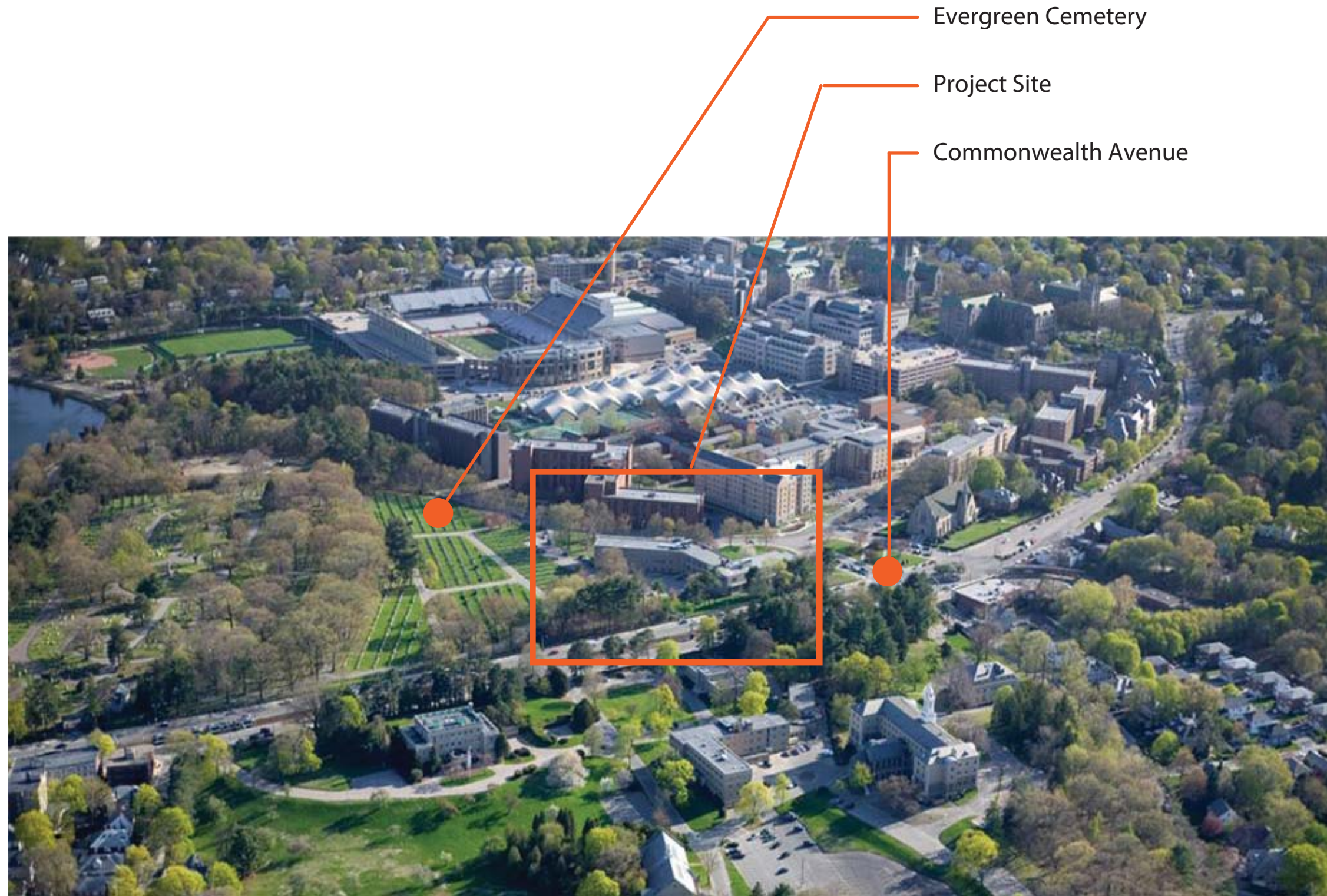




Boston College
2150 Commonwealth Avenue Residence Hall

Boston Civic Design Commission Briefing Package May 28, 2013



Location

The Boston College 2150 Commonwealth Avenue Residence Hall Project will be located at the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and St. Thomas More Road in the northeast corner of the Boston College Chestnut Hill Campus. This 146,575 square foot site is south of Commonwealth Avenue, east and north of St. Thomas More Road, and west of the Evergreen Cemetery. St. Thomas More Hall, which has been vacant since Spring 2012, will be demolished and replaced by this Project.

Access to the Project Site is from St. Thomas More Road via Commonwealth Avenue, a major arterial roadway. The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority's (MBTA) Green Line B Branch runs along Commonwealth Avenue and terminates diagonally across Commonwealth Avenue from the project site.

Context

Boston College's Chestnut Hill Campus sits south of Commonwealth Avenue and includes three parts that reflect the topography of the site that slopes down from Upper, Middle, and Lower campuses. The Project Site is located in the northeast corner of the Lower Campus, which contains academic, cultural and athletic facilities, two parking facilities, space for student activities, and dining and student residence halls. The Project Site is directly across Commonwealth Avenue from the Brighton Campus.

