



SUMMER 2008

ANNUAL MEETING WITH
Emily Rooney
SEPTEMBER 11 • ALGONQUIN CLUB

Proposed Copley Place Tower Raises Serious Questions about Public Space, Shadows

BY JACKIE YESSIAN, JOLINDA TAYLOR, AND PETER FLYNN

THE PROPOSED NEW TOWER OVER Copley Place Park—the plaza with the two metal horses in front of Neiman Marcus—is the latest example of a development project where none was ever envisioned by the adjacent neighborhoods or the City of Boston. It has come about because the Simon Properties Company, one of the largest mall owners in the world, is looking to expand, employing the latest strategy in mall development—high-end residences and retail space. This may make sense in the typical suburban mall where the retail buildings are surrounded by acres of parking that provide ample space for new buildings over the cars. In Copley Place, however, such a proposal is much more problematic.

Copley Place parking is already covered by the mall. There is limited open space, and that open space is suspended over the publicly owned Massachusetts Turnpike. The open space is an east-northeast facing park, an asset to the neighboring residents, mall shoppers, and travelers using the train station across Dartmouth Street. The proposed development will enclose this park, as well as part of the adjacent, heavily trafficked sidewalks, and will require the acquisition of the corner of Dartmouth and Stuart Streets.

At the Copley Place site, a building that could contain the developer's desired number of new residential units would have to be very tall because the available open space is relatively small. The developers are touting the views from these units. But for those of us who live in the surrounding neighborhoods, the view would be less attractive.

The project is described in a Project Notification Form (PNF) submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) for public review and comment. (Copies are available for viewing at the BRA and at the Boston Public Library.) As illustrations in the PNF show, the basic idea is to expand the retail space on the lower levels and construct the residences in a 600-foot-tall tower above. For reference, The Prudential Tower is 749 feet tall. The nearby John Hancock Tower is 790 feet. The neighboring Westin, the Marriott at Copley, and the new Clarendon building are 395, 382, and 375 feet, respectively. The typical Back Bay/South End brownstone is only about 65 feet tall.

The location of the proposed tower is close to the iconic John Hancock Tower, which is widely regarded as one of the best high-rise buildings in the world. Along with Trinity Church, it is one of the most

photographed buildings in Boston. When planning Copley Place, the rule of thumb, "no higher than half the height of the Hancock," was used to establish the maximum height for the hotel and office towers. Adhering to this principal for any building within the area would clearly establish the new tower as part of Copley Place, and avoid visual conflict with the taller structures.

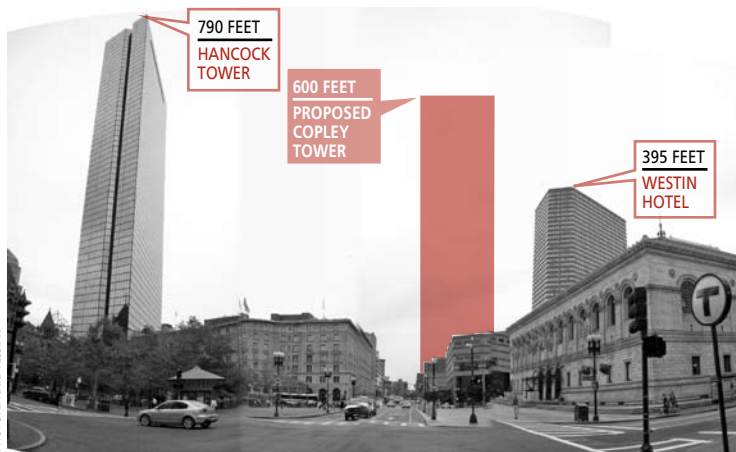
The location of the proposed development is also directly south of the Boston Public Library on Dartmouth Street. Buildings on Dartmouth Street are held away from the street, creating an important north-south boulevard

that expands into the open space of Copley Square (see box.) The proposed tower would block views of the sky from the Square and cause new shadows on Dartmouth Street, Copley Square, on the adjacent nationally landmarked Boston Public Library and

Trinity Church, and on the Back Bay and South End Historic districts. The PNF studies indicate that shadows would extend all the way to the Commonwealth Avenue Mall at some times of the year.

