



## OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

645 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116  
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Greater Boston  
Interfaith Organization

Michael Cantalupa  
Boston Properties  
800 Boylston St,  
Boston, MA 02199

September 19, 2017

Dear Mr. Cantalupa,

Old South Church in Boston is a National Historic Landmark, the highest, most important designation possible under federal preservation laws. A stunning, indeed, unrivaled example of Northern Italian Gothic architecture, our 1875 building is our church's single most significant platform and springboard for our varied ministries. It is a costly undertaking. Stewarding this building on behalf of our ministries, on behalf of the City of Boston, and on behalf of the nation to which our church helped give birth is an outsized undertaking for our members. In truth, our members cannot pay for the building's upkeep through annual giving. To that end, and over the past twelve years, we have worked strategically to establish endowed funds to care for the building's fabric (inside and out) and its systems, for today and tomorrow. We have addressed all deferred maintenance. We have built what we calculate to be a sufficient endowment to fund future capital needs and we are executing against an ever-green 20-year capital improvements plan. Our members are giving generously and sacrificially to support both our ministries and our ever-aging facility.

In contrast to almost every other church in Boston, we are open seven days a week, free to the public. In addition, day in and day out, from early morning to late at night, our building is a hive of activities: for the unhoused, for persons with AIDS, for those undertaking any number of 12-step programs, for musical choirs and ensembles, and for myriad partner organizations like City Mission, *common cathedral*, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, Poor People's United Fund, Snowden International High School, to name just a few. The building sustains tremendous wear and tear.

As the City of Boston has changed, so too has the ecosystem of Old South. It used to be that the vast majority of our members lived in Boston. No more. More and more our members are priced out of Boston by new initiatives like Back Bay / South End Gateway Project. They have and are moving to towns like Billerica, Reading, Lawrence, Pepperell and Brockton. This is profoundly concerning and disheartening.

It is precisely for this reason that Old South Church and the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO, of which Old South is a dues paying member), are officially joined in a campaign to secure an agreement with Boston Properties that will protect both our church and our community.

We have done a great deal of due diligence since we first learned of the proposed Back Bay / South End Gateway Project and since the Massachusetts Historical Commission issued a finding of “adverse effect” on our historic resource: a direct result of your proposed towers. We have met with numerous elected officials, neighbors, members/leaders of our church and preservation and housing experts. We have learned from Wiss, Janney, Elstner and from preservation architects around the country that additional shadows cast on old buildings do, over time, have a detrimental or degrading effect on the masonry, contrary to the three letters you showcased in your exhibit F. In fact, our preservation architects are affixing sensors to our building now, to study the before-and-after effects of your proposed Towers. Unfortunately, the data won’t reveal the degree of degradation for thirty, or forty, or perhaps fifty years. Boston Properties will bear no responsibility to make us whole then, while Old South Church members will be left holding the bag and footing the bill.

In particular, Old South Church and our preservation architects are concerned about the iso-thermal glazing technology used in our stained glass preservation. A lack of sunlight will hasten the scheduled timeline for restoration of the technology.

Therefore, Old South Church and GBIO request you inform us tomorrow as to whether you will lower the Garage West tower to 150 feet to eliminate the shadow cast on Old South Church. If for financial reasons, this is not feasible, we ask you to open your financial projections to demonstrate this.

If Boston Properties does not lower the tower to minimize or eliminate additional shadows cast on our historic resource, Old South and GBIO therefore request \$19 million in mitigation, as described below.

### **Preservation of Old South Church**

Old South cares for its building through endowed funds designated for that purpose. Our assessment is that the shadows from this project will increase and hasten our preservation

costs over time and that at least \$4 million will be needed as a permanent, restricted endowment to cover increased preservation costs in perpetuity.

### **Preservation of Our Communities**

In addition to increasing Old South's preservation costs, Boston Property's project will permanently and significantly diminish the beauty of our worship space. While we looked into it, we now recognize that it is technically and financially impractical to attempt to replace the natural sunlight that will be lost to Boston Property's proposed towers. This is a deeply painful loss for the congregation as well as for the tens of thousands of visitors who come through our doors into our sanctuary each month for prayer and meditation. This constitutes an "adverse impact" that will likely never go away. The congregation is willing to suffer this loss if the Back Bay South / End Gateway Project includes a significant public good of our own choosing. We propose \$15 million to seed a not-for-profit city-wide Homeownership Fund. We have in mind possible not-for-profits who are well-equipped to manage the money and the program. This is a crying need in our City. Old South Church is prepared to trade what we will lose in aesthetics for \$15 million in justice and kindness.

Old South Church is not new to addressing housing in Boston. We were founders or co-founders of Tent City, Boston Community Capital Loan Fund, the Retirement Housing Foundations' several Boston properties (elder, subsidized apartments near Symphony Hall), the Yes on Five Community Preservation Act, and more.

We look forward to our meeting tomorrow. We hope we can come to an agreement which satisfies us that the benefits and burdens in your consideration of the PDA for this project will include mitigation, recognizing that the beauty of our stained glass windows will be diminished and their religious significance reduced, and simultaneously take a step in the right direction to combat the affordable housing crisis through a homeownership fund which would go a long way toward preserving the fabric of our community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Nancy S Taylor (Sr Minister & CEO) and Rev. John M Edgerton (Associate Minister)

**OLD SOUTH CHURCH IN BOSTON**

*Gathered 1669*

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CC

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