The existing urban fabric along the south side of Commonwealth Avenue is characterized by three- to six- story buildings clad in masonry. The façades of the University's other residential and academic buildings facing northward to Commonwealth Avenue remain parallel to the road as it bends and are generally comprised of groups of orthogonal masses, each of moderate length (100-200 feet) and generally topped by a mixture of gabled and flat roofs. These buildings tend to form a very porous streetwall, set back between 40 feet and 60 feet from Commonwealth Avenue.

The Project Site contains an existing building, St. Thomas More Hall, which housed University administrative offices until Spring 2012. This 3-story, 64,584 gsf building was constructed in 1955 for use as the Boston College Law School. It is situated approximately in the middle of the site, which slopes down approximately 16 feet from the north side along Commonwealth Avenue to the south side where the main driveway is located along the Evergreen Cemetery. The lot is generally landscaped with a mix of canopy trees and lawn on all sides except the east side, where a parking lot for approximately 88 vehicles is located.



Institutional Master Plan and Student Housing

Boston College’s 2009 Institutional Master Plan (IMP), as approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), established a series of guiding principles for future campus development. These principles included the formation of a cohesive overall campus, the co-mingling of multiple university uses throughout the campus, and planning and architecture that reflects the best of the university’s historic Middle Campus. Future development should emulate the scale, density, and proportion of open space to building found in the Middle Campus, and should do so with an overarching focus on sustainable development. Most germane to this project, the IMP proposes the development of undergraduate student housing that enables BC’s residential life mission of promoting holistic student formation.

Boston College’s Residential Life mission is characterized by an inclusive, Jesuit educational philosophy of developing the whole person: mind, body and soul. The university aims to provide a residential experience that contributes to personal development and a sense of community through providing safe, comfortable space for continuous learning and adult mentorship, spiritual growth and communal gathering. As outlined in the IMP, the university’s goal is to fully meet undergraduate student housing demand in university-controlled housing. By providing a mix of traditional, suite-style and apartment style units across campus in low-rise buildings (six stories or less), BC is able to meet its goals of student formation and reinforce habits of good student behavior. Current campus housing is provided in the following locations:

Chestnut Hill Lower Campus (location of proposed Project)	3,147 students (43%)
Chestnut Hill Middle Campus	1,334 students (18%)
Chestnut Hill Upper Campus	1,974 students (27%)
Newton Campus	875 students (12%)



Proposed Project

The proposed new student residence hall will have 484 beds in a mixture of 4-bed and 6-bed apartments, within multiple wings that partially surround a landscaped courtyard. The program for the approximately 245,000 sf building also includes two adult-in-residence apartments, common areas (including study lounges, music practice rooms, floor lounges, a main common room, a seminar room, and a laundry room), and a new home for Boston College Health Services. The Project will result in a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.65 and lot coverage of 28 percent.

Vehicular access to the site for parking, Health Services use, and building services will be from St. Thomas More Road through a driveway entrance located at the south side of the Project Site. There will be parking spaces for approximately 22 vehicles located along the eastern portion of the Project Site, a net reduction of 66 spaces from the existing 88 spaces. A service drive for deliveries will be located along the east wing of the building. This east area is also the possible future site of a secondary road that will cross Commonwealth Avenue and connect the Chestnut Hill Campus with the Brighton Campus. The access roadway and landscape have been designed to anticipate this future development.

According to the City of Boston Zoning Code, the underlying zoning of the Chestnut Hill Campus property is the Boston College IMP. The Project is described as a “Proposed Institutional Project” in the Boston College IMP, approved in 2009. While the current design is in keeping with the intent of the Project as described in the IMP, the design of the proposed Project has evolved. The following table illustrates the proposed program of uses, as compared to the original program outlined in the 2009 IMP:

Condition	Existing IMP	Proposed IMP
Gross Square Feet	Total - 282,000 Housing - 235,000 Retail - 12,000 Parking - <= 35,000	Total - 245,000 Housing - 234,000 Health Services - 11,000
Stories	4-6	5-6
Height (feet)	60	79.5
Use	Undergraduate Housing, Retail, Parking	Undergraduate Housing, Health Services, Parking
Number of Beds	470	484
Parking Spaces	0-100	22