Very tall buildings, such as the Hancock Tower, are responsible for winds that make walking in this area difficult in many weather conditions. The proposed tower would add to this problem.

The site is at a transportation hub, close to turnpike, bus, subway, and train routes. Thus, it is ripe for transit-oriented development. However,
continued on page 3



This composite photo, shot looking south along Dartmouth Street from Boylston, illustrates the approximate height of the proposed tower, based on information in the Project Notification Form. (The "ghost" building here does not accurately convey the project's proposed shape.)

Bare Today, Green Tomorrow



The City of Boston has begun work to renew the lawn and some of the masonry in Copley Square. See page 3 for details.

Graffiti NABbers Round-up: A Tagger, an Award, and More...

BY ANNE SWANSON AND KATHLEEN ALEXANDER

QUICK THINKING LEADS TO ARREST

On June 11, neighbor Penny Cherubino proved to be a Graffiti NABber extraordinaire when she used her cell phone to photograph a young man scrawling words and pictures on the Collins Statue on Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

After the vandal jokingly posed for her camera, he thought to inquire what Penny intended to do with the photo. When Penny said she planned to send it directly to the police, the tagger followed her aggressively. Fortunately, two nearby postal workers came to her aid by escorting the young man back to his friends.

Penny immediately emailed the perpetrator's photo to our long-time ally, Detective Billy Kelley, who drove to the Mall and made the arrest. This is the ultimate in community policing and a great use of technology to help us enforce the law in our neighborhood! While we do not recommend confronting vandals, we salute Penny for her fortitude and quick thinking! (And thanks to the Parks Department for quickly removing the graffiti.)

We need to educate young people that defacing public or private property for entertainment is unacceptable.

GRAFFITI NABBERS WINS AWARD

In July, the Graffiti NABbers were selected to receive one of Boston's Top Ten Crime Watch Awards for 2008. Mayor Menino attended the presentation of the awards at the Salute to the Neighborhoods Community Awards Celebration on August 4. Seven Graffiti NABbers represented the larger group at the event at the Venezia Restaurant in Dorchester, where crime watch groups were honored for contributing to a safer and friendlier city for all of us!

GRAFFITI BUSTERS TO CLEAN RESIDENTIAL ALLEYS

The City of Boston's Graffiti Busters has agreed to clean the residential alleys north of Commonwealth Avenue in early September. In preparation, Graffiti NABbers has contacted residents for permission forms and will post flyers on

tagged surfaces. Graffiti Busters will also clean new tags in the commercial alleys south of Commonwealth Avenue. Completing the cleaning of all Back Bay alleys will be a huge milestone after our two-and-a-half-year effort to eradicate graffiti from the historic district.

continued on page 2



Graffiti NABbers co-chairs, Kathleen Alexander and Anne Swanson (left to right) accepted a Crime Watch Award as BPD officers, including Sergeant Kevin Power and Officer Richard Litto (left to right next to Anne), look on.

ANNUAL MEETING AND STREET SALE

> **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 at 6:30 p.m.**
NABB ANNUAL MEETING at the Algonquin Club, 217 Commonwealth Avenue. Guest Speaker will be Emily Rooney of WGBH-TV's "Greater Boston"

> **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**
NABB STREET SALE on the Dartmouth Street Mall. Call 617-247-3961 for information.

We Will Miss Dick Brayley And Fred Mauet

This spring the Back Bay neighborhood lost two stalwart defenders with the passing of Richard Brayley on March 9, aged 83, and Fred Mauet on April 19 at age 55. Both men were longtime NABB board members and both had been honored with NABB Community Service Awards.

At the time of his death, **Dick Brayley** had lived in the Back Bay for over 50 years and in his soft-spoken, selfless way had been a knowledgeable advisor and helpful participant in many of NABB's endeavors. In the mid-1980s, Dick built a model of the proposed Prudential Center redevelopment project that pointed up the need for project guidelines, influencing the establishment of the citizen's group, PruPAC. With fellow NABB activist, Paul Prindle, Dick called attention to poor conditions in our alleys and worked with the City on much-needed improvements—an effort that continues to this day. Dick also served over a decade as a NABB representative to the Back Bay Architectural Commission.

