

THE PROJECT

Founded in 1867, the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) is the oldest independent school of music in the United States. Located in the historic Back Bay district of Boston, the school had outgrown its facilities. The school identified a number of goals including: address NEC's highest priority needs; strengthen programs by improving location and affinities of functions; be accomplished in phases that will be consistent with the conservatory's financial resources; address highest priorities first by consolidating the library and providing early campus center improvements; provide student housing in suites; and lead eventually to a full campus center and student services complex.

CHALLENGE

NEC engaged Dober Lidsky Mathey to help them to understand the extent of the facility issues that they faced and to recommend a plan to address the various needs identified. Through an iterative planning process that relied on the active participation of all NEC constituents, the Conservatory articulated and prioritized facility needs that reflect its institutional mission. Together, we helped them to define academic and student life facility needs including practice and performance spaces and community resources, presented peer benchmarking, and explored a variety of alternatives and possible solutions to their needs.

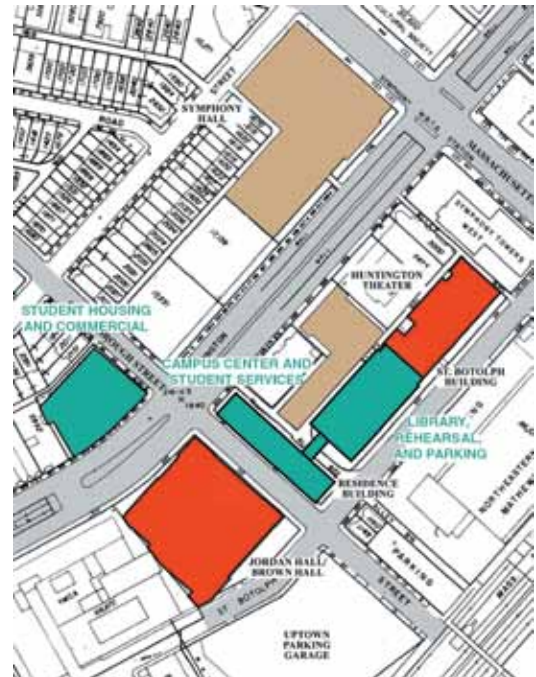
The conservatory wanted to improve their facility situation by addressing several issues to improve the quality of both campus and academic life. There was insufficient community space in which students, faculty, and staff could meet. The library was divided between two buildings. Firestone Library is on the lowest level of the main building and Spalding Library is adjacent to the residence hall on the opposite side of Gainsborough Street. Not only is this resource split, but there is insufficient space for collections and services. Student housing was spartan and contrary to the suite style of housing that the conservatory would like to provide. Practice and rehearsal space was inadequate. Faculty are dispersed. Space for support and storage was minimal.

SOLUTION

The Planning Committee and the Conservatory agreed that the recommended three-phased plan best meets the needs of the institution. The first phase, consisting of the Library, Rehearsal Hall, and underground parking, will be adjacent to the St. Botolph Building. Phase Two, new student housing with



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PROPOSED SITES

commercial space at the ground level, will be built on the 295 Huntington Avenue site. This project will allow the removal of the existing Residence Hall on Gainsborough Street, creating a site for Phase Three, the Campus Center and Student Services building. The three major projects will be linked through an internal gallery connecting these core campus elements.

RESULTS

Shortly after the completion of the study, there was a major change of administration. Nevertheless, a significant fund-raising initiative was begun and has resulted in several strategic renovations to upgrade facilities and reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. Plans are advancing and a capital campaign is now underway to provide the student-oriented residential, campus life and performance/practice spaces

REFERENCE

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CREATING CAMPUS SOLUTIONS