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## Planning Report #1

Date: January 27, 2021  
To: South Orange Planning Board  
From: Greer Patras, AICP, PP, Board Planner  
Applicant: Seton Hall University  
Subject: Application No. 276  
400 South Orange Avenue, Block 901, Lot 3  
Preliminary & Final Site Plan

The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning Board with an evaluation of Application #276 submitted Kevin J. Coakley, Esq. on behalf of Seton Hall University (the "Applicant"). The Applicant proposes building addition and plaza space to the existing University Center building, changes to a nearby parking area, and with other site improvements. The Applicant seeks preliminary and final site plan approval; no variances have been identified or requested.

We met with the Applicant on January 12, 2021 at a Technical Review to discuss preliminary comments and make technical recommendations. As such, the Applicant has provided a partial resubmission to show that many of the items were addressed.

The following items were reviewed:

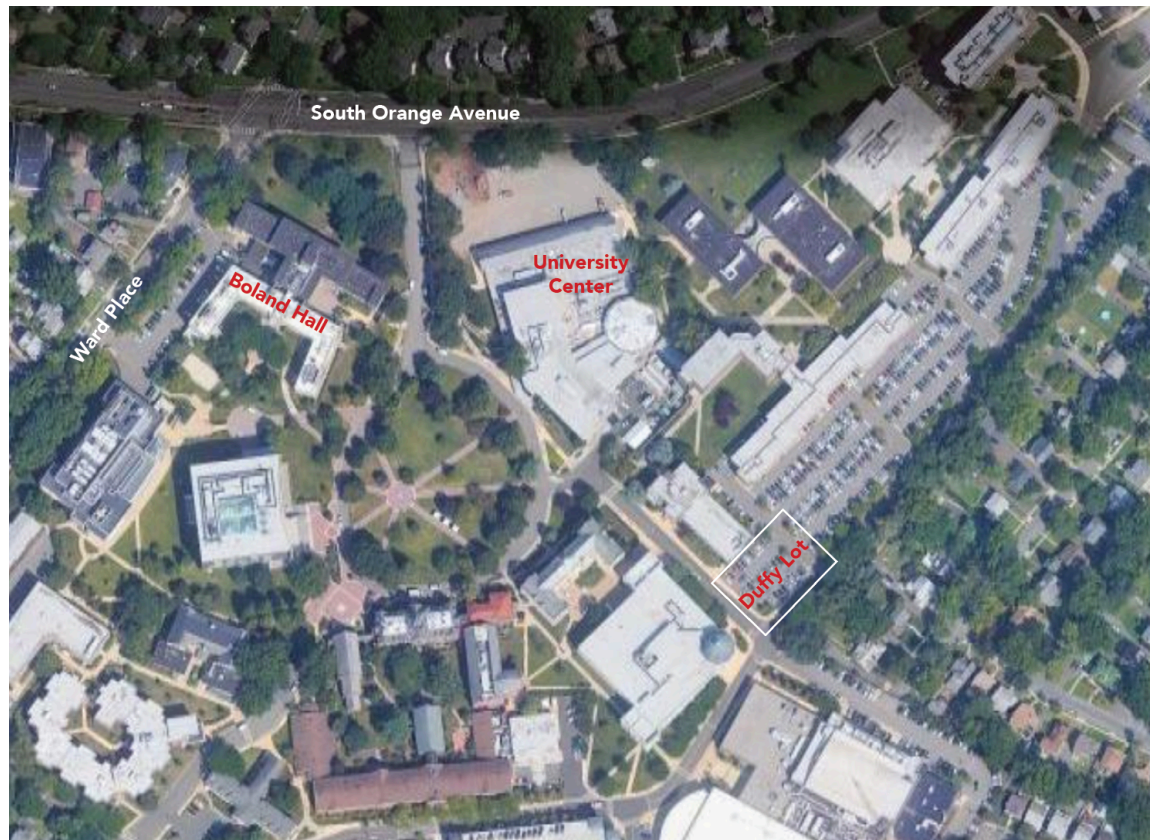
- **Planning Board Application Submission**, filed December 18, 2020.
- **Cover Letter**, written by Nicole B. Dory, dated December 18, 2020.
- **Site Plan**, consisting of twelve sheets prepared by Leonard D. Savino of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., dated December 17, 2020, sheets CS002, CS101, CG101, CG102, CU101, and CS501 last revised January 20, 2021.
- **Landscape Architecture Plans**, consisting of fifteen sheets prepared by George M. Hibbs, A.I.A of Clarke Caton Hintz, dated December 18, 2021, last revised January 20, 2021.
- **Average Grade Calculations**, consisting of two pages prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., dated December 17, 2020.
- **Stormwater Management Report**, consisting of 426 pages prepared by Leonard D. Savino of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., dated December 17, 2020.
- **Stormwater Maintenance Plan**, consisting of 18 pages prepared by Leonard D. Savino of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., dated December 17, 2020.
- **Response Letter**, prepared by Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., dated January 20, 2021.

