

BOSTON COLLEGE

Catholic Religious Archives Institutional Master Plan Notification Form for Amendment



SUBMITTED TO

Boston Planning & Development Agency
Boston, Massachusetts

SUBMITTED BY

Boston College
140 Commonwealth Avenue
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

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1. PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION

The purpose of this submission is to amend Boston College's current Institutional Master Plan (the "IMP"), originally approved in 2009 and last renewed through November 17, 2025, to reflect modifications to the Library Storage Project (referred to herein as the "Project", or, in its amended form, as the "Catholic Religious Archives"). As outlined in Section 6 below, the proposed modifications to the Project qualify for the expedited amendment procedure of Section 80D-9.2 of the Boston Zoning Code (the "Code").

2. OVERVIEW OF BOSTON COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL MASTER PLAN

In the spring of 2004, Boston College ("the University") embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning initiative to assess its academic program and to set institutional goals for a decade and beyond. After several years of planning, a strategic plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees in February of 2006. Following two years of consultation with the surrounding neighborhood, Boston College submitted an Institutional Master Plan Notification Form ("IMP NF") outlining the institutional needs of the University in December of 2007. In response to a Scoping Determination issued by the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA"), Boston College submitted an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) in June of 2008. The IMP was ultimately approved by the BRA on June 10, 2009, renewed in 2013 for a four-year period, renewed in 2017 for a four-year period through June 20, 2021, renewed in 2021 for a two-year period through October 14, 2023, and renewed in 2023 for a two-year period through November 17, 2025.

Since the IMP was approved in 2009, four amendments have been approved by the BRA. The First Amendment to the IMP reflected *de minimus* dimensional changes to the Thomas More Apartments located at 2150 Commonwealth Avenue. The First Amendment went into effect in October 2013. The Second Amendment to the IMP reflected a proposed change for the renovation of 2101 Commonwealth Avenue (formerly known as the Cardinal's Residence) for a University Conference Center and the McMullen Museum of Art. The Second Amendment went into effect in May 2014. The Third Amendment to the IMP reflected *de minimus* dimensional changes to the Margot Connell Recreation Center project located at 200 St. Thomas More Road. The Third Amendment went into effect in July 2016. The Fourth Amendment to the IMP added the Fish Field House located at 12 Chestnut Hill Driveway as a Proposed Institutional Project. The Fourth Amendment went into effect in March 2017. A modest expansion and renovation of the Conte Forum was permitted as an Exempt Project and was completed in August of 2023.

Since 1975, the University has engaged in a comprehensive, long-range strategic planning process to guide its institutional vision and assess its academic programs. In 2006, the Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan entitled "Excellence, Distinction, Leadership: Boston

College in the 21st Century," which was the result of a two-year assessment and planning process that involved more than 200 faculty, staff, and students.

The strategic plan outlined the following seven strategic objectives for the future of Boston College:

1. Commit Boston College to becoming the leader in liberal arts education among American universities.
2. Develop and implement a student formation program that will be a contemporary model for colleges and universities committed to student formation.
3. Identify and support selected research commitments that will achieve excellence and distinction in addressing urgent societal problems.
4. Commit targeted resources to selected natural sciences emphases that will establish Boston College as a national leader in these areas.
5. Build on the strengths and reputations of Boston College's professional schools to establish leadership in critical professional areas.
6. Become a significant intellectual and cultural crossroads by leveraging Boston College's international resources and partnerships, and its Jesuit and Catholic networks.
7. Become the world's leading Catholic university and theological center.

Upon the completion of the 2006 Strategic Plan, the University developed a long-range Campus Master Plan that would provide the University with an opportunity to achieve excellence by using the strength and distinctiveness of its campus to reinforce its mission and strategic objectives. During this process, the University established the following six guiding principles essential to fulfilling its institutional objectives:

1. Create One Campus—That the former Archdiocesan property become fully integrated with the Boston College campus, and that the 120-acre Chestnut Hill Campus, the 40-acre Newton Campus and the 65-acre Brighton Campus each provide a notable setting that contributes to the campus learning environment and the life of the University.
2. Develop Mixed Campus Uses—That Boston College's campuses host a mix of academic, residential and co-curricular facilities, and provide open space areas that foster a vibrant and engaged University community.

