



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2008-61
Date: December 17, 2009
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 369-371 Beacon Street

Applicant Name: Beacon Street Hotel
Applicant Address: 369-371 Beacon Street
Property Owner Name: George Makrigiannis
Property Owner Address: P.O. Box 391111, Cambridge, MA 02139
Alderman: Heuston

Legal Notice: The Applicant, Beacon Street Hotel., seeks a Special Permit with Site Plan Review under §7.11.10.5.b in order to construct and establish a hotel of more than 10,000 gross square feet.

Zoning District/Ward: Business A (BA) / 2

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §7.11.10.5.b

Date of Application: November 3, 2008

Date(s) of Meetings/Public Hearing: PB: December 17, 2009 / ZBA: January 6, 2009

Date of Decision: N/A

Vote: N/A

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The subject property is composed of three parcels (37-C-1, 37-C-2 & 37-C-3). The lot contains 9,670 sf with street frontage on two sides of approximately 192 ft. There is currently a one-story vacant gas station on the site which occupies about one quarter of the lot and is accessed by two curb cuts. The remainder of the property has been paved with concrete and asphalt. The property has been used as a filling station and repair shop since the 1920s.

The site is located near Porter Square between Beacon Street and the MBTA commuter rail tracks.

Four roads intersect in this vicinity, Beacon Street, Oxford Street, Roseland Street and



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Somerville Avenue, which runs parallel to the tracks on the opposite side from the subject site. The MBTA tracks are substantially below grade in this area and the property is situated approximately 8-10 ft above the rail bed. Property frontage along the tracks is approximately 180 ft. The lot is irregularly shaped and comes to a point near the Beacon Street overpass of the railroad tracks.

2. Proposal: The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing gas station and construct a 35 room hotel and restaurant with a combined 19,318 nsf. The proposed 60 seat restaurant would be 1,760 sf and located on the first floor of the building. The structure would be four stories and 50 ft in height at its highest point under the SZO. The section of the structure that lies within 30 ft of the abutting neighboring residential district would be scaled down to three stories and 40 ft in height. Where the lot comes to a point near the Beacon Street overpass, the building has a rounded façade and features a small outdoor seating area that would be a few feet below the street level, but accessible from the sidewalk. The hotel entrance would be located near the rounded section of the structure and the restaurant entrance would be located near the edge of the building on the right side of the front façade.

On the far right side of the property would be a ramp leading to a below grade parking area, loading zone and trash area. The parking area will be serviced by valet and include 28 spaces that would be mechanically stacked two cars high. A small pickup and drop off area is proposed to cut into the sidewalk before Beacon Street turns up towards Somerville Avenue. This area would be long enough to allow two cars to stand and load or unload passengers, while allowing a 7 ft wide sidewalk to exist and to allow a 4.3 ft wide bicycle lane to be located between the standing cars and the street traffic lanes.

3. Nature of Application: Since the proposed hotel facilities are larger than 10,000 sf the applicant is required to apply for a Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) under §7.11.10.5.b of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) to establish the use. The restaurant and structure would be allowed by right in the BA district.
4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The site is located approximately 1,000 ft from the center of Porter Square, which includes a wide variety of commercial uses and an MBTA Red Line station. The area immediately surrounding the subject parcel is characterized by a mix of detached two- and three-family wood frame structures and medium density residential uses including a multi-family residential building across Beacon Street, and small scale commercial uses including a laundromat, café and convenience store. As previously discussed, an MBTA rail line runs adjacent to the property to the northeast.
5. Landscaping: The landscaping on the site is currently non-existent as the entire parcel has been either built on or paved. The applicant is proposing 10.6% landscaping (1,027 sf) on the site, which would include trees, pavers and a small seating area. This area would be accessible from within the hotel and from the public sidewalk abutting the property. There would also be some smaller grass areas along the front of the structure along Beacon Street.
6. Parking: Under §9.5.10 of the SZO a minimum of 28 off-street parking spaces are required. The Applicant is proposing to provide 28 off-street parking spaces. Calculation of the parking requirement is as follows:
 - Restaurant: Under §9.5.10.a the 60 seat / 1,760 sf restaurant would require 1 space per 110 gsf, which would require 16 parking spaces. Since this is a use associated with a hotel only 25% of those spaces are actually required, which results in 4 spaces required for the restaurant.