Urban Design Principles

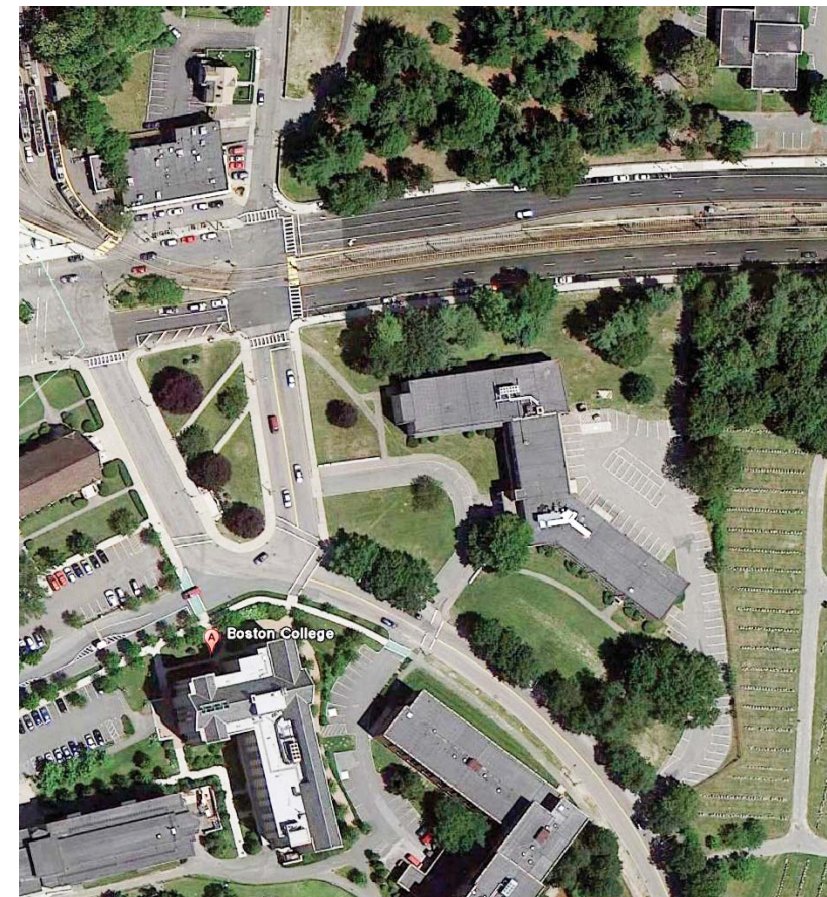
Four urban design principles stated in the IMP resonate particularly for the Project Site:

First, that key sites should act as gateways to the Boston College campus. The design should provide a landmark to vehicles and pedestrians approaching Boston College from the east headed west on Commonwealth Avenue. The design should include elements that address this primary gateway onto the Boston College campus.

The second major design principle is to respond to the IMP's imperatives for strong building composition along major streets, in this case Commonwealth Avenue. Since the existing fabric presents varied lengths of major masses rather than uninterrupted streetwall conditions, the design should be articulated to relate to this scale, and activated by architectural elements of varied scale, transparency and materials. Architecture that responds to the historic language of the campus, through massing, rooflines, and materials will contribute to this composition.

A third key principle is to create memorable open spaces. Such an exterior space should be positioned for good solar orientation so that the spaces are welcoming for the campus community and reinforce the approach to site circulation and the IMP's imperatives for gateways and linked courtyards. The design should encourage pedestrians within the Chestnut Hill Campus to continue through a memorable open space, and to connect eastward and northward toward the Brighton Campus. An open space associated with this Project should be identifiable as simultaneously belonging to the building, the campus, and the City.

Finally, a fourth principle is that the design should express its most active interior uses to establish visual connections between the inside and outside. Therefore, the design should present the street with a mixture of masonry and glazing, with the glazing at entries and common areas articulated to provide clear wayfinding for pedestrians while using the social character of floor lounges and study lounges to animate the street façades.



Site Design

The 2150 Commonwealth Avenue Residence Hall is strategically located to become both a link to the Brighton Campus and the threshold marking the beginning of the existing campus on Commonwealth Avenue.

The University intends to retain and/or replace many of the existing trees to help separate the building from the scenic parkway while maintaining the nature of the 40 - 60 foot setback of campus buildings from Commonwealth Avenue. The site plan continues the strong row of red oaks that exists along St. Thomas More Road out to Commonwealth Avenue. The primary pedestrian crossing between Lower Campus and the Brighton Campus will remain at the signalized intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Lake Street.

The site design also restricts service areas, with Health Services' vehicular needs, service parking, move-in requirements, and other activities located to the east side, so that these areas are not situated within the primary vehicular or pedestrian approaches. A tree-lined pathway along the east flank of the building handles the pedestrian circulation heading south toward the University's Lower Campus.

The resulting oval lawn of the central courtyard accomplishes important goals surrounding accessibility. There is 16 feet of grade change from the southernmost portion of the site up to Commonwealth Avenue. To create an accessible route to the building's main entry, the courtyard incorporates a long curving ramp along the north side of the lawn. To the south is a slightly shorter sloped path with steps. These two divided paths enclose the central lawn both defining its oval shape and landform, and directing primary circulation around it. By redirecting this flow of traffic, this central space becomes a place for students to gather and for informal recreational activities.

Public Realm

The 2009 IMP identified the proposed buildings on the Project Site as one of four "Green Gateways" at the edges of campus. The naturally landscaped edge of this site along Commonwealth Avenue distinguishes a formal campus entry and serves as a transitional buffer to the Brighton neighborhood. The building form and massing also contribute to defining a prominent campus edge.