3. Emulate the Character of the Middle Campus—That the new facilities on the Lower Campus reflect the distinctive character of the Middle Campus with its combination of Gothic architecture and collegiate open spaces, linked quadrangles, and walkways.
4. Provide Appropriate Campus Density—That campus development emulate the Middle Campus' proportion of open space to building space, reflecting the Middle Campus height (four to five stories) and open-space pattern, while respecting the character of the surrounding community.
5. Promote Student Formation—That the Lower and Brighton Campuses develop undergraduate student housing reflecting the University's commitment to student formation that supports intellectual development and responsible student behavior in smaller living communities.
6. Achieve Sustainability—That development on each campus achieve higher levels of energy efficiency and champion the natural environment, and that sustainability goals be carefully considered with each project.

Figure 1 (2009 Institutional Master Plan) shows Boston College's ten-year campus plan as outlined in the 2009 IMP, encompassing the projects contemplated in Boston, as well as those projects planned for the Chestnut Hill Upper and Middle Campuses and the Newton Centre Campus. **Figure 2** (Master Plan Update) indicates which facilities have been completed since 2009 and those that remain for possible future development. Listed below are those projects—both entirely new construction and renovations to existing facilities—that have been completed or are in progress in Boston and Newton since the approval of the 2009 IMP.

Boston

1. Renovation of 129 Lake Street (formerly known as Bishop Peterson Hall) for administrative office space, completed in October 2011.
 2. Development of the Cadigan Alumni Center at 2121 Commonwealth Avenue (formerly known as the Chancery) for administrative offices for University Advancement, completed in February 2012.
 3. Renovation of 2101 Commonwealth Avenue (formerly known as the Cardinal's Residence) for a University Conference Center and the McMullen Museum of Art, completed in February 2016.
 4. Construction of Thomas More Apartments at 2150 Commonwealth Avenue consisting of 490 student beds and the University Health Center, completed in August 2016.
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5. Renovation and conversion of Reservoir Apartments (formerly known as 2000 Commonwealth Avenue) to create a 540-bed student residence hall, completed in August 2016.
6. Construction of the Harrington Athletics Village on the Brighton Campus consisting of a baseball field with 1,000 seats, softball field with 300 seats, and a grass recreational field, completed in March 2017.
7. Construction of the Fish Field House, an indoor practice facility housing a full-size football field, strength and conditioning space and offices serving the football program, as well as other campus recreation programs, completed in August 2018.
8. Construction of the state-of-the-art Margot Connell Recreation Center with two pools, basketball courts, indoor track, fitness and weight areas, multi-purpose recreation courts, a climbing wall, and outdoor recreation center, completed in July 2019.
9. Construction of the Pete Frates Center, an indoor practice facility, batting cages, lockers rooms, strength and conditioning space and offices for the baseball and softball programs, completed in November 2020.
10. Construction of the Hoag Basketball Pavilion, a 10,000 GFA addition and 22,235 GFA renovation to Conte Forum for new men's and women's basketball team locker rooms, sport medicine suite, strength and conditioning room, nutrition suite, accessibility and landscape improvements, completed in August 2023.

Newton

1. Construction of Stokes Hall humanities building with classrooms and faculty offices, completed in December 2012.
2. Renovation of St. Mary's Hall for the Jesuit Community residence and academic space for the University's Woods College of Advancing Studies, and the Communication and Computer Science departments, completed in December 2014.
3. Construction of 157,000 sf Integrated Science Building/aka 245 Beacon Street housing research labs, maker space, classrooms, office and the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society focusing on climate, energy, and public health research, completed in December 2021.