**Richard
Brayley
1924–2008**



PHOTO: PATTI QUINN

In 2007, Dick received NABB Mary Natale Citizenship Award in recognition of his sustained dedication and significant and unheralded service to our neighborhood. (See *NABB NEWS*, Winter 2008)

Neighbors and family gathered to remember the life of Dick Brayley on April 27th at the Boston Architectural College across Newbury Street from his home and the NABB office where for many years Dick was this association's welcoming landlord. Many memories and anecdotes, both humorous and touching, were shared about Dick as a proud WWII Army veteran, intrepid pilot, and delightful friend. As Dick was fond of saying about the buildings in his beloved historic Back Bay neighborhood, "They're not making any more of them!" The same could be said of this unique gentleman.

Fred Mauet was the 2005 recipient of the Paul Prindle Community Leadership Award, which honored his two decades of dedication and advocacy on behalf of our neighborhood and the city. (See *NABB NEWS*, Fall 2005) Fred served NABB and Boston in a multitude of capacities, as chairman, as a member of the Millennium and Columbus Center Citizen's Advisory Committees, and as vice-president of the Friends of the Public Garden. NABB recently named the Fred Mauet Legal Action Fund in his honor. Friends and family held a memorial service at Mount Auburn Cemetery on May 21 celebrating Fred's life with music and loving recollections.

A lawyer, teacher, and preservationist, Fred's brand of civic activism combined intellectual analysis with passionate conviction. His insight, wisdom, and vision were invaluable to all who sought his counsel.

Fred's belief in the importance of neighborhood involvement in thoughtful development is best explained in his own words, which resonate today as well as when they were written in 1999.

**Fred Mauet
1953–2008**

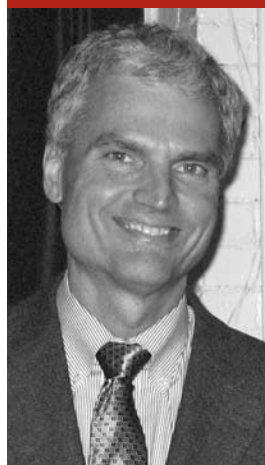


PHOTO: JACKIE YESSIAN

When Good Things Happen to Bad Projects: The Neighborhood Review Process

BY FRED MAUET

Boston's super-heated real-estate market has generated scores of development proposals, most of them targeted for downtown locations. The 70 projects currently proposed or in the pipeline have provoked alarm in the city's neighborhoods. Many residents feel overwhelmed by the size of the proposals and their perceived impact, and they are vigorously voicing their concerns. But neighborhood involvement in the development discussion is a sign of Boston's success as a vibrant city, not a frustrating symptom of a lack of a "can-do" attitude.

In the last two decades, Boston's competitive niche—from a physical perspective—has become its walkable and human-sized scale. Guidebooks and newspapers tout the city's "moderate skyline" and "village charm" as qualities that visitors love. For residents, Boston offers an amenity possessed by only a handful of large American cities: thriving downtown neighborhoods where workplaces in the financial district are within walking distance, and a sense of community has been preserved in the midst of the urban hurly-burly. This is a valuable characteristic which deserves to be protected.

But Boston's intimacy is a function of its unusual geography. Its residents are keenly aware that over-development, hastily approved to catch the

wave of a feverish real-estate cycle, will be unhealthy for the future livability of districts where residents must coexist with workers, shoppers and tourists. For that reason, community groups have been speaking forcefully about the dangers inherent in a building boom. They are not advocating a moratorium on development—responsible neighborhood organizations, which the city has in abundance, support reasonable choices. But they are asking some tough questions which deserve answers. The hardest question has turned out to be the management of transportation infrastructure. It is difficult to see how Boston's streets will accommodate 30,000 new cars lured into the city by the parking facilities that accompany many of the development projects in planning, or already under review at the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). The neighborhoods believe the only solution is an improved transit system. It is irresponsible to first build millions of square feet of development and then ask if there is a coherent strategy to serve the transportation needs of a denser city.

