



Dartmouth's Proposed Indoor Practice Facility

FAQ's

Updated 3/20/17

The Hanover Planning Board recently denied Dartmouth site plan approval for an Indoor Practice Facility on the open site immediately east of Boss Tennis Center. The College has appealed the Planning Board's decision to Grafton Superior Court.

What is the purpose of the Indoor Practice Facility and why is it necessary?

Building a practice facility that fosters the sustained athletic excellence to which Dartmouth aspires as an Ivy League, NCAA Division I institution is a College priority, as is our commitment to the value of athletics for the participating individuals and the community.

The facility would provide indoor training space for hundreds of student-athletes, especially during cold and inclement weather. It would contain a 56,000 square foot FieldTurf® surface for football, lacrosse, soccer, baseball, softball, and other sports, along with two batting cages for baseball and softball.

The new facility would address the shortage of time and space available in Leverone Field House — which is primarily an indoor track and field venue — and give Dartmouth's teams a stronger chance to compete successfully against Ivy competitors located in milder climates and/or with more extensive indoor practice space.

How extensively did the College consult with its neighbors?

Dartmouth strives to be a respectful member of the community. Before submitting our application to the town, we engaged with and responded to our neighbors' concerns in many ways, including:

- Multiple group meetings;
- Neighborhood walks in the area to explain the plans;
- Individual sessions with four immediate abutters;
- Significant modifications to the exterior design and landscaping plans in response to expressed concerns; and
- Additional facility changes during subsequent Planning Board hearings.

How has the appearance of the facility evolved in response to community input?

The design of the facility has evolved significantly from its early renderings in response to feedback from neighbors, including changes to its size, materials, and shape.



Architectural rendering of Dartmouth's proposed indoor practice facility if viewed from the Dartmouth side of the heavy foliage along Tyler Road. (Sasaki Associates)

How visible would this facility be from the neighborhood?

The proposed building would be largely obscured from the neighborhood for many months of the year. Existing shrubs, 80-foot pines, and other trees already obscure the other facilities in this complex from adjacent homes. The project would include substantial additional evergreen plantings to help screen the complex from view during the remaining months.

Would the facility impact parking and traffic in the area?

The proposed facility is not large enough to accommodate a regulation size field for any sport, would host no games, and have no seating for spectators. The majority of athletes, coaches, and support staff utilizing this facility would already be on campus and arriving on foot, so there would be virtually no incremental impact on parking or traffic.

How would the size of the building compare with nearby existing facilities?

The main structure's footprint of 56,000 square feet is smaller than that of Leverone Field House (79,000 square feet), comparable in size to Thompson Arena (also 56,000 square feet), and larger than Boss Tennis Center (just under 40,000 square feet).

How would the height of the building compare with nearby existing facilities?

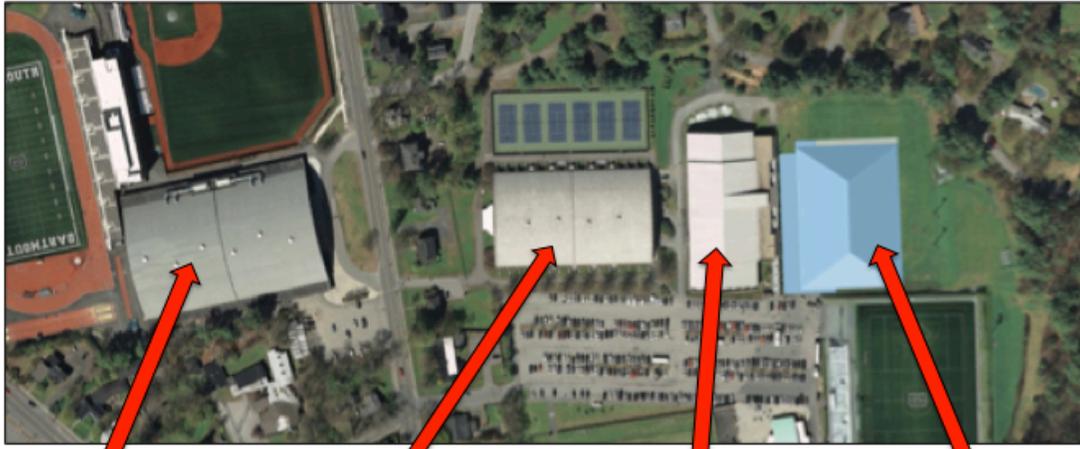
The final design reduced the maximum wall height to 52 feet. This compares with 48 feet for Boss Tennis Center, 55 feet for Thompson Arena, and 60 feet for Leverone Field House. The center of the roof would rise to 68 feet, but the design is such that the roof would not be visible from ground level and just barely visible from the top story of nearby homes.