For the past two years, the University has been engaged in a comprehensive planning exercise intended to identify its anticipated facility requirements for the next decade, to provide for future infrastructure improvements in the areas of campus mobility and resiliency, and to further integrate its campuses, which now include the former Pine Manor College campus in Brookline and the former Mt. Alvernia High School campus ("Newton East"). The University opened Messina College, a new two-year residential associate's degree program designed for

first generation students with high financial need and welcomed the first class to the Brookline Campus in July of 2024. The University is currently in the planning process for the renovation of the former Mt. Alvernia High School and the relocation of BC's graduate school of social work on the Newton East Campus.

The University plans to start construction of the Catholic Religious Archives Project in January 2025, after completion of regulatory review.

3. BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CATHOLIC SCHOLARSHIP

Included among Boston College's strategic goals is the advancement of the University as one of the foremost international centers for Catholic scholarship. Initiatives realizing this goal began as early as 2008 when the University established the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry ("STM"), a world-class center of theological study, now ranked among the top ten graduate schools for theology, divinity, and religious studies worldwide. More recently, the University completely renovated the former Creagh Library on the Brighton Campus to house the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History and its collection of over 400,000 digital documents, photos, manuscripts, paintings, and artifacts supporting research on the Jesuit missions of the 16th–19th centuries and the history of Christianity in China and East Asia.

The Theology and Ministry Library (the "Library") is housed in a dedicated facility on the Brighton Campus. The facility serves both the St. John's Seminary and the Boston College STM and houses the collections of both institutions. With over 300,000 volumes, the Library is the largest collection of Catholic literature outside of the Vatican Libraries.

In 2018, Boston College hosted a conference on "Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives." The conference brought together 160 archivists, historians, and leaders of religious communities to consider ways of ensuring that archival holdings of various religious orders and congregations would be maintained and available to future generations. In response to this crucial need—made more urgent as many such orders have been forced to close due to declining vocations and financial exigency—Boston College established a Catholic Religious Archives Repository ("Repository") to assist in the collection, preservation, and study of institutional records and documents belonging to Catholic religious orders and congregations in the United States and Canada. Boston College has begun the process of accepting archival materials from numerous religious orders and will soon exhaust its available archival storage space for this purpose.

The 2009 IMP included among its Proposed Institutional Projects an approximately 40-foot high, 14,000 gross square foot, Library Storage building to be located next to the Library. As further outlined below, Boston College proposes to amend this Proposed Institutional Project to support the Repository.

4. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO EXISTING LIBRARY STORAGE PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT

The Library Storage Project was described in the 2009 IMP as an approximately 40-foot high, 14,000 sf addition to the Library on the Brighton Campus “to provide a robotic library storage facility.” As shown on Figure 1, the Library Storage Project was located immediately to the North of the Library and east of Lake Street.

The amended Library Storage Project, referred to as the Catholic Religious Archives Project, will be in the same location as the Library Storage project, but enlarged to comprise less than 45,000 sf Gross Floor Area (“GFA”) with an overall height less than 55 feet. See **Figure 3** (Locus Map) and **Figure 4** (Aerial View). The project will house archival shelving, restrooms, and climate control mechanical equipment in a partial basement. The Project will be linked to the Library by a one-story connector. The Project will also be amended to incorporate two service parking stalls along the building, and two accessible parking stalls to the west of the building.

To comply with parking requirements of the underlying Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District zoning (Table J to Article 51) this Amendment also proposes that the existing, temporary surface parking lots comprising 45 spaces¹, located directly to the east of the Library as shown on the **Figure 4**, be incorporated into the 2009 IMP as part of the amended Project.

Table 1 summarizes the proposed modifications of the Project as compared to the Library Storage Project within the 2009 IMP.

Table 1: Dimensional Comparison between the Project and 2009 IMP PIP

Attribute	PIP within 2009 IMP	PIP within Proposed Amendment
Gross Floor Area	14,000	< 45,000
Height in Stories	N/A	3 ²
Height in Feet	40	< 55
Setback (from Lake Street)	N/A	120 Feet
Use	Library Storage	Library Storage
Parking	N/A	49 stalls ³
Loading Bay	N/A	1

¹ Permitted as a temporary facility in connection with the construction of the Frates Athletic Center under Article 10-3 of the Boston Zoning Code.

