

*Gordon Conwell
Theological Seminary
Site Reuse Initiative*

VISIONING WORKSHOP

Hamilton Planning Board

Members:

Marnie Crouch, Chair

Richard Boroff

Emil Dahlquist

Beth Herr

Jonathan Poore

Bill Wheaton

Pat Norton, Associate

*Patrick Reffett, Director of Planning &
Inspectional Services*

Date: January 10, 2023

Introduction

The goal of the Workshop is to create a Vision for the site that was sufficiently detailed to promote further refinement and to introduce meaningful discussions about the appropriate means and options to codify the site. The importance of a Vision (“what we want”), in addition to transparency, is to bring more predictability into the eventual bylaw. All want predictability - developers and residents alike. Without a clear Vision for the site and a measure of predictability, public support for adoption of a code for the site will not materialize.

The Workshop products attached hereto begin with three text documents that are sequential:

1. Guiding Principles – Core Values
2. Site Characteristics - Understanding Site Context
3. Planning Exercise – Connecting Values to Context

These documents are followed by four graphic plans constructed in a sequence to arrive at a logical conclusion where the Planning Board could realistically assess development scale and intensity, as well as use. This is a process used to shape a site design and to evaluate the results.

Drawings include:

1. Site Assets
2. Preference Survey
3. Layout Ideas
4. Zoning Location Examples

The Layout Ideas and Zoning Examples are at a well-advanced stage from the Planning Board’s perspective and now must be studied by GCTS representatives and the Select Board for feed-back.

Next Steps

- Examine and define in more detail, sectors on the conceptual map;
- Add parking, refine the geometry of the forms (within what we can accurately assume or will require to maintain scale); and
- Evaluate dimensions and density in relation to the carrying capacity of the site in terms of water, wastewater treatment, and traffic to move forward with writing the code.

Guiding Principles – *Core Values*

Guiding Principles are community design core values that represent an approach to community development – a Vision

1. Embrace open space and respect the natural environment, including mature trees and steep slopes.
2. Maintain clear development edges with buffers or separation between areas of dissimilar character, either at the perimeter of the site or on the site itself.
3. Retain historic resources, including buildings and heritage landscapes.
4. Encourage diversity in new and existing construction, using compact, mixed-use development (i.e., small retail, office, and residential), focusing primarily on physical forms, not use.
5. Utilize Smart Growth principles, such as clustered housing, and provide a mix of housing types (cottage, townhouses, multifamily, live/work) and ownership choices (apartments, condominiums), for different incomes (moderately priced to market rate).
6. Organize new development areas to reflect traditional campus spatial layouts and / or New England building, street, and open space patterns.
7. Provide a contiguous network of trails and walks separate from streets as a central greenway open to the public as civic space and balance the needs of motor vehicles drivers and pedestrians, using landscaping to create an inviting, walkable site that will attract both the public and businesses that will appeal to residents.
8. Balance fiscal, social, and environmental benefits to the Town.

Site Characteristics – *Understanding Context*

Site Characteristics are physical conditions and visual / cultural resources integral to making site change decisions

1. The 102-acre+/- site rises approximately 150' from a gently sloped area on the south to a plateau at the summit (Brown's Hill) through an intermediate area of southeasterly-facing, 13-16% slopes.
2. Brown's Hill, which is entirely cleared, is Hamilton's highest elevation offering distant vistas and scenic views off-site, yet it contains approximately 160,000 sq. feet of space capable of reuse.
3. Several internal views offer a unique perspective of the history and natural attractiveness of the scenery.
4. The site is surrounded by country roads and single-family residential properties, some with large lots and at least one close to the GCTS property line with a stable and paddocks.
5. Proximity and lack of natural plantings are conditions that will have to be addressed to mitigate "nuisance" impacts to abutting properties prior to development.
6. Three significant legacy buildings (the Retreat House, Pilgrim Hall and adjacent Barn from 1900) and a designated "Heritage Landscape" remain from one of Hamilton's oldest estates.
7. Later buildings were constructed approximately 50 years ago to augment GCTS campus functions, including six residential dormitories.
8. A wastewater treatment plant that may not meet today's standards, utility infrastructure, cell towers located in the steeple of the Kerr Building, and an underground water tank on Brown's Hill in active use on Town-owned land.
9. Mature woodlands and specimen trees occupy areas providing natural buffers, shading in open space; because of their age and size offer irreplaceable assets.
10. Significant wetlands cover the southernmost portion of the property along Essex Street.
11. A circulation system comprised of a series of narrow roads to connect buildings and traverse grade changes, as well as a separate network of walks and trails to circumnavigate the property.