### I. EXISTING CONDITIONS

- A. **The Site:** The Site is the Seton Hall University campus which occupies 56.96 acres and contains numerous buildings. Within the campus is the three-story University Center building which is located in the northern section of the Site. The University Center building connects to various walkways, and towards the east of the building is three parking spaces.

Per the Applicant, the University Center is viewed as the centerpiece of the campus and primary hub for student life.

- B. **Neighborhood Context:** The subject site is located at the eastern edge of South Orange, located in the northern section of the Seton Hall University campus. The campus is surrounded by several residential districts, adjacent to the border of the City of Newark, and one block from the Maplewood Township border. University Center is adjacent to the Arts and Sciences Hall, Xavier Hall, Duffy Hall, Mooney Hall and the University Green. It is separated from South Orange Avenue to the north by the Galleon Lawn.



- C. **Zoning:** University (U)

## II. PROPOSAL

- A. **Proposed Project:** The Applicant proposes the following:

1. Increase University Center building by 1,384 SF with additions to the east and west entries (from 62,070 SF to 63,454 SF)
2. Landscaping, streetscape, and other site improvements including but not limited to:
  - a. Front of University Center building:
    - Outdoor amphitheater performance space with associated lawn, seating, and steps
    - Outdoor performance area with seating, tables, and landscaping
    - Outdoor double-sided fireplace with seating
    - Bike rack for 5-6 bicycle parking spaces
    - Building overhang
    - Multiple landscaped areas, retaining walls, paver crosswalks, and steps with railings

- b. Rear of University Center building:
  - East entry outdoor plaza
  - Terraced meditation garden with planter beds
  - Prayer garden and statue relocation
  - Grotto with landscaping
  - Bike rack for 4-5 bicycle parking spaces
  - Building overhang
  - Multiple landscaped areas, retaining walls and concrete sidewalks
- 3. Improvements to the Duffy Hall parking lot including but not limited to the reduction of parking spaces, installation of a SHUfly shuttle bus shelter, striping, pavement improvements, a paver sidewalk, and sign relocation:
  - a. Parking lot reconfiguration and of 13 total parking spaces (33 spaces to 20 spaces)
  - b. Removal of existing retaining wall along Seton Drive to be replaced with a sidewalk and new SHUfly shuttle bus shelter
  - c. Two additional SHUfly shuttle signs
  - d. New one-way traffic pattern with a removal of one point of egress from the parking lot's northern entrance, and a new painted directional arrow to convey traffic patterns
  - e. Enhanced paver crosswalk at the new point of egress with a new painted stop bar.

B. **Bulk Table:** Compliance with the bulk requirements of the University zone is as follows:

Standard	Required	Existing	Proposed
Lot Area (Min.)	50 acres	59.96 acres (2,481,216 SF)	No change
Lot Width (Min.)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Front Yard Setback (Min.) (Ward Pl.)	30'	387.4'	No change
Front Yard Setback (Min.) (South Orange Ave.)	30'	124'	No change
Side Yard Setback – South (Min.)	30'	477.4' *	No change *
Rear Yard Setback – East (Min.)	30'	1005.1 *	1,006.8' *
Building Coverage (Max.)	30%	28.52%**	28.64%**
Lot Coverage (Max.)	-	<i>Should be provided</i>	<i>Should be provided</i>
Building Height (Max.)	75' ***	3 stories / <i>Should be provided</i>	3 stories / 72.43'****
FAR (Max.)	0.65	0.532 (1,319,858 SF)	0.532 (1,320,705 SF)
Parking Spaces (Max.)	2,100 spaces*****	2,935 spaces	2,922 spaces
* These appear inconsistent with the plans and must be reviewed. See setback discussion in Section III.2.f ** See coverage discussion in Section III.7. *** Calculated as 30' plus 1.5' per additional 1' increase in building setback, not to exceed 75' total **** See height discussion in Section III.3 ***** See parking requirement discussion in Section III.5			

### III. PLANNING COMMENTS:

1. The Applicant should discuss overview of all proposed improvements and consistency with the Ordinance requirements. The Applicant should discuss the Seton Hall University campus master plan and changes to previously approved development phases.