² The project is anticipated to have two stories fully above grade, with a partially exposed basement level that may qualify as a story under the applicable definition in the Boston Zoning Code.

³ As discussed above, 45 of these parking stalls currently exist on the Brighton campus as a temporary facility permitted under Article 10-3 of the Boston Zoning Code.

Additional information regarding the Catholic Religious Archives Project is provided within the Article 80 Small Project Review submission. See **Figure 5** (Project Site Plan), **Figure 6** (Rendering Looking West), and **Figure 7** (Rendering Looking Northwest).

5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

5.1. Community Outreach

The University is committed to continuing its public outreach with the Allston-Brighton Boston College Community Task Force (the “Task Force”), local elected officials, and the community-at-large. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from various community and civic organizations in Allston and Brighton. At a Task Force meeting on June 29, 2023, the University provided an overview and update on construction and renovation projects completed since the approval of the IMP in 2009, as well as ongoing projects, and a preliminary presentation on the Catholic Religious Archives Project. Following the Task Force meeting, the University has continued to incorporate feedback and work with BPDA staff to advance and refine the design of the Project.

5.2. Economic Benefits

The Project will provide a valuable source of employment for more than 200 construction workers from various trades during the Project’s construction.

Boston College is a major employer in the City of Boston and has an estimated economic impact on the City of \$1.6 billion annually. The Project will help to maintain the University’s strong contribution to the growth of the local and regional economies.

5.3. Job Creation

The University will create up to three full-time equivalent library staff positions.

The University is committed to using union labor on the Catholic Religious Archives Project.

6. ELIGIBILITY FOR EXPEDITED REVIEW

The project meets all of the requirements for expedited review under Section 80D-9.2 of the Code, “Expedited Review for Certain Small Projects.” Specifically, it meets the standards set forth in Section 80D-9.2(a), which requires that an amendment “proposes no changes to the Institutional Master Plan other than the addition of one or more Proposed Projects.” This IMPNF proposes no changes to the 2009 IMP other than the modifications to the Project described herein.

The project also meets the standards set forth in Section 80D-9.2(b) of the Code, “Projects Qualifying for Expedited Amendment Procedure.” Because the amended Project will have a GFA of less than 50,000 sf, it does not meet the size threshold for Large Project Review under Section 80B-2. Additionally, although not an exempt project, the Project meets the following requirements of 80D-9.2(b)(ii):