Although neighborhood groups are asking hard questions, they are certainly not controlling the development agenda. On the contrary—the new developer-friendly Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code has speeded up

BRA review immeasurably. We need to remember the lessons of the past, when residents who resisted projects were roundly criticized as "anti-progress." Decades later, we are thankful that stalwart citizens resisted highrises on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, a new expressway in the Southwest Corridor, and a tower plunging the Public Garden into perpetual shadow. Instead, the city is the proud possessor of a preserved jewel of the Emerald Necklace, a stunning "ribbon park," and the respectfully designed Heritage on the Garden complex—all victories of stubborn advocates who sailed against the prevailing development winds of their day.

This isn't to say that new building shouldn't happen in Boston. This city is deservedly a showcase of urban living, which merits the attention of developers who understand its history. The neighborhoods must be encouraged to participate in decision-making regarding the city's future if we are to have a semblance of serious discussion that moves out of developers' conference rooms. We are a society that works best with a healthy system of checks and balances. If neighborhood advocates didn't exist, they would have to be invented.

Reprinted by permission from the Winter 1999 issue of ArchitectureBoston.

Graffiti NABbers, continued from page 1

We urge owners of cleaned properties to express their appreciation to Mike Bartosiak and his crews. While we all pay taxes for these services, Graffiti Busters serves 22 neighborhoods and receives 100 calls a day! By facilitating the cleaning of entire alley corridors, Graffiti NABbers has worked together with Graffiti Busters to combat this chronic vandalism as never before. Our photographic record of the original condition of these alleys shows that the transformation is astonishing and reminds us how very far we've come!

E.J. CLEAN REACHES HIGHER

Erik Barry of E.J. Clean is continuing to contact property owners to provide graffiti removal for upper stories and rooftops. This is a complicated and time-consuming process and removal of many layers of paint adds to the cost. Nevertheless, Erik's service makes it possible to remove upper-story graffiti. We urge property owners to contact Erik Barry at 617-212-4575 or ejclean1@aol.com. If you prefer to have your own maintenance people take on the task, that's wonderful, too! Please do so at your earliest convenience.

NABB WEBSITE PROVIDES TIPS

Please check the Graffiti NABber portion of NABB's new website for practical information about graffiti removal. The website explains our working relationships and provides contact information for the Graffiti Busters, E.J. Clean, and local paint and hardware stores. We also tell you how to report graffiti vandalism and how to remove graffiti. Go to www.nabbonline.com.

USPS REPAIRS MAILBOXES

Postal worker Dave Eisner has been repainting Back Bay mailboxes covered with graffiti or splotchy, mismatched paint from temporary graffiti paint-overs. The freshly



painted mailboxes look infinitely better, and we are very grateful! If you see Dave in action, please express your appreciation!

ADOPT-A-BLOCK

The Adopt-a-Block initiative is the next step in spreading the responsibility for maintaining our beautiful historic district. We've worked hard to complete the initial hands-on removal of graffiti and stickers throughout the district. Now we are simply asking more of you to keep an eye on your immediate area, remove small tags and stickers, and report larger tags for removal by the Graffiti Busters. Please let us know if you wish to Adopt-a-Block by sending an email to graffitinabbers@nabbonline.com.

Please become part of our collective solution for this ongoing problem. If many people take care of a small area, we can keep the neighborhood beautiful! Cleaning graffiti quickly takes all the excitement out of tagging and keeps the taggers away!

Alley Rally Brings Out The Best



Historian David McCullough, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of 'Truman' and 'John Adams,' pauses on Arlington Street to salute NABB volunteers sweeping Alley 424.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who turned out on April 26 for a super successful Alley Rally. Burger King, Bostone Pizza, Dunkin' Donuts, and Shaw's Supermarkets generously donated the food and beverages for this popular neighborhood event, headquartered as usual at the Clarendon Street Playground. The City of Boston provided equipment as part of Mayor Menino's citywide cleanup, "Boston Shines."



