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Duxbury Retreat Center Attracts Wide Interest from Developers

BY STEVE ADAMS

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Steve Adams

Housing developers and conference center operators are lining up to bid on a 30-acre Duxbury property that's been listed for sale for the first time since the 1940s.

The Miramar Retreat and Conference Center includes a 37-bedroom, 27,000-square-foot retreat house that's been a refuge for religious and wellness programs for decades.

Boston-based O'Connor and Highland is marketing the 121 Parks St. property, which lists an asking price of \$8.2 million, reflecting its assessed value.

The Society of the Divine Word established the retreat in the 1940s to welcome Catholic priests returning from missions. In recent years, the property was made available for public rentals and has hosted everything from yoga and Buddhist retreats to recovery and wellness programs.

But operational costs exceeded income, and the Chicago-based organization decided in 2022 to sell the property after completing its remaining reservations.

"They found every time they opened their doors, they were losing money to support the groups outside of their core mission," said John O'Connor, a principal at O'Connor and Highland.



Photo courtesy of O'Connor and Highland

The largest of the three buildings, the shingle-style hilltop retreat house, was built in 1900 and expanded in the 1980s to 27,000 square feet. It includes 37 bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, along with conference rooms and dining room. The layout would be suitable for an assisted-living facility, O'Connor said.

The property also includes a community center which includes staff housing, and a Cape Cod-style single-family home.

Since the property was listed in early August, brokers have received inquiries from single- and multifamily housing developers, charitable organizations, corporate retreat operators and other religious orders that are consolidating their real estate, O'Connor said.

The property is located in two different zoning districts, and has approximately 23 developable acres. Redevelopment scenarios indicate that up to 26 single-family homes could be built on the property, or multifamily housing through the Chapter 40B affordable housing process, O'Connor said.

Since Colonial days, the property has only changed hands twice. A Colonial settler received it through a land grant in 1627, and the Loring family, which built iron ships in South Boston during the 19th century, sold it to the Society of the Divine Word in 1945.

Offers for the property will be sought through the end of October, O'Connor said. ◀

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