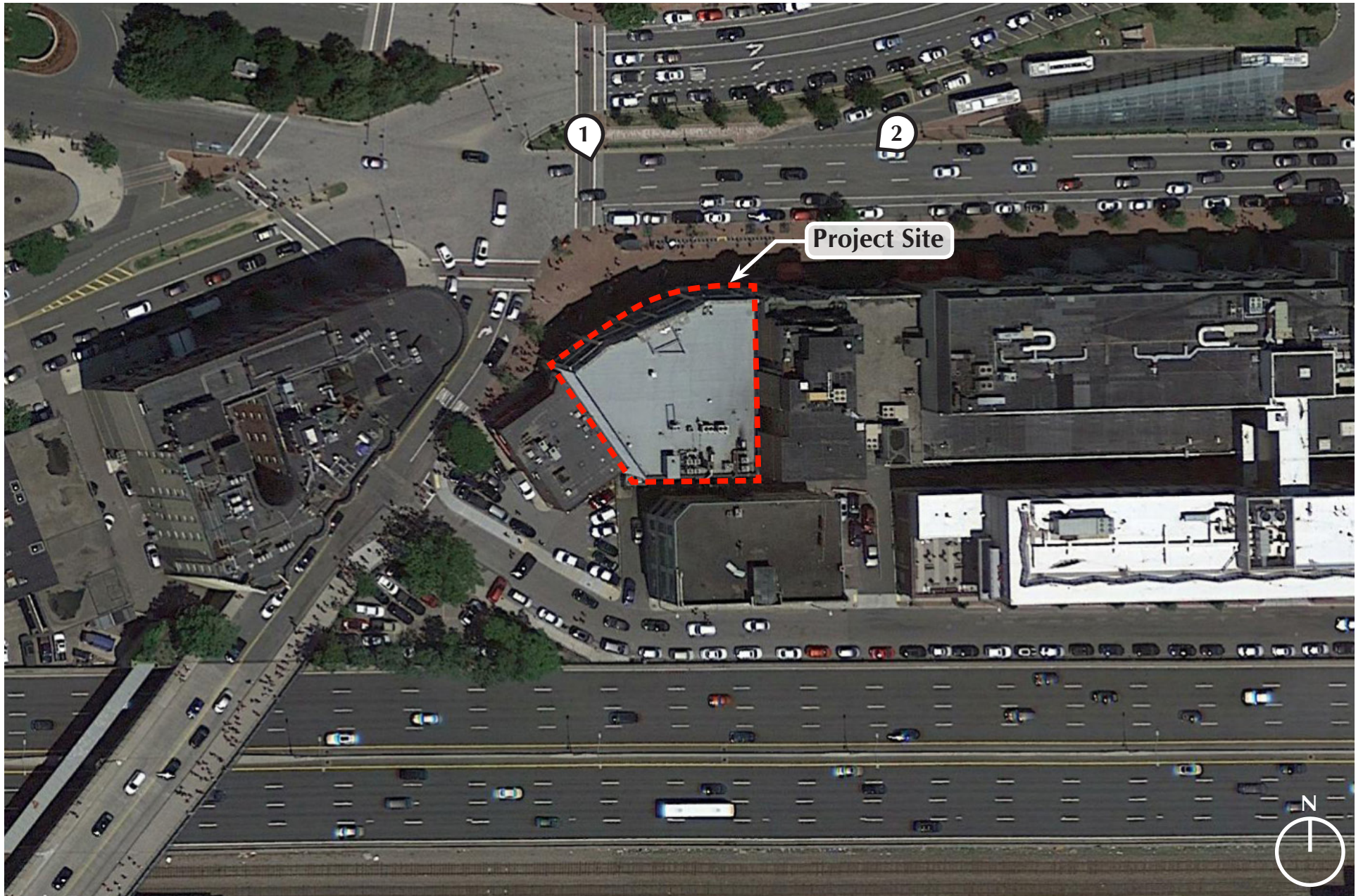
Below is a description of the Project elements:

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|-----------------------|---|
| Address: | 540 Commonwealth Avenue |
| Property Owner: | The Shubert Foundation |
| Lessee: | Trustees of Boston University |
| Zoning: | B-4 General Business |
| Current Occupant/Use: | Vacant |
| Building size: | 24,420 sf (RSF)/3 floors |
| Area of Lease: | 16,280 sf (RSF) on floors 2 and 3 |
| Duration of Lease: | 5 years with options for two 5-year renewal periods |
| Proposed Uses: | Academic/Administrative |











Exterior View 1: Looking south toward Project Site from Commonwealth Avenue



Exterior View 2: Looking southwest toward Project Site from Commonwealth Avenue



Interior View 1: North-facing instructional space



Interior View 2: Interior instructional space

