April 12, 2007

Mr. Gerald Autler, Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Subject: Wheelock College Campus Center and Student Residence

Dear Mr. Autler:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Project Impact Report for Wheelock’s new CCSR project. I filed comments on the Wheelock Institutional Master plan on March 13. The Boston Groundwater Trust was established by the Boston City Council to monitor groundwater levels in areas of the City where the integrity of building foundations is threatened by lowered groundwater levels and to make recommendations for solving the problem. As such, my comments are limited to groundwater related issues.

The project is located within the Groundwater Conservation Overlay District, and I am pleased that the proponents plan to comply with the requirements of Article 32. While we are often concerned about the use of an underdrain system, since it will drain the recharge system, the water will be ultimately returned to the ground. The project will not have a deep excavation, reducing the possibility that groundwater levels would be affected by construction.

I look forward to meeting with the proponent to discuss the location of groundwater observation wells around the site. These will ideally be located on public property and can be turned over to the Trust after construction for incorporation into our observation well network. The wells should be read for six months before construction to establish a base groundwater level. They should then be read at appropriate intervals during and after construction to be sure that level has been maintained. Readings should be shared shortly after they are taken with the Authority and the Trust.
I look forward to working with the proponent and the Authority as the project progresses to assure that it helps as we strive to increase groundwater levels within the area of concern.

Very truly yours,

Elliott Laffer  
Executive Director

Cc: Kathleen Pederson, BRA  
Maura Zlody, BED