

St. John of God campus revitalized as residential community



This aerial photo, taken in August, shows the progress of the St. John of God redevelopment. The Monarch has since been completed, as has all of the landscaping. Construction on Seton Manor and Providence House are nearly complete.

Originally built in 1908, the St. John of God Hospital campus in Brighton, MA provided healthcare services to area residents for more than 90 years. The site was a thriving and valued healthcare community until the campus medical facilities began to close one by one, and in 2000, only the Seton Manor AIDS residence and the Caritas Good Samaritan Hospice remained in operation.

Enter Edward A. Fish Associates, LLC, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, and The Architectural Team, who teamed up in 2001 to develop and design the redevelopment of the site into a lively and inviting residential neighborhood in a key location near Cleveland Circle and the City of Boston. With construction nearly complete on three of the five buildings in the program, the team's design has already rejuvenated the campus by adding two new buildings, renovating an existing building and enhancing green space with extensive landscaping.

The new program includes:

- **The Monarch** - an 83-unit condominium cooperative with underground parking
- **Providence House** - a 102-unit affordable assisted living facility
- **Seton Manor** - a 20-unit residence for individuals living with AIDS/HIV

The Monarch was completed in September, and Providence House and Seton Manor are both expected to be complete in early December. Redevelopment of the former skilled nursing facility and administration buildings are forthcoming.

According to Phil Renzi, Project Manager, the greatest design challenge was recreating the campus setting, which was achieved by maintaining the historic layout of the buildings while enhancing the green space and improving the grounds with new construction. The new buildings were designed to relate to the surrounding neighborhood context, and massing and facades were kept similar to the site's existing and previous buildings. Renzi noted that the existing strong axial site helped frame and sustain the campus atmosphere.

If early community feedback on the St. John of God redevelopment is any indication of success, then it would seem that the design goal has been achieved. According to Renzi, many neighbors who pass by the site take the time to praise the development, specifically noting their delight with what they thought were remodeled buildings. "I have to tell them that the buildings they are admiring are actually brand new buildings," said Renzi. "However, I think that is the greatest compliment because it shows that we achieved our goal."

In addition to the residential portions of the development, the 5.5 acre site includes parking, pedestrian paths, benches and a gazebo, and a community park, which provides valued open space for the densely developed neighborhood.

The development cost is estimated at approximately \$40 million. Project team: Bob Verrier, Liviu Marza, Phil Renzi and Nick Kane