2. The Applicant should provide an overview of all existing site buildings and proposed improvements, specifically the building addition and plazas.
  - a. The Applicant should provide testimony regarding all proposed facade improvements, with particular attention to colors and materials, and how the new building additions will complement the existing architecture, so as to appear cohesive.
  - b. The Applicant should provide testimony regarding all proposed interior improvements including the new dining facilities, theater and event spaces, and public lounges.
  - c. The Applicant should provide testimony regarding the use and operation of outdoor spaces including the new amphitheater and fire pit areas.
  - d. The Applicant should provide material specifications for the proposed cast stone on the retaining walls nearest the main entry to allow the Board to assess if it is complementary to those used on the building.
  - e. Applicant must confirm compliance with ADA and NJ Barrier Free Subcode requirements, and should show accessible routes on the plans. Seating types for all abilities should be provided in the interior and exterior gathering / entertainment areas.
  - f. It appears the proposed building extensions would reduce coverage, but an increase is reported in the applicant's bulk chart. All existing and proposed setbacks should be dimensioned on the plans and correspond with the bulk chart.
3. The Applicant proposes a total roof height of 72.43' tall, where 75' maximum is permitted. Additionally, "stair tower cross" is shown on top of this highest roof, for an overall height of 77.23'. Per Ordinance Section 185-167G, church spires, cupolas, and similar appurtenances designed exclusively for ornamental purposes are exempt from the maximum height requirements, so long as they occupy "10% or less of the area of the roof on which they are located, and further provided that such structures do not exceed the height limit by more than 10 feet." The Applicant must confirm that the area of the proposed spire is less than 10% of the roof area and meets this height exception.

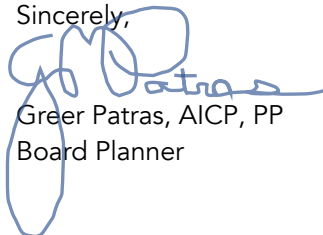
Also, the Applicant should also confirm the following and update the plans for the following:

- a. The highest elevation dimensioned on the elevation plans (sheet A-201: west elevation) is 66.8'. The highest dimension measurement should be shown on the plans.
  - b. The Applicant should also provide the existing height.
4. The Applicant should provide an overview of all existing and proposed site and landscaping improvements. At the Technical Review meeting, it was recommended that additional shade trees and buffering be provided. The Applicant's response letter states that additional tree and shrub plantings would be made at locations that would create a visual screen for headlight glare. The revised concept should be presented to the Board for review and comment, and the final plans should reflect the final exact locations and species. We offer the following specific recommendations:
  - a. A landscape plan must be provided around the reconfigured parking area and related streetscape. At a minimum, plantings should adequately screen car headlights within the parking lot, particularly on the side facing Seton Drive and the residential neighborhood beyond.
  - b. Shade tree plantings should be from species with a generous canopy and initial plantings should be a minimum of 2-3" caliper or greater where appropriate.

- c. The Applicant should provide testimony regarding tree removal and any proposed replacement trees. We recommend additional shade trees be provided.
5. Testimony should be provided regarding the proposed changes to the parking area. Per the Applicant's chart, 2,935 spaces exist, and 2,922 spaces are proposed after the reconfiguration of the Duffy Hall parking lot. The Applicant reports that 2,100 parking stalls are required. Per Ordinance Section 185-174A, universities are required to provide parking at a rate of "0.25 space for each full- and part-time student and full- and part-time employee" and that "For purposes of this calculation, a minimum aggregate total of 8,400 shall be used as the campus population. The university shall provide the Village with certified counts as of January 1 each year." As such, the university should clarify the employee and student counts for this year and discuss compliance with the parking requirements.
6. The Applicant should consider additional bicycle racks in front of the building addition.
7. The Applicant discuss impacts to lot coverage and stormwater management, in particular:
  - a. The existing and proposed building coverages provided by the Applicant include both this University Center expansion and the proposed improvements made under the Boland Hall Application, which is a separate but related application currently before the Planning Board. The Applicant should discuss and provide an overview of the increased building coverage related to just this University Center application.
  - b. The Applicant should also discuss and quantify increases to lot/impervious coverage, as this application includes changes to patios, walkways, and parking areas.
  - c. The Applicant's Zoning Analysis Chart should be updated to include both building and lot coverages (it currently states "lot coverage", but maximum 30% building coverage is currently regulated in this zone.)
  - d. We defer any comments to the Board Engineer regarding stormwater management, grading, drainage, utilities, and soil erosion and sediment control.
8. At the Technical Review Meeting, the Applicant agreed to provide lighting in compliance with the ordinance, and that all fixtures would be downward facing and have a maximum color temperature of 3,500°K. The color temperature and orientation of the new and relocated lighting must be noted on plans and product specifications to confirm.
9. If the application is approved, all items discussed in the Applicant's Response letter should be reflected on final plans.
10. If this application is approved, the Applicant must provide an as-built plan, applicable approvals, and any applicable developer's fee as part of resolution compliance.

If you have any questions regarding this application, please feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,



Greer Patras, AICP, PP  
Board Planner