The strong vertical elements with substantial glazing associated with the main entries, stair towers, and study lounges will extend visual cues already present at Stayer Hall (adjacent to the Project site) and other campus buildings to create a harmonious public entrance to the campus. The building massing facing Commonwealth Avenue will maintain a considerable setback from the street edge with landscaped buffers in order to retain and/or replace the motte of trees along the Commonwealth Avenue frontage.

The design reinforces key view corridors and provides visual landmarks appropriate in scale and character to the campus context. The design calls for a major beacon with transparent glazing at the northeast corner facing Commonwealth Avenue and the Brighton Campus. Also included are smaller beacons associated with transparent glazed study lounges on Floors 1-5, strategically located at the corners of the building in order to be clearly visible from the T stop to the northwest, from the main part of St. Thomas More Road approaching from the south, and from campus pathways to the southwest.

The configuration of the building and courtyard will ensure that the courtyard and nearby public walkways are unshaded through most of the day, having prominent western and southern exposures. The courtyard itself not only contributes a strong new sense of place to the building, but to the sense of place within the campus and within this part of the City.



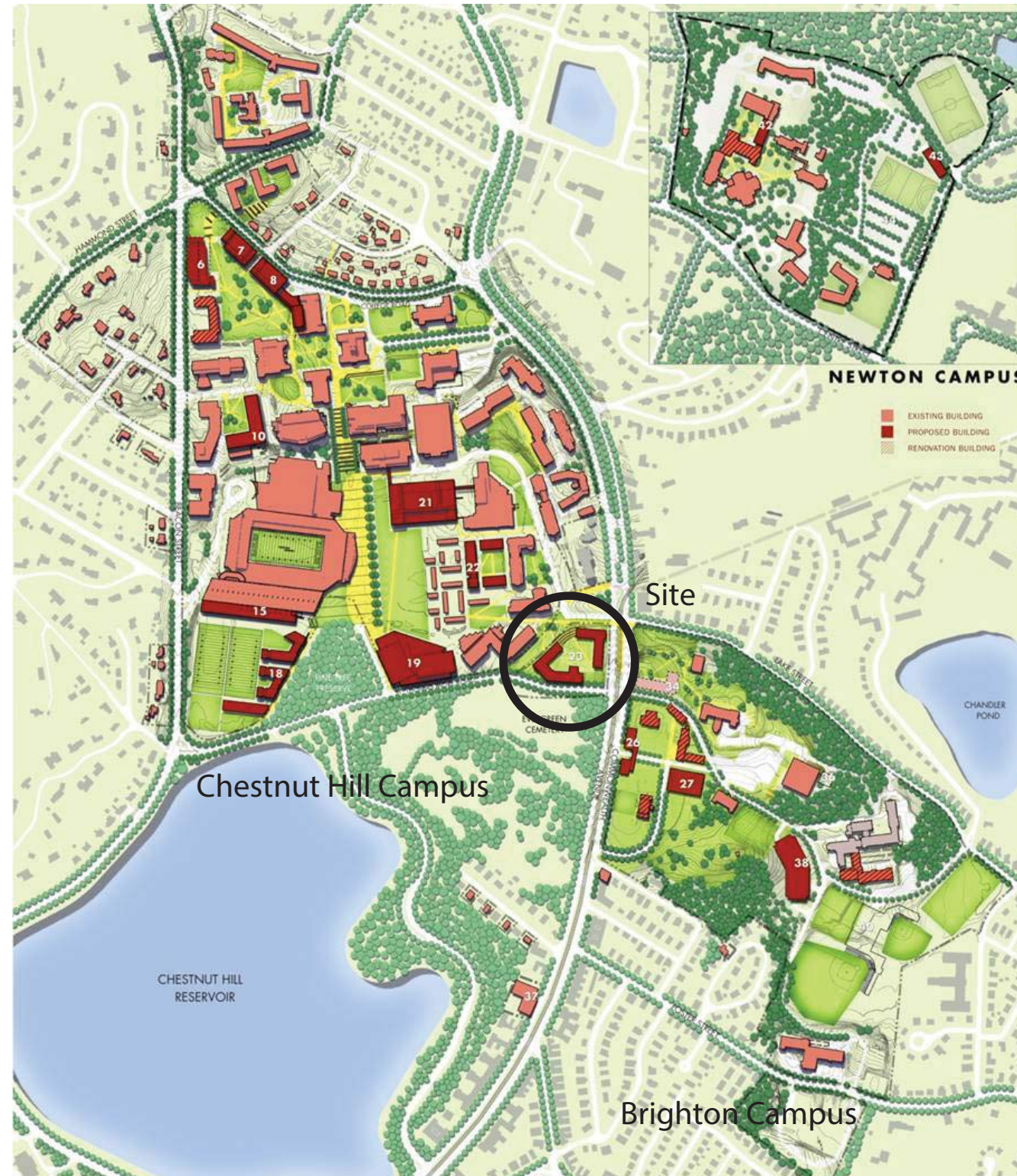
Architectural Design

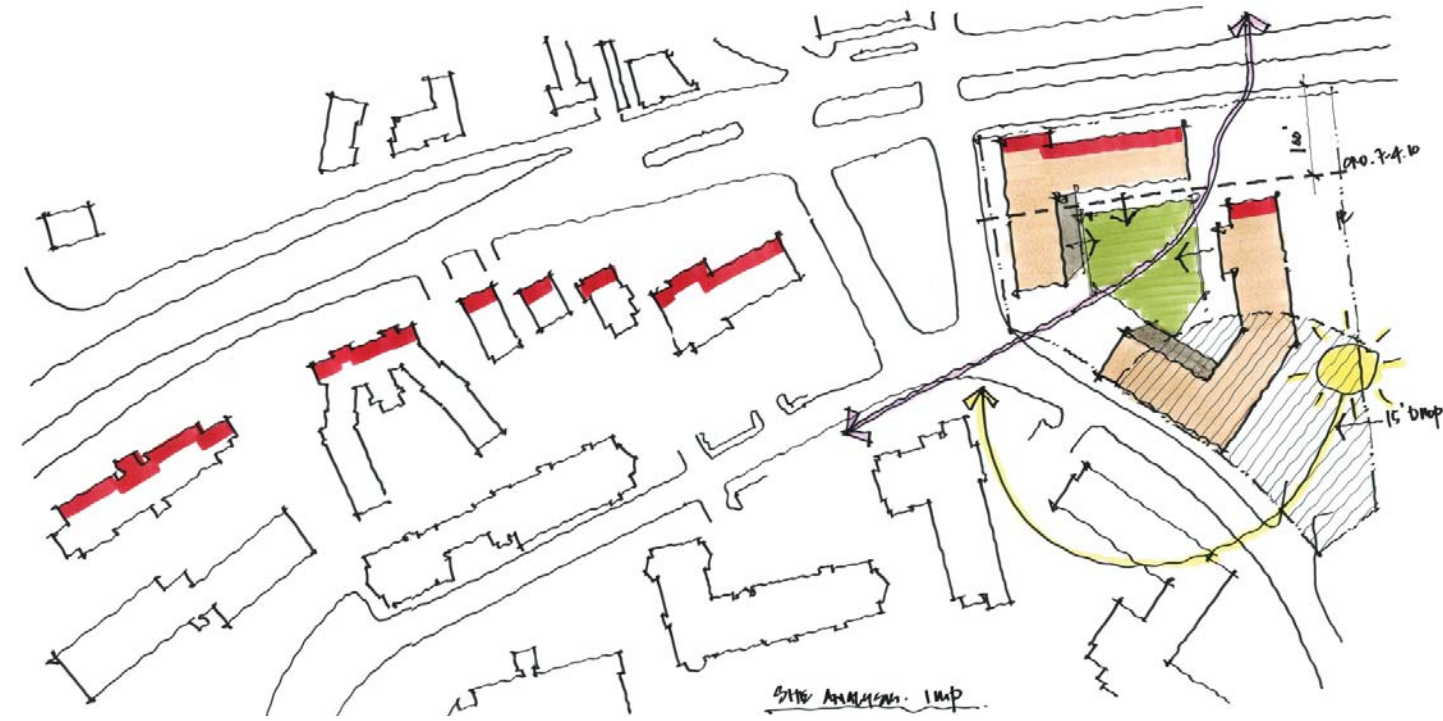