Planning Exercise – *Connecting Values to Context*

Organize the identified site characteristics into groups that are similar for the purpose of ranking & drawing on a map

1. **Perimeter Buffers**

Are there any areas that need PERIMETER BUFFERS if the developed area is likely to abut an unlike type of building or land use?

Draw a line around areas to remain as a perimeter buffer

Examples of buffers include:

- Distance
- Existing vegetation
- Enhanced vegetation

2. **Interior Buffers**

Are there any areas that need INTERIOR BUFFERS of some sort if there is a likelihood of different land uses abutting one another?

Draw a line around areas to remain as an interior buffer

3. **Qualities**

List qualities on the site that you would be disappointed to lose in the process of development.

Draw a line around and label areas that might have these qualities

4. **Things & Spaces**

List the things and spaces you would be disappointed to lose in the process of development.

Draw a line around and label these things and spaces

5. **Rank Your Observations**

Look at all the circles and rank their level of importance:

1 = Essential

2 = Important

3 = Nice to have, but not critical

6. **Look at What's Left Over** – Look at the shape, pattern, and position of the space that is left over (not circled).

Discuss what you see as a pattern or useable shape for development in the leftover areas



ASSETS

EXISTING UNPROTECTED SITE FEATURES (DRAFT 1-3-23)

LEGEND

- - - EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- DESIRABLE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- HERITAGE LANDSCAPE
- HERITAGE BUILDING
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- ASSEMBLY BUILDING
- EXISTING TREES
- MATURE SPECIMEN TREES

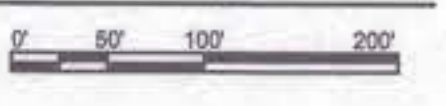
POTENTIAL SECONDARY ENTRY

Progress Print
11.10.22



Diagrammatic Contour Map of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

SCALE: 1" = 100'



Based On: Verge Permaculture Contour Generator:
<https://contourmapgenerator.com/#16/42.6111/-70.8424>
(Shown W/ 4' Contour Intervals)

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DWG. 1

PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP
1-10-23

ASSETS

TERTIARY ENTRY (NO EXIT)

PRIMRY ENTRANCE

VIEW

VIEW

VIEW

VIEW

116

100

88

82

85

88

92

96

100

104

108

112

116

120

124

128

132

136

140

144

148

152

60

80

100

120

140

160

180

200

160

96

48

52

82



ENVIRONMENTAL & FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF TOWN

High Point & View
 ↳ Pedestrian access

PROTECT

PROTECT

PROTECT

DWG. 2
 PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP
 1-10-23
PLANNING BOARD PREFERENCES

ASSETS

EXISTING UNPROTECTED SITE FEATURES (DRAFT 1-3-23)

LEGEND

- - - EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- DESIRABLE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- HERITAGE LANDSCAPE
- HERITAGE BUILDING
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- ABUTTER BUILDING
- EXISTING TREES
- MATURE SPECIMEN TREES