- Hotel: Under §9.5.10.d a hotel use is required to provide parking spaces for 80% of the 35 guest rooms in the facility plus 0.5 per employee. The applicant would have 6 employees on site at peak operating times, which results in 31 required parking spaces for the hotel.

- Transit Reduction: Under §9.6.3.b, any use within 1,000 ft of a rapid transit station shall be entitled to a 20% parking reduction in the required parking. Since this property is approximately 850 ft from the Porter Square T station this section of the SZO applies. The 20 % reduction of 35 spaces results in a required parking space figure of 28 spaces.

7. Green Building Practices:

As per the applicant:

The building will be a factory fabricated modular structure, thereby reducing on site erection time, and thus noise, dust and vibration. Modular approaches significantly reduce material waste, improve envelope thermal efficiencies, and provide higher quality control throughout the construction than stick-built projects.

The building will be sided with Nichiha fiber cement siding which is made of 100% recyclable materials; the product is 55% fly ash, a by-product derived from power plants

The building will have high efficiency heating and cooling equipment

The applicant is researching techniques for the utilization of rainwater for site irrigation and washing uses, offsetting some of the storm water expense to make a cistern.

The applicant will have low-use and energy efficient water fixtures

8. Comments:

Comments of Traffic and Parking: Terry Smith, City Traffic Engineer, reviewed this application and had the following comments:

The proposed project at 369 - 371 Beacon Street involves demolition of a now defunct gas station, mechanic's bay and associated single story building and replacing this structure with a new hotel building with 35 guestrooms and a 60 seat restaurant. The applicant has retained the services of a professional traffic engineering firm, Traffic Solutions, LLC to prepare a Traffic Impact and Access Study relative to the new development and its impact on the surrounding roadway network.

The proposed development is located in the roadway nexus of Somerville Ave, Beacon St and Oxford St. Somerville Ave runs just north of the project site and intersects with Beacon St in the immediate vicinity of the proposed hotel and restaurant. Somerville Ave is an urban principle arterial roadway. Beacon St, the site of the proposed development, is also an urban arterial roadway. A traffic signal controls the intersection of Somerville Ave and Beacon St. Oxford St is located directly opposite the proposed development. Oxford St is a heavily traveled roadway for vehicles and pedestrians accessing various Harvard University buildings. All three streets are pedestrian corridors. Beacon St is a major bicycle corridor from Somerville to Cambridge.

The submitted traffic analysis in this study is a well prepared document focusing on vehicle movements at this location. This report states that using industry standard "the number of trips (vehicle) generated by the new use is a nominal amount" and the Level of Service (vehicle delays and length of queues) at the signalized and unsignalized intersections will operate at the same Level Of Service with or without the project. Traffic and Parking does not disagree with these statements.

However, when reviewing the impacts of proposed developments Traffic and Parking examines the effect new developments will have on the entire immediate transportation network including not only vehicles but also pedestrians and bicycles. The City of Somerville has aggressively pursued an increase in the number, location and length of bike lanes throughout the city. A bike lane was created on Beacon St connecting with an existing bike lane at the end of Beacon St and the start of Hampshire St at the Somerville/Cambridge City Line. Prior to the installation of this bike lane on Beacon St and according to the City's Pedestrian/Bicycle Liaison there were 75 bicyclist per hour during the AM and PM peak hours (7 - 9 AM and 4 - 7 PM). After the bike lane was operational the number of bicyclists increased to 200 per hour during these peak hours. The intersection of Beacon St at Oxford St is an atypical intersection for motorists and bicyclist and additional safety measures for bicyclists were required after several bicycle/vehicle accidents occurred after the installation of the bike lane. These measures included additional pavement marking and signage. The proposed development of a hotel and restaurant will add turning movements from the development to and from Beacon St and Oxford St. Mitigation to continue the safety measures already established at this location will be required. This mitigation should be in the form of a gift to the City of \$3,000.00 for the installation of pavement markings and signs along the Beacon St corridor in the vicinity of Beacon St/Oxford.