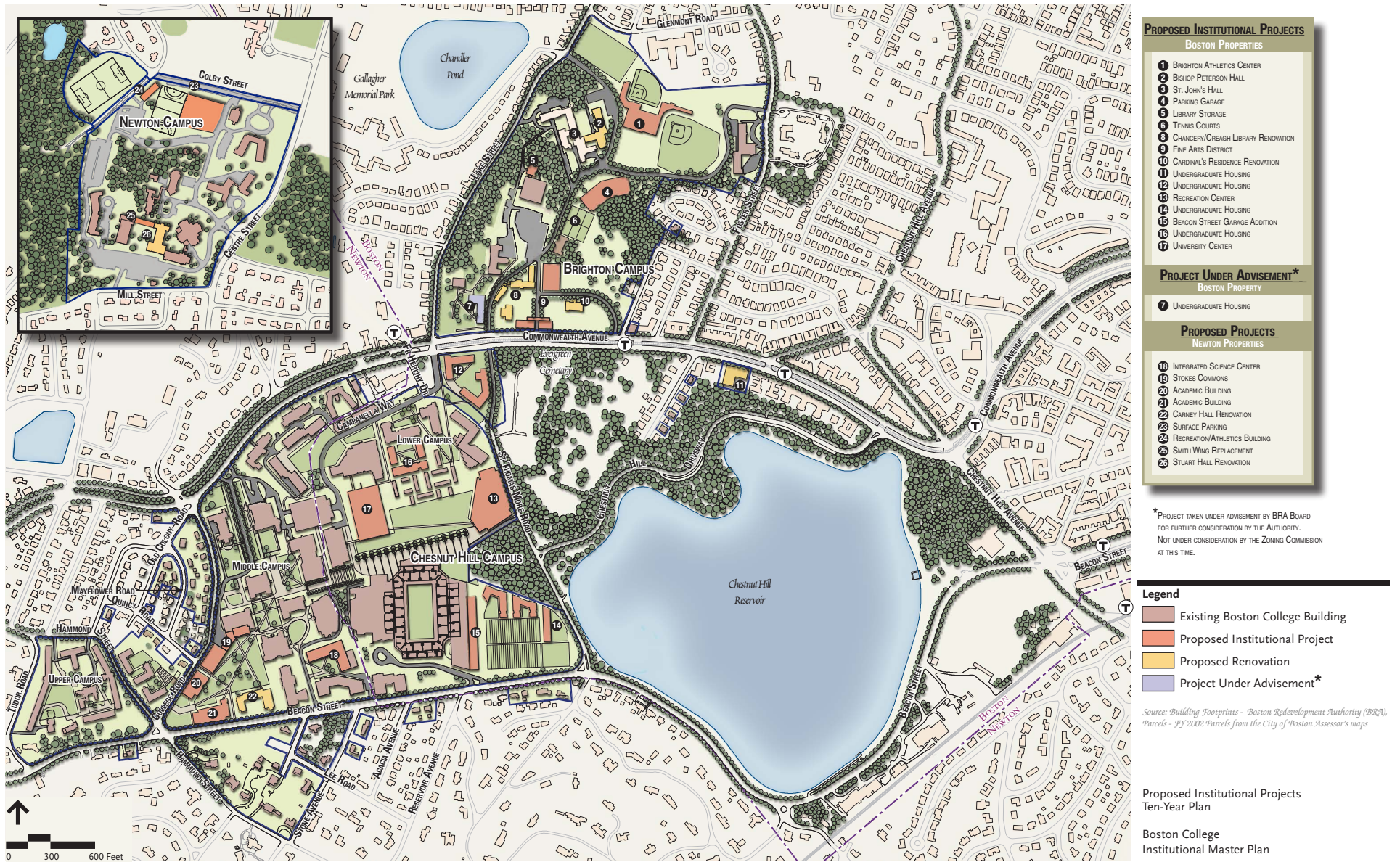
- The Project is located in the St. John’s Seminary Conservation Protection Subdistrict of the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District, where “the use category that most closely describes such project” [i.e., Library] is designated as an allowed use;
- The Project’s dimensions and parking and loading spaces meet all the requirements of the underlying zoning applicable to the use category that most closely describes the project, as outlined in the table below; and
- The Project is not a High Impact Subuse of an Institutional Use.

In support of this analysis, **Table 2** outlines the compliance of the Project with the underlying dimensional, parking, and loading bay requirements of the underlying zoning.