POTENTIAL SECONDARY ENTRY

Progress Print
 11.10.22

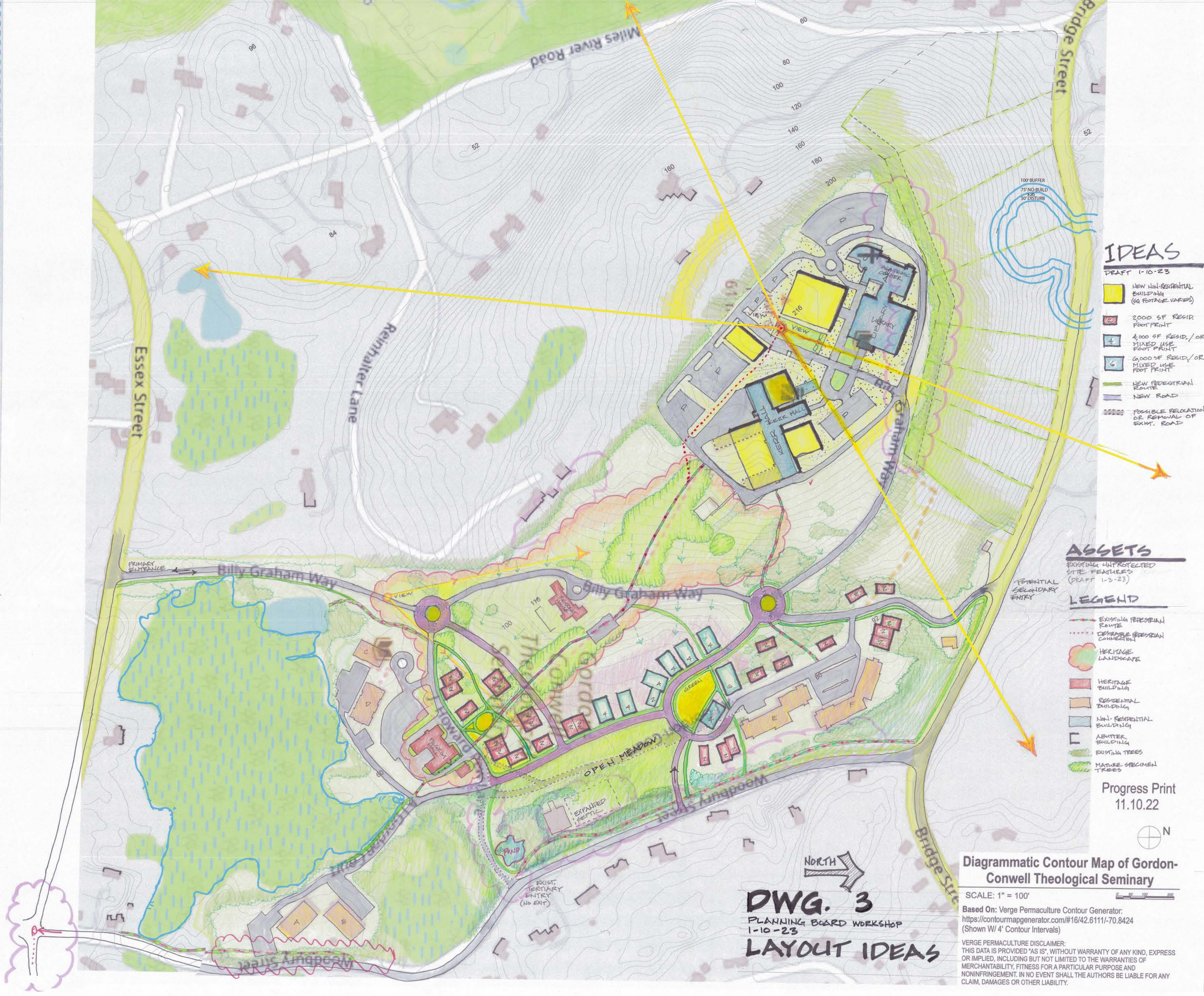


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IDEAS

DRAFT 1-10-23

- NEW NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (SQ FOOTAGE VARIES)
- 2,000 SF RESID. FOOTPRINT
- 4,000 SF RESID./OR MIXED USE FOOTPRINT
- 6,000 SF RESID./OR MIXED USE FOOTPRINT
- NEW PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- NEW ROAD
- POSSIBLE RELOCATION OR REMOVAL OF EXIST. ROAD

ASSETS

EXISTING UNPROTECTED SITE FEATURES (DRAFT 1-3-23)

LEGEND

- EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- DESIRABLE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- HERITAGE LANDSCAPE
- HERITAGE BUILDING
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- ABANDONED BUILDING
- EXISTING TREES
- MATURE SPECIMEN TREES

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DWG. 3

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LAYOUT IDEAS





IDEAS

- NEW NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING (SQ FOOTAGE VARIES)
- 2000 SF RESID. FOOT PRINT
- 4000 SF RESID./OR MIXED USE FOOT PRINT
- 6000 SF RESID./OR MIXED USE FOOT PRINT
- NEW PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- NEW ROAD
- POSSIBLE RELOCATION OR REMOVAL OF EXIST. ROAD

ASSETS

EXISTING UNPROTECTED SITE FEATURES (DRAFT 1-3-23)

LEGEND

- EXISTING PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
- DESIRABLE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- HERITAGE LANDSCAPE
- HERITAGE BUILDING
- RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
- ABUTTER BUILDING
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Progress Print
11.10.22



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DWG. 4

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EXAMPLE OF ZONES