The proposed hotel and restaurant are in close proximity to Porter Square. Porter Square is a hub for several bus routes and a subway station and a commuter rail station. The close proximity of these transit services to Beacon St and Oxford St has already resulted in individuals parking their vehicle at this location and walking to the Porter Square area and utilizing public transportation. Traffic and Parking is considering the installation of parking meters in this area to prevent this phenomena. Coupled with the proposed restaurant, the requirements of parking meters most likely will be a higher priority. Many customers for this restaurant will either be from "pass by trips", "diverted trips and/or reformulated "internal trips". In order to allow for vehicle parking availability, parking spaces must be available on a consistent basis. Traffic and Parking does not want to observe a traffic pattern developing in this area where vehicles are "searching" for parking spaces. A pattern of this nature will have an adverse effect on traffic safety, traffic congestion and pedestrian and bicycle safety. The likelihood of conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles with motor vehicles will increase without an adequate parking supply, i.e. parking space availability due to turnover of parking spaces associated with/due to parking meters. Mitigation by the developer in the form of providing to the City a multi-space parking meter kiosk capable of accepting coins, paper currency, credit cards, debit cards and possible pay by cell phone technology along with all long term and short term service agreements associated with the parking meter kiosk would satisfy this need. Specification or all requirements of the above will be supplied by the Director of Traffic and Parking when appropriate/required prior to installation.

It should be noted that this development meets the off site parking space requirement of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. This parking space requirement is in compliance due to the innovative ramp/double deck parking space utilization process. Using this ramp system 2 vehicles will have access to a single parking space via the "double decking" of these vehicles. Traffic and Parking is aware of this concept through previous research on how to best utilize parking space with limited available area. This parking space implementation is and should be a model for future developers in the city. The developer is complimented on this innovation.

To reiterate, provided that the proper mitigation for bicycle and pedestrians safety is provided in the form of a gift to the City of \$3,000.00 for pavement markings along the Beacon St corridor and along with proper mitigation to ensure adequate parking space turnover in the form of a parking meter kiosk as described above, then Traffic and Parking has no objections to the proposed development of a hotel and restaurant at 361 - 371 Beacon St.

DRC: *(The DRC reviewed this project in January 2009 and made the follow comments. Many of their ideas have been incorporated into the proposal including the pick up/drop off area, the vertical trellis and the restaurant door addition/location.)*

The rooftop penthouse would help to hide rooftop mechanicals including cooling towers; however, the penthouse takes away from the trellis and the cylindrical focus of the building. Make the trellis more prominent vertically so that it is the monumental feature. The DRC was concerned that if the trellis was removed this portion of the building would become a back end and it should remain the focus. Do not remove the trellis from the plans.

There should be a drop-off space for taxis and other vehicles because the street can get congested. Ideas include creating a drop-off space in the plaza, on the sidewalk as a shared pedestrian/vehicle zone near the restaurant, or in the street, which is sixty-six feet wide.

Having only one elevator could be difficult when it needs repair but the cost of an additional elevator is understandably limiting.

Add an entrance to the plaza from the rotunda. Add a door to the other side of the main entryway. The success of the restaurant will depend on pedestrian access. Add an entrance to the restaurant from the street.

The northern façade is undulating with vistas to Porter Square. The breakdown of this wall would help to cut down the noise from the train. It would be a nice feature to have natural light on the staircase with the glass exterior. It would be beneficial to have transparent doors to the corridors so that the light will filter into the core of the building.