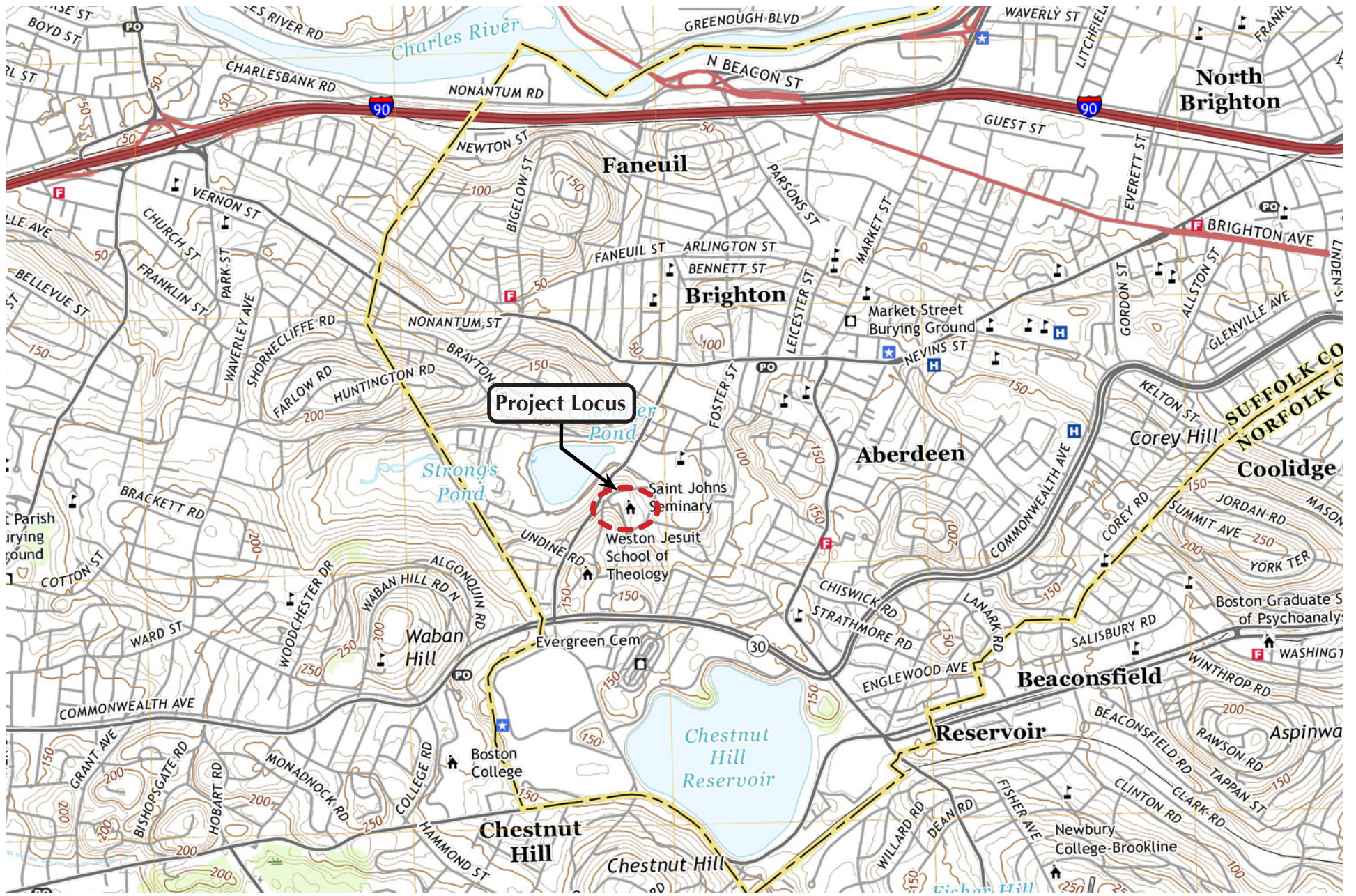
Table 2: Project Compliance with Underlying Zoning Dimensional Requirements

