

## Landscape Planning for Brain Injured Adolescents

The headquarters for MAB Community Services, a social service agency providing opportunities for people with disabilities, was built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a replica of a French chateau, converted first into a convent, and later into a school for the blind. It's a spectacular, but somewhat shabby, neighbor in Brookline's historic Cottage Farm neighborhood. MAB Executive Director Barbara Salisbury is determined to make the landscape flourish once again while including new outdoor opportunities for her students to learn, work, and play.

Salisbury, with the support of the MAB Garden Committee, invited COGdesign to develop a visionary master plan for the Ivy Street School, a MAB program which teaches academic and life skills to adolescents living with brain injuries and other neurological difficulties.

Encouraged by a successful kitchen garden which supplies the school with fresh produce and supports the culinary learning program, staff and students hope for more involvement with the landscape where formal gardens once flourished. Remnants of the gardens remain in the crumbling walls, tea house, and several distinct patios and terraces; but the basketball court, picnic tables, and open turf suggest more currently relevant and active use.



COG designer and Landscape Institute student Sally Naish's task is to consider use, safety, and beauty combined with historic features, environmental sensitivity, and the wish lists of staff and students and produce a landscape plan for a re-imagined future.

Naish began her project work in November 2008 with a MAB charrette – a community design workshop – inviting staff, Garden Committee volunteers, COG designers, and Ivy Street students to share ideas and draft their impressions of what a newly transformed landscape might become.

Charrette participants spent a day walking the grounds together, talking with students and staff, and listening to various points of view about how the disjointed landscape could be reconfigured to be more inviting while accommodating the sports, socializing, and hands-on activities desired by all. The suggestions and brainstorming were then translated into design concepts and drawings – some pragmatic and others fanciful – and presented to the group for further response. Armed with this collection of MAB community-generated ideas, Naish continues to refine, review, and develop the blossoming vision for a revitalized landscape.

### TOURING THE SITE



## TALKING WITH STUDENTS



## WORKING IN TEAMS



## PRESENTING DESIGN CONCEPTS



### **MAB Community Services Charrette participants**

Rovers: Sally Naish, Barbara Salisbury;

Facilitators: Sukie Amory, Karen Howard, T.J. Hrabota, Peter Welanetz;

COG Designers: Jane Coutre, Risa Edelstein, Monica Fairbairn, Ellen Forrester, Jean Krasnow, Fran Peterson, Mike Smith, Kathy Tunsley;

MAB Staff: Gail Brash, Jeff Fein, Tania Fernandez, Dorsey Grandfield, Mike Hurley, Holly Jacobs, Aaron Kaplan, Chris Mauro, John Salvati, Greg Whipple;

Community members: Elaine Ellenbogen, Russ Hensel, Edward Hsieh, Deb Raptopoulos, Alexandra Schweitzer, Suzy Tobin.