The DRC thought that a hotel makes sense in this location. The scale of the building is appropriate for the neighborhood and will act as a landmark in the area. The hotel will be an improvement to the site and an enhancement to the neighborhood.

Fire Prevention: Steve Keenan reviewed this application and had the following comments:

The proposed hotel at this location will require a code compliant fire alarm and fire suppression system. Lt. Vincent McLaughlin of our Code Compliance Unit will also have to be contacted regarding this site because it appears to have been a gas station and there may be some issues that Lt. McLaughlin would have to look into regarding existing underground fuel storage tanks, etc.

Comments of City Engineer: Charlie O'Brien reviewed this application in February 2009 and had no concerns at that time. In discussions, he stated that since the property was completely paved any new drainage system would be an improvement on the site.

Comments from Aldermen: Ward Alderman Heuston has been contacted and has not yet provided comments.

II. Findings and Determinations for Special Permit with Site Plan Review

In considering the requested special permits with site plan review the Planning Board must consider and make findings and determinations as outlined in §5.2.5 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.2.5 in more detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Applicant must comply "with the information requirements in Section §5.2.3;" The information provided by the Applicant allows for a comprehensive review of the proposed development and is in general compliance with the requirements set forth under §5.2.3 of the SZO. Additional information regarding drainage systems will be necessary before any building permits are issued.
2. Compliance with Standards: The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit with site plan review". Within the BA zoning district all developments that require a special permit with design review or special permit with site plan review should comply with the following two guidelines to the highest degree practicable.

1. Give preference to locating on-site, off-street parking at the rear of the lot, behind the building or below street level, providing vehicular access from either a side street or alley where possible.

This proposal features 28 parking spaces below street level that would be accessed from Beacon Street. Access directly from Beacon Street is the only option to provide vehicle access as the property has no other street frontage. This purpose of this guideline is to encourage parking to be located in an area that is not visible from the public way and Staff finds that this proposal meets this objective.

2. Give preference to providing landscaping along the primary street edge.

The landscaping proposed for this site is situated predominantly along the primary street edge, some in front of the building and a landscaped open space area on a triangular piece of land along Beacon Street near the railroad overpass. The existing site features no landscaping and Staff finds the increase landscaping and open space to be visually and physically beneficial to the neighborhood.

2. Purpose of the District: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with the intent of the specific zoning district as specified in Article 6". The project site is located within a Business A district. The BA district seeks "to establish and preserve business areas bordering main thoroughfares that are attractive to a wide range of uses, including retail business and services, housing, government, professional and medical offices, and places of amusement. While it is anticipated that most users will arrive by motor vehicle, it is intended that the area should be safe for and conducive to pedestrian traffic."

Staff finds that a hotel and restaurant is consistent with the general purpose of the BA district as a business area and would provide much needed lodging options to the Porter Square area and the city as a whole. Its location near the intersection of two main thoroughfares, Beacon Street and Somerville Avenue, also are consistent with goals of the zone. While the BA zone was created with the anticipation that most users would drive to the area, Staff finds that the mix of transportation options in the area including: the commuter rail and Red Line stations in Porter Square less than 1,000 ft away, several bus stops, and defined bike lanes would encourage users to travel to the site by means other than automobile. The variety of transportation options makes this an ideal location for a hotel

and restaurant use that would require good accessibility. The increased pedestrian and bike traffic should improve the safety of the area with more "eyes on the street" and the 7 ft minimum sidewalk, better designed and with one less curb cut, would provide increased safety for pedestrians.

3. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "Is designed in a manner that is compatible with the existing natural features of the site and is compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding area, and that the scale, massing and detailing of buildings are compatible with those prevalent in the surrounding area."

Since the lot has previously been developed, prior natural features have been significantly altered. The site has been used as a gas and automobile service station for approximately 80 years and the current building was constructed around the late 1950's. This structure is a single story garage with minimal architectural interest. The structure is situated in the middle of a paved lot and is accessed by two curb cuts. This structure is not typical or compatible with the type of development in the area which features predominantly 2.5 and 3-story structures with higher lot coverage percentages.