The architectural character of the building will be consistent with that of other buildings on the Lower Campus. Granite will be used in combination with brick and limestone to achieve a visual connection to Stayer Hall and St. Ignatius and a mnemonic connection to BC's Middle Campus. The body of the building will be clad in brick masonry with stone string courses and copings, and with punched openings defining a residential character consistent with the Lower Campus. Study lounges, floor lounges, and interconnecting stairs will feature significant glazing in order to provide daylight into corridors while acting as transparent lanterns to the City.

The roof shape will be articulated as a combination of sloped and flat roofs, sympathetic to the existing campus buildings and the adjacent St. Ignatius Church. The terminations of the sloped-roof portions will be expressed as carefully proportioned vertical gable ends with stone masonry, and polygonal bay windows articulate the longer faces of the architectural masses. The northeast corner of the building will serve as a beacon to mark the edge of Lower Campus as one travels east and west along Commonwealth Avenue.

Within the courtyard, the entry will be defined with a strong vertical articulation of glass denoting the upper floor lounges and a two-story, L-shaped limestone bay that marks the entry and the common room, clearly showing the pedestrian connectivity through the building mass to the east and then north toward the Brighton Campus. The entry volume will continue upward into glazing that reveals both the double-height entry space and the floor lounges on floors 3 and 5. The outer wings that define the courtyard to the north and south will utilize gable ends and punched openings with vertically composed elements to reinforce the building's visual link to the traditional Collegiate Gothic character of Boston College's Middle Campus.