Alley Rally chairs (left to right) Ellen Rooney, Chris Mitchell, and Roseann Colot



Kevin Hughes serves thirsty workers

MIT's fraternities lend many hands.



ALL PHOTOS BY PATTI QUINN, EXCEPT AS NOTED



Nancy Devereaux and Marjorie Smith



Will Onuoha, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, spreads the word about "Boston Shines."

Copley Tower, continued from page 1

the impacts on these already very actively used resources need to be studied. Rather than overloading this site by creating a single tower with significant negative impacts on its surroundings, the City would do well to identify all potential sites for transit-oriented development and divide planned retail and housing development among them.

BRA REVIEW PROCESS

This project is moving through the BRA review process as if it were the only building that will impact our area. However, the term, "high spine development corridor"—a term first used in the early 1960s to denote a column of high-rise buildings separating the Back Bay from the South End—is used frequently in public meetings by the BRA and individual developers. In this context, the Hancock Garage, which provides a flat space even closer to the Hancock Tower, has already been mentioned as an inviting location for yet another tower that would introduce even more shadow, wind, traffic, and other detrimental environmental impacts. Any developer with an eye on the area will be watching the Copley tower carefully for indications of how high the City is willing to go.

The public needs to participate in monitoring and scrutinizing these ever-burgeoning development proposals. It is important that residents and business owners weigh in on every issue affecting our neighborhood and the health of the City. We need to ensure that the environmental impacts of proposed projects are carefully studied and mitigated as much as possible. At the same time we need to strongly encourage the City to create a more transparent planning function reporting to the citizens, rather than to leave planning decisions in the hands of individual developers and the BRA.

For more information go to www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org or call NABB at 617-247-3961.

Copley Square Milestones



PHOTO: MARK YESSIAN

Copley Square, named for artist John Singleton Copley, is a prominent, centrally located, public gathering place in the Back Bay. The Square is surrounded by three National Historic Landmark buildings: Trinity Church, Old South Church, and the Boston Public Library.

Copley's statue, sculpted by Lewis Cohen, presides. Residents of the Back Bay and nearby neighborhoods and visitors from around the country and the world know and appreciate the sun-washed space. Two days a week from June through November, local farmers ring the lawn with cheerful tents to sell fresh seasonal produce and flowers. At holiday time, the square hosts a festive tree. The Boston Marathon, celebrated by Nancy Schon's Tortoise and Hare sculpture, finishes just outside the square.

In June, the Parks Department began replacing the 20-year-old great lawn and its drainage and sprinkler system. New bluegrass sod will be installed and perennial rye grass will be seeded into it. Protective fencing will remain in place until Marathon Monday, April 20, 2009. Other grass areas will also be replaced. Fortunately, the work will not displace the Farmers' Market. The Parks Department also has plans to repair the masonry in the Square.

This is all good news, as Copley Square is one of the most beloved and heavily used parks in the City.

1870 The Museum of Fine Arts stood where the Copley Plaza Hotel stands today.

1875 Construction of New Old South Church completed.

1877 Trinity Church opens its doors.

1883 Name changes from Art Square to Copley Square.

1895 Construction of the Boston Public Library completes the architectural framework surrounding the square.

1966 The City proposes closing off the first block of Huntington Avenue to join the existing triangles into a "square." The result is a sunken park, which would be less noisy and offer seclusion from busy street life.

1983 After residents and businesses form the Copley Square Centennial Committee, the City launches public workshops to establish guidelines for a new park.

1989 A national competition results in the current design, dedicated in this year.

1992 The Friends of Copley Square is founded as the successor to the CSCC, whose work of redesign and reconstruction had been accomplished by 1991.

2008 The funds raised by the Friends of Copley Square continue to be used to maintain the fountain and provide other routine maintenance of the Square.

Milestones provided by the Friends of Copley Square. The Friends' mission is to preserve and enhance the park as a recreational resource for residents, workers and visitors.