Though the proposed structure seems larger in terms of scale and massing, the property is significantly larger than most other properties in the area. As a function of lot size, the hotel proposal would be more compatible with surrounding uses. This property does abut an RB zoning district line, which is a residential district. The BA zone allows twice the FAR of an RB zone and an increased height of 10 ft. Therefore, this structure is larger than would be allowed in the neighboring district. However, Staff finds that the three-story, multi-family structure on the opposite side of Beacon Street, which is of a similar mass and scale to the proposed structure, does not negatively affect the street. Staff finds that the multi-family structure, which is on a lot similar in shape to the proposed site, acts to define the intersection and is visually appealing, while helping to create a sense of place in the area. The Staff finds that the proposed hotel would act in a similar fashion to define the intersection and also visually signify the boundary of the Porter Square commercial area, while providing a transition into the lower scale residential and commercial corridor of Beacon Street with the step down in height along the residential zoning district boundary.

This development is at the far eastern boundary of the Porter Square commercial area. Staff finds that a hotel and restaurant would be suitable for this area due to the transportation infrastructure that exists, the lack of other lodging in the area, and Porter Square which attracts tourists and visitors coming to the area for its history, schools, business opportunities etc. The City is looking to the area between the subject property and the center of the square as an area that could support future commercial development that is vital to the health of the City. Over the summer, the City worked internally and with neighborhood groups to develop a vision and eventually a rezoning for the area around Porter Square to take advantage of the transportation infrastructure that exists and to strengthen the City's commercial base. Ideas have included a variety of Transit Oriented Development zones as well as potentially covering the tracks from the Beacon Street overpass to the MBTA station to create development opportunities. As an extension of the Porter Square commercial district, the proposed hotel structure can be viewed as compatible with the scale, massing and detailing of commercial buildings in the area.

4. Functional Design: The project must meet "accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction."

Based upon the comments received from the various City Departments, the project meets accepted standards and criteria for the functional design of facilities, structures, and site construction. Any

necessary mitigation or minor design changes have been incorporated into the recommended conditions section of this report.

5. Impact on Public Systems: The project will “not create adverse impacts on the public services and facilities serving the development, such as the sanitary sewer system, the storm drainage system, the public water supply, the recreational system, the street system for vehicular traffic, and the sidewalks and footpaths for pedestrian traffic.”

Additional review is still required for the proposed drainage systems. However, this can be completed subsequent to the zoning review, with a condition of approval requiring provision of a drainage plan satisfactory to the City Engineer prior to the issuance of any permits. The approval of the SPSR shall be contingent upon the City Engineer’s or the City consultant's determination that no adverse impacts on public systems will result from the development.

6. Environmental Impacts: “The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.”

Because of the nature of the proposed use and the area in which it is projected to be built, adverse environmental impacts are not anticipated. In addition, it is not expected that this facility will produce a level of emissions that would be higher than are now experienced in the area due to any increased traffic generated by the hotel/restaurant. By nature, a hotel will not produce an emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances pollute water or transmit communications interference. The restaurant will be conditioned in this report to vent up and away from neighboring residences. Also, during construction, efforts will be made to mitigate dust and control air quality, and to minimize noise. Once completed the building would serve as an acoustical buffer for the traffic noise generated by the cars on Somerville Avenue and by the MBTA trains. The building and its articulated rear façade would disperse the sound coming from these areas. This should benefit the neighbors and the residential areas to the south and east of the project.

The applicant has submitted a shadow study that depicts minimal shadow impacts on surrounding structures. Most of the shadow cast by the building affects the MBTA property, since the railroad tracks are situated almost directly north of the site.