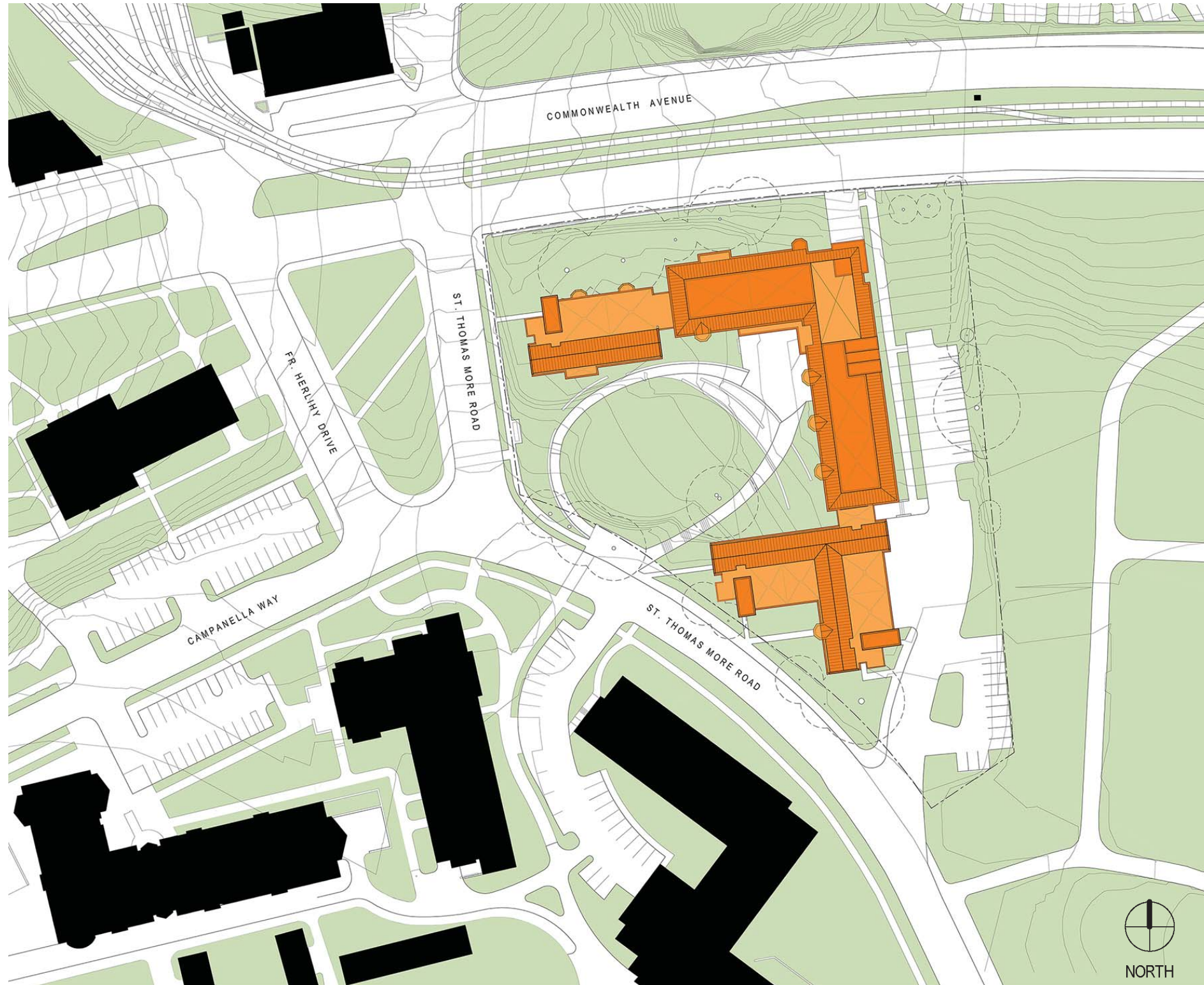


IMP FOOTPRINT



PROPOSED FOOTPRINT



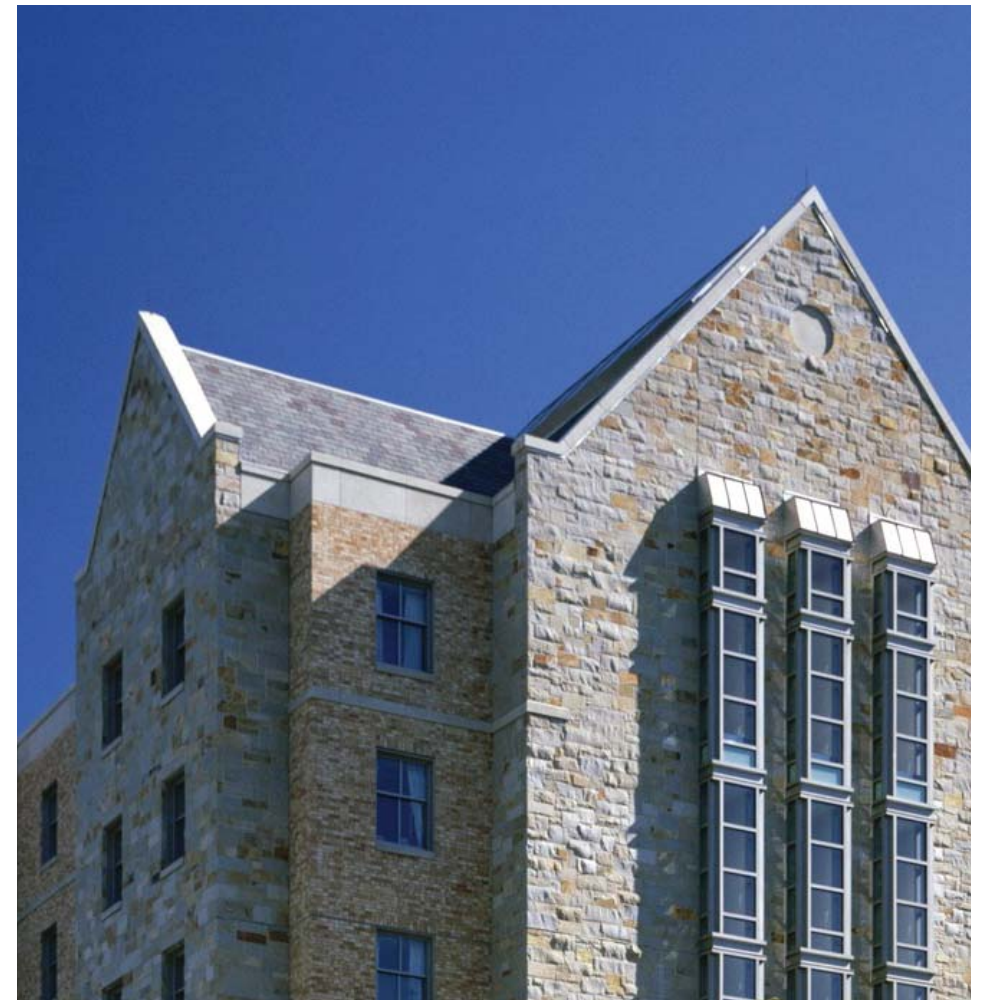
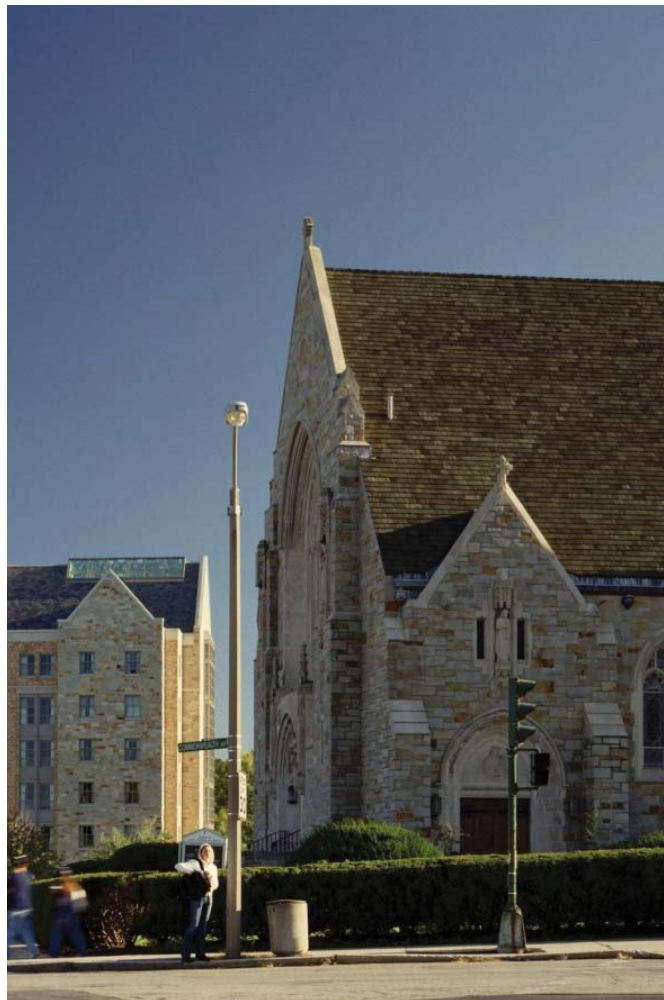














Boston College / 2150 Commonwealth Avenue Residence Hall

EYP/ STEPHEN STIMSON ASSOCIATES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Fort Point Associates, Inc.
Urban Planning Environmental Consulting Project Permitting

Commonwealth Avenue Perspective







Boston College / 2150 Commonwealth Avenue Residence Hall



Appendix: Excerpt from 2009 Institutional Master Plan

Proposed Institutional Projects - Boston

While Boston College's plans for the next 10 years include projects on all three campuses, this section describes the specific projects located in the City of Boston, including properties located on the Brighton Campus and the Chestnut Hill Campus. Projects in the City of Newton are not a formal part of the IMP submittal to the City of Boston, but are an integral part of the 10-year plan for the development of Boston College. The Newton projects are described in detail in a later section of this chapter.

