

MEMORANDUM

FEBRUARY 14, 2013

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

FROM: HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW
MICHAEL CANNIZZO, URBAN DESIGN
JOHN FITZGERALD, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

SUBJECT: SHOWA BOSTON PROJECT 3rd AMENDMENT
420 POND STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (“BRA”) authorize the Director to (1) issue a Certification of Approval for the construction of a 1,500 square foot Classroom Addition Project at 420 Pond Street in Jamaica Plain, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”); and (2) to amend the Showa Boston Institute Master Plan as required by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered BZC-9718.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Showa Boston Institute (“Showa”) established by Showa Women’s University in Tokyo, Japan, is a residential academic institution dedicated to increasing students’ English proficiency, developing cross-cultural awareness, fostering personal growth and increasing understanding between the people of Japan and the people of the United States. Showa has been in operation at the existing site on Pond Street in Jamaica Plain since 1986.

Located six miles from downtown Boston atop Moss Hill in Jamaica Plain, Showa’s 40-acre campus originally consisted of two principal buildings and several small support structures. The 116,700 square foot, multi-purpose main building housed ten dormitory wings, a dining hall, classrooms, an auditorium, a swimming pool, and administrative offices. The 20,500 square foot academic building provided classroom space.

Since August 2003, Showa has shared its classrooms, dining hall, auditorium, swimming pool, media lab, and recreational facilities with the British School of Boston, an independent elementary/secondary school whose curriculum is based on the

English National Curriculum (the “British School”). The British School draws students from Boston and the surrounding suburbs, with the academic year beginning in early September and ending in early July. For the 2009 academic year, the British School’s enrollment is comprised of 395 students in kindergarten through seventh grade.

While not technically eligible for an Institutional Master Plan, Showa agreed to submit a Master Plan in 2004 and such Master Plan was approved by the BRA Board with support from the Jamaica Hills Association on April 1, 2004.

In January 2008, Showa filed its first amendment to the Master Plan, which was the construction of 1,000 square foot additions to six (6) of the ten (10) Showa Boston’s student dormitory wings.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Showa now proposes a single 1,500 square foot, 80-seat classroom addition (“Proposed Project”). On January 13, 2012 Showa filed a Second Amendment to the Master Plan and Small Project Review with the BRA for the Proposed Project. This amendment consisted of approximately 8,000 square feet of work that would add approximately 20 additional beds; 3,200 square feet of work for 4 extra classrooms; and 2,800 square feet of work for a cafeteria addition.

PUBLIC PROCESS

The Jamaica Hills Neighborhood Association approved the Master Plan and the Proposed Project and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) with Showa at its March 10, 2004 meeting. Any changes to the Proposed Project made after 2004 including the change proposed herein, would require the developer to present said changes to the Jamaica Hills Neighborhood Association.

The Developer as required by the MOU, has also met with Jamaica Hills Neighborhood Association and the Jamaica Plan Neighborhood Council, from which the have both received unanimous support.

ZONING

The Proposed Project is located within a Conservation Protection Subdistrict of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood District. It has also been established as the Nazareth/Showa Conservation Protection Subdistrict. Elementary and Secondary School is an allowed use. The Proposed Project also complies with all dimensional regulations and the off-street parking and loading requirements. While no zoning relief is required for the construction of the Proposed Project, pursuant to the provisions of a City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered

BZC-9718 (“ZBA Decision”), Showa was asked to prepare a master plan for review by the Jamaica Hills Neighborhood Association and approval by the BRA. Insofar as Showa is not a degree-granting educational institution, Showa’s Master Plan and amendments thereto are not subject to the Institutional Master Plan Review requirements of Article 80D of the Code, but rather the provisions of the ZBA Decision. The provisions of the ZBA Decision with regard to the Master Plan submission are as follows: (1) Design review by the Authority; (2) An open space plan which addresses the objectives for preservation of major open space areas including the preservation of an open space area on the site; and (3) It is determined by either traffic engineers for Showa or by the City that either pedestrian or vehicular traffic signals are necessary at either access point from Pond Street to site, an extensive traffic study should be undertaken by Showa with respect to the potential impact of these additional signals on the area’s traffic flow.

RECOMMENDATION

The Proposed Project complies with the requirements set forth in Section 80E of the Code for Small Project Review and the Master Plan as amended complies with the 1987 ZBA decision. Therefore, staff recommends that the Director be authorized to (1) issue a Certification of Approval for the construction of an approximately 1,500 square feet 80-seat classroom addition at 420 Pond Street in Jamaica Plain, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code; and (2) to amend the approved Showa Boston Institute Master Plan as required by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered BZC-9718.

Appropriate votes follow:

VOTED: That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Approval, for that the proposal by Showa Boston to construct an approximately 1,500 square feet 80-seat classroom addition at 420 Pond Street in Jamaica Plain, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code; and

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Boston Redevelopment Authority hereby approves the Third Amendment to the Showa Boston Institute Master Plan as required by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered BZC-9718.