As there have been underground tanks used at the site for many decades, remediation of the site will be required under Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations. The applicant has retained Loitherstein Environmental Engineering Inc. to address environmental issues with the site. In December 2009, a Phase IV -Ready Implementation Plan (RIP) was submitted to MassDEP outlining the Comprehensive Remedial Action to be provided. Remedial activities will be conducted in conjunction with the site work for the hotel, which could begin as early as Spring 2010.

7. Consistency with Purposes: "Is consistent with: 1) the purposes of this Ordinance, particularly those set forth in Article 1 and Article 5; and 2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit with site plan review which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those at the beginning of the various sections."

As the required findings of Article 5 have been made, and the proposal satisfies the purposes of Article 1, including Purpose, Interpretation and Scope, and of Article 6, as already described, the Planning Board finds the proposal to be consistent with the purposes of the SZO.

9. Preservation of Landform and Open Space: The Applicant has to ensure that "the existing land form is preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing grading and the erosion or stripping of steep slopes, and by maintaining man-made features that enhance the land form, such as stone walls, with minimal alteration or disruption. In addition, all open spaces should be designed and planted to enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood. Whenever possible, the development parcel should be laid out so that some of the landscaped areas are visible to the neighborhood."

As previously discussed, this proposal will increase the amount of landscaping and open space on the property to approximately 10% where there is currently none. The landscaping will increase the attractiveness of the neighborhood by adding several trees and a seating area. This area will provide shaded seating during the summer and also work to screen the views of the MBTA tracks and Somerville Avenue. The increased pervious surface will improve the drainage conditions currently on the site.

10. Relation of Buildings to Environment: The Applicant must ensure that "buildings are: 1) located harmoniously with the land form, vegetation and other natural features of the site; 2) compatible in scale, design and use with those buildings and designs which are visually related to the development site; 3) effectively located for solar and wind orientation for energy conservation; and 4) advantageously located for views from the building while minimizing the intrusion on views from other buildings."

As previously mentioned, the natural landform has been altered. The Applicant has made efforts to design a structure that works with the irregularly shaped parcel while creating a visually appealing structure from all sides. The rounded section of the building leads to the landscaping and open space which flows into the sidewalk and Beacon Street overpass. The façade of the structure that faces the tracks undulates and has a series of angled walls that face west toward Porter Square and will provide additional sunlight into the hotel rooms. There are trees and other vegetative elements proposed for the rear wall that will improve the views from the neighborhood across Somerville Avenue.

11. Stormwater Drainage: The Applicant must demonstrate that "special attention has been given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Stormwater shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, and paved area, and routed through a well-engineered system designed with appropriate stormwater management techniques. Skimming devices, oil, and grease traps, and similar facilities at the collection or discharge points for paved surface runoff should be used, to retain oils, greases, and particles. Surface water on all paved areas shall be collected and/or routed so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved area. In larger developments, where practical, the routing of runoff through sheet flow, swales or other means increasing filtration and percolation is strongly encouraged, as is use of retention or detention ponds. In instances of below grade parking (such as garages) or low lying areas prone to flooding, installation of pumps or other devices to prevent backflow through drains or catch basins may be required."

While additional review is required of drainage plans, any approval of the SPSR should be conditional upon the City Engineer's or the City consultant's approval of such plans and determination that no adverse impact will result to the drainage system from the project's design.

12. Enhancement of Appearance: The Applicant must demonstrate that "the natural character and appearance of the City is enhanced. Awareness of the existence of a development, particularly a non residential development or a higher density residential development, should be minimized by screening views of the development from nearby streets, residential neighborhoods of City property by the effective use of existing land forms, or alteration thereto, such as berms, and by existing vegetation or supplemental planting;"

The proposed location for the new construction is in an area that will be highly visible from both Beacon Street and Somerville Avenue. The applicant has proposed trees and vegetation for the façade along Somerville Avenue to partly screen the structure and visually reduce its scale along that side. The appearance of the area would be improved with the removal of the existing gas station and expanse of concrete. The new structure is of a contemporary design that is broken down into sections using color and materials to reduce the visual scale and massing of the structure. The rounded section, the use of glass and undulating façade all add to the appearance of the structure that Staff finds an improvement over the current conditions.