How close would the facility be to current residences?

At a distance of 220 feet to the nearest home, it would be farther than Boss Tennis Center (195 feet), Thompson Arena (110 feet), or Leverone Field House (80 feet).

Facility Footprint & Wall Height Comparison

Main Volume of Each Facility



Leverone Field House

79,000 Sq Ft
 West End 60' High
 East End 60' High
 Nearest home 80 ft,
 6 homes within 185 ft

Thompson Arena

56,000 Sq Ft
 West End 45' High
 East End 55' High
 Nearest home 110 ft,
 4 homes within 150 ft

Boss Tennis Center

39,000 Sq Ft
 South End 48' High
 North End 48' High
 Nearest home 195 ft

Proposed Indoor Practice Facility

56,000 Sq Ft
 South End 42' High
 North End 52' High
 No homes within 220 ft

Would the facility impact the storm water systems for Chase and Tyler Roads?

The College's storm water management plan for this project — approved by Hanover's Public Works Department — would actually *reduce* the rate of storm water flow into the Chase Road storm drain system in comparison with the present condition. In addition, the College has committed to rebuilding and repairing the failing Chase Road system as a voluntary betterment for the Town, at Dartmouth's expense.

Would the neighborhood be impacted by noise from the facility?

Acoustical experts for both the College and the Town have concluded that any sounds emanating from the building would be far below the level permitted by Hanover's noise ordinance, and the overall impact on the neighborhood would be negligible. The major mechanical systems would all be inside the building, and the main exterior vents would be on the south end of the building (facing away from the neighborhood).

The loudest mechanical noise currently generated by this complex comes from Thompson Arena's refrigeration system, which predates the Town's noise ordinance. Dartmouth has committed to address this issue with sound attenuation to improve the environment for our neighbors.

Would the neighborhood be affected by light emitted by the facility?

In response to concerns about light emanating from the building, there would be no windows on the north end, and the windows on the east side would have motorized shades

to prevent light from reaching the neighborhood at night. The building would also block headlights in the Thompson Arena parking lot that have been an annoyance for some.

Would the facility cast a shadow on adjacent properties?

It would not during most months of the year, but it would do so at the beginning and end of the day during certain months. However, the roof design has been modified to reduce this impact, and, in most cases, the neighboring properties are already in heavy shadow from evergreen trees during those limited time periods.

Would the facility impact neighborhood property values?

Using historical real estate data obtained from the Town, a professional appraiser has shown that previous large institutional projects have not had negative impacts on selling prices or market duration for neighboring homes.

Why didn't the College select an off-campus site for this facility?

Given the large number of student-athletes that would use this facility and the weather conditions in which usage would be heaviest, we are striving to minimize impact on their demanding schedules by keeping it on campus. This also fulfills the Hanover Master Plan recommendation that Dartmouth's facility development "be encouraged to take place in the core campus" and "not pushed to the outskirts of Hanover."

Why not choose a site within the same complex but further from the neighborhood?

We thoroughly explored alternative sites within the same complex, but each one would be detrimental to our student-athletes in various ways (such as reducing the amount of lighted field space, which is already at a premium) and/or would be perceived to impact other residential neighborhoods.

Why not erect a "bubble" on an existing field as other Ivy schools have done?

We explored this avenue thoroughly, but found that each potential site has significant logistical disadvantages. In addition, more than 20 bubbles have collapsed in the Northeast over the last 10 years, including the structures at the University of Maine, Boston College, Utica College, and Franklin Pierce University, some of which sustained extensive damage. Most of these collapses have occurred under heavy snow, serving as a reminder of the risks inherent in our northern climate.

Does the proposed facility meet Hanover's zoning requirements?

Yes, both the Town staff and the Planning Board have determined that the project is fully compliant with all applicable zoning requirements.

Why is the College appealing the Planning Board's decision?

If approved, this facility will serve a critical need for our dedicated student-athletes, enabling them to continue representing the College and the Upper Valley to the best of their abilities.

We pride ourselves on being good neighbors, and we have every expectation that this would continue if and when this facility is built and fully utilized.