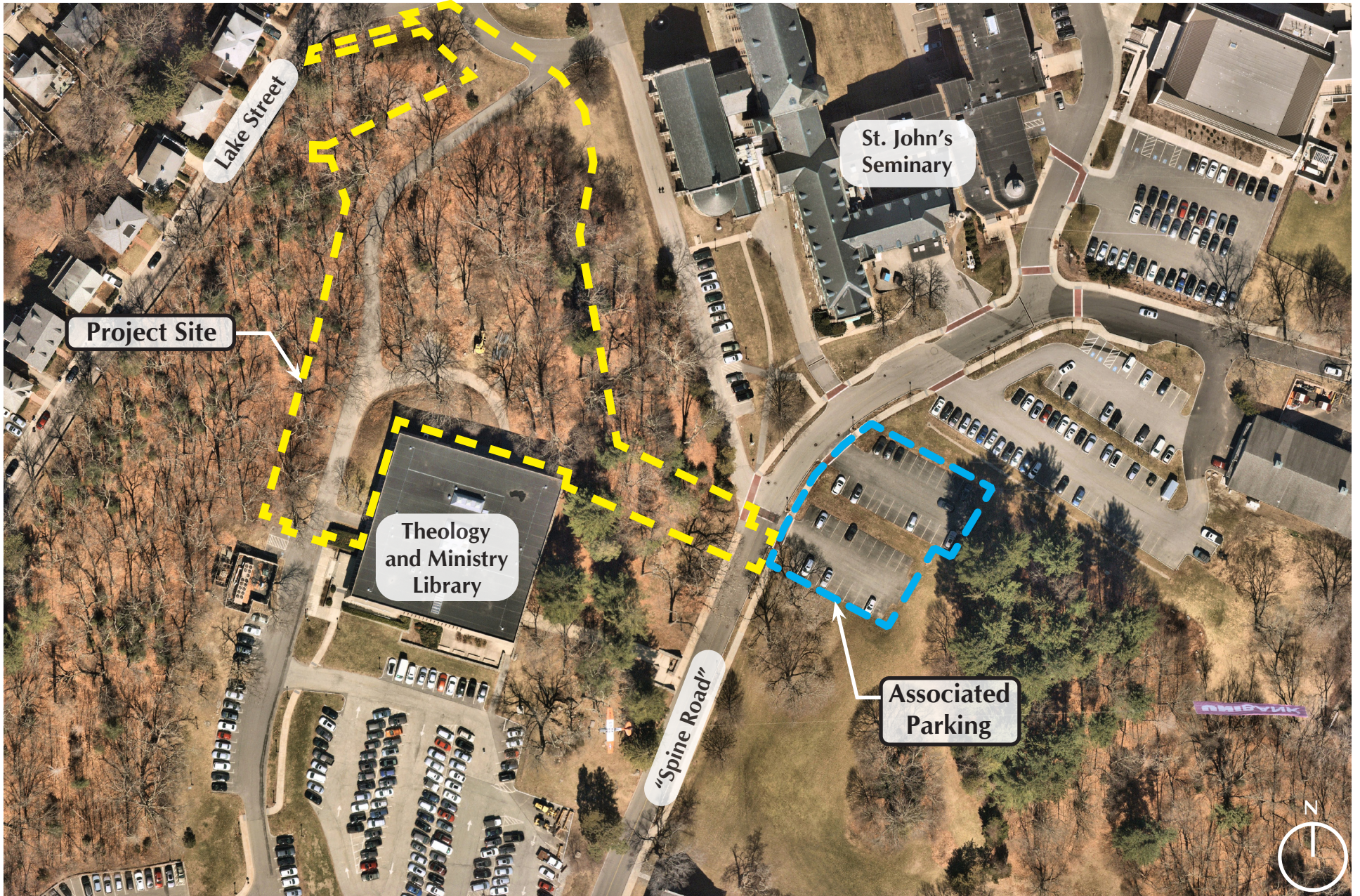
Attribute	Allston-Brighton Art 51, St John’s Seminary CPS Requirement (See Tables H, J, K)	Proposed Conditions
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (“FAR”)	0.5	0.26
Maximum Height	55 feet (when set back 100 ft from property line)	< 55 Feet
Minimum Front Yard	50 Feet	>100 Feet
Minimum Side Yard	50 Feet	>100 Feet
Minimum Rear Yard	50 Feet	>100 Feet
Parking Stalls	49 (one per 1,000 GFA)	49
Loading Dock	1	1

As provided in Section 80D-6 of the Code, an amendment of an Institutional Master Plan meeting the requirements of an Expedited Review for Certain Small Projects under Section 80D-9.2 becomes effective upon approval by the BPDA.









Boston, Massachusetts

Figure 4
Aerial View
Source: NearMap, 2023