The projects proposed in the City of Boston are shown on Figure 5-1 and listed in Table 5-2. These projects include undergraduate residence halls, athletic fields and a support facility, tennis courts, a Recreation Center, a University Center, a Fine Arts District, a library storage building, additional parking in a new garage and the expansion of an existing garage. Inherent in each of these projects is the reflection of sustainable values: the desire to build compactly, to create a pattern of buildings and open space that allow for indoor and outdoor learning, to provide mixed use districts, and to create strong pedestrian networks that encourage walking.

Residential Life

The mission of the Office of Residential Life is to foster an inclusive residential community that complements the academic mission of the University. In support of this goal, Boston College intends to increase the supply of undergraduate student housing to meet 100 percent of undergraduate demand. The IMP includes Proposed Institutional Projects comprising a net total of 790 new beds¹ of undergraduate housing during three phases over the next 10 years. Since Boston College is committed to maintaining its undergraduate enrollment at approximately 9,000 students, adding 790 new beds will enable Boston College to provide University housing for 94 percent of BC undergraduates who seek it. These 790 new beds will free up housing for local residents in the Allston and Brighton neighborhoods. (See Chapter 6, *Student Housing Plan*, for an analysis of the impact of student housing demand on the local housing market.) In addition, this IMP reflects the University goal to provide housing for all undergraduates who seek it, by proposing a 150-bed residence hall at Commonwealth Avenue on the Brighton Campus as taken under advisement by the BRA Board and by listing an additional proposed future project for 350 beds.

More Hall Site

The More Hall site, at the intersection of St. Thomas More Road and Commonwealth Avenue, will be used to construct 470 beds of undergraduate apartment-style housing and possibly ground floor neighborhood retail space along Commonwealth Avenue. The retail space could contain businesses that primarily serve Boston College students, faculty, staff and local residents. The plan calls for two buildings that will be four-to-six stories in height. The More Hall residences will be built during phase one of the IMP.

¹ If the BRA Board takes a future vote to approve the 150 new beds that were taken under advisement at the January 29, 2009 BRA public meeting, and the Boston Zoning Commission subsequently approves such amendment to this IMP, the net number of beds of undergraduate student housing approved in the amended IMP will total 940 which would increase the total of BC students living on campus to 96 percent of demand.

The More Hall buildings are oriented east-west to take advantage of passive solar gain, with a courtyard ample enough to allow natural light on all sides. The courtyard opens to the southwest allowing natural light, while being protected from the northwest winter winds. The buildings will function as a gateway to the Lower Campus.

The land on this site slopes the equivalent of one floor level from Commonwealth Avenue toward St. Thomas More Road on the south side of the site. This could allow for one level of underground parking along Commonwealth Avenue containing up to 100 parking spaces. As a sustainable concept, this below-grade parking helps reduce the amount of impervious surface area and stormwater runoff.

Shea Field

Commander Shea Field, at the corner of St. Thomas More Road and Beacon Street, sits adjacent to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, Pine Tree Preserve and Alumni Stadium. Boston College plans to build housing for up to 550 students in three buildings of five-to-six stories on a compact portion of the existing playfields. One building with 170 beds will be built in the first phase and the remaining two buildings with 380 beds will be built during phase two of IMP construction. These proposed buildings are set back approximately 60 to 180 feet from St. Thomas More Road and are sited to take advantage of southern sun for passive solar gain and passive recreation in the accompanying housing courtyards. The buildings will be designed to allow for the retention of two-and-a-half practice fields on the Shea Field Site.

Modular Housing Site

The University's long-range plan calls for eliminating all of the modular housing buildings and replacing them with new residence halls that would be built around a new quadrangle. This plan will be accomplished in two phases. The first phase of development, which is included in the 10-year plan, will replace the northernmost cluster of buildings with a residence hall of four to five stories in height. The building will provide housing for 185 students and will be built during phase three of IMP construction. This first phase of modular replacement housing is oriented east-west to maximize passive solar gain. By creating a more compact area for student beds, long-term development of this site will allow much-needed green space to occupy a portion of the existing modular housing site, while also supporting stormwater management goals by significantly decreasing the amount of impervious surface area in this district.

The second phase, anticipated to occur in the early stages of the next 10-year Master Plan cycle, will replace the remaining modular units with a new quadrangle and a second residence hall with 75 beds. A total of 260 beds are planned for the long term.

The planned University Center and Recreation Center, as well as the existing Corcoran Commons dining facility, will be adjacent to this site.