

# Petition to Protect the Garden of Peace – April 2006

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

The Garden of Peace is a Massachusetts memorial to homicide victims, located on the upper plaza of 100 Cambridge Street. This memorial, authorized by Chapter 237 of the Acts of Commonwealth of 2000, is located on state owned land and is privately funded. The Garden was built, not only as a memorial, but to build public awareness of the toll of violence. The Garden was dedicated in 2004 and currently has over 500 names engraved on commemorative river stones.

The proposed 31 story tower will block the only direct source of southern light during the most critical time of year from spring through fall as well as light reflected from the McCormack Building. The building, housing 800 students, a student center and all-campus dining facility at 20 Somerset Street will be a threat to the integrity and sanctity of the Garden. . This usage will make the building the heart of Suffolk’s campus, attracting its 6,600 students to this site immediately adjacent to the Garden of Peace, a place held sacred to the many families whose relatives are commemorated in the memorial.

The volume of students living and socializing in such close proximity to the Garden will disrupt the sanctity of this memorial. We are very concerned that the students will appropriate the Garden for outdoor space as well as a pathway to the rest of the campus on Cambridge Street, friends’ apartments on Beacon Hill and the Faneuil Hall entertainment district.

We the undersigned residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts oppose the height, density, and use of Suffolk’s proposal and respectfully request that:

1. The Boston Redevelopment Authority in its role of scoping Suffolk’s Institutional Master Plan Amendment #2 should:

- Require that Suffolk University submit to the BRA a long-range plan for its future expansion, with a comprehensive evaluation of all student housing needs and siting alternatives, including 20 Somerset Street, the impacts on surrounding open spaces and neighborhoods, and the cumulative impacts of all expansion proposals;
- Require that the Suffolk University proposal conform to the existing zoning and demonstrate the benefits and impacts of any proposed zoning changes to the Garden of Peace and the neighborhood;
- Require that Suffolk University minimize any negative effects on its immediate neighbor, The Garden of Peace, *a memorial to homicide victims*.

2. The Boston Redevelopment Authority and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office in scoping the environmental impacts of Suffolk University’s proposed development at 20 Somerset St. require that the University include wind, shadow, and light reflectivity impacts on the Garden of Peace as well as the potential impact to the character and quality of the memorial from future student use and foot traffic.

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