13. Lighting: With respect to lighting, the Applicant must ensure that "all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be adequately lit and designed as much as possible to allow for surveillance by neighbors and passersby."

The applicant will be required to submit an exterior site lighting plan that demonstrates sufficient lighting for public surveillance. The exterior lighting intensity by condition will have little to no effect on the properties surrounding the facility.

14. Emergency Access: The Applicant must ensure that "there is easy access to buildings, and the grounds adjoining them, for operations by fire, police, medical and other emergency personnel and equipment;"

Both the City's Traffic and Parking Department and the Fire Prevention Bureau have commented on the plans. No outstanding concerns have been communicated to the Planning Staff.

15. Location of Access: The Applicant must ensure that "the location of intersections of access drives with the City arterial or collector streets minimizes traffic congestion."

The existing layout of the site includes two curb cuts onto Beacon Street. The curb cut closest to Somerville Avenue is approximately 150 ft from the intersection. The proposal will reduce the number of curb cuts providing access to the site to one and relocate it at the furthest point from the intersection at about 250 ft. The Beacon Street right of way is wide enough at this point to allow the applicant to incorporate a pick up and drop off area large enough for two cars in the area before Beacon Street turns towards the Somerville Avenue intersection.

A Traffic Study has been submitted to the Traffic and Parking Department. According to Traffic and Parking, the number of trips (vehicle) generated by the new use would be a nominal amount and the Level of Service (vehicle delays and length of queues) at the signalized and non-signalized intersections will operate at the same Level Of Service with or without the project. Conditions will be added to this report that will require the applicant to provide a parking kiosk and money for street line painting to address concerns Traffic and Parking has about the creation of traffic congestion due to lack of available parking.

Staff finds that the proposal including Traffic and Parking mitigation requirements would work to minimize traffic congestion in the area.

16. Utility Service: The Applicant must ensure that "Electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment are placed underground from the source or connection, or are effectively screened from public view."

The Applicant is proposing to tie into the existing City services for electric, telephone and cable. Any new lines would be placed underground in accordance with the SZO and the policies of the Superintendent of Lights and Lines.

17. Prevention of Adverse Impacts: The Applicant must demonstrate that "provisions have been made to prevent or minimize any detrimental effect on adjoining premises, and the general neighborhood, including, (1) minimizing any adverse impact from new hard surface ground cover, or machinery which emits heat, vapor, light or fumes; and (2) preventing adverse impacts to light, air and noise, wind and temperature levels in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development;"

As previously mentioned, no negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed uses.

18. Signage: The Applicant must ensure that "the size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall reflect the scale and character of the proposed buildings;"

Signage will be limited in size and location to that shown in the elevation diagrams. All proposed signage meets with the SZO regulations regarding size, type and placement. Staff finds that the design of the signage reflects the character of the building and would not be visually intrusive to the neighborhood. Any alterations to the proposed signs that do not meet SZO requirements would need SPGA approval.

19. Screening of Service Facilities: The Applicant must ensure that "exposed transformers and other machinery, storage, service and truck loading areas, dumpsters, utility buildings, and similar structures shall be effectively screened by plantings or other screening methods so that they are not directly visible from either the proposed development or the surrounding properties."

The Applicant indicated in the plans that a trash room would be located below grade adjacent to the ramp leading to the parking area beneath the structure. This will provide easy access for trucks to haul away trash while reducing grade level views of the dumpsters. The trash area will still be required to be screened by a condition to eliminate any views of the dumpster from the public way. Any transformers should be located as not to impact the design of the building or landscaped area, and so as to allow for full screening.

20. Screening of Parking: As previously discussed, parking is below grade and not visible from the public way.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) SZO §§7.11.10.5.b

Based on the above findings, the Planning Board recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT with SITE PLAN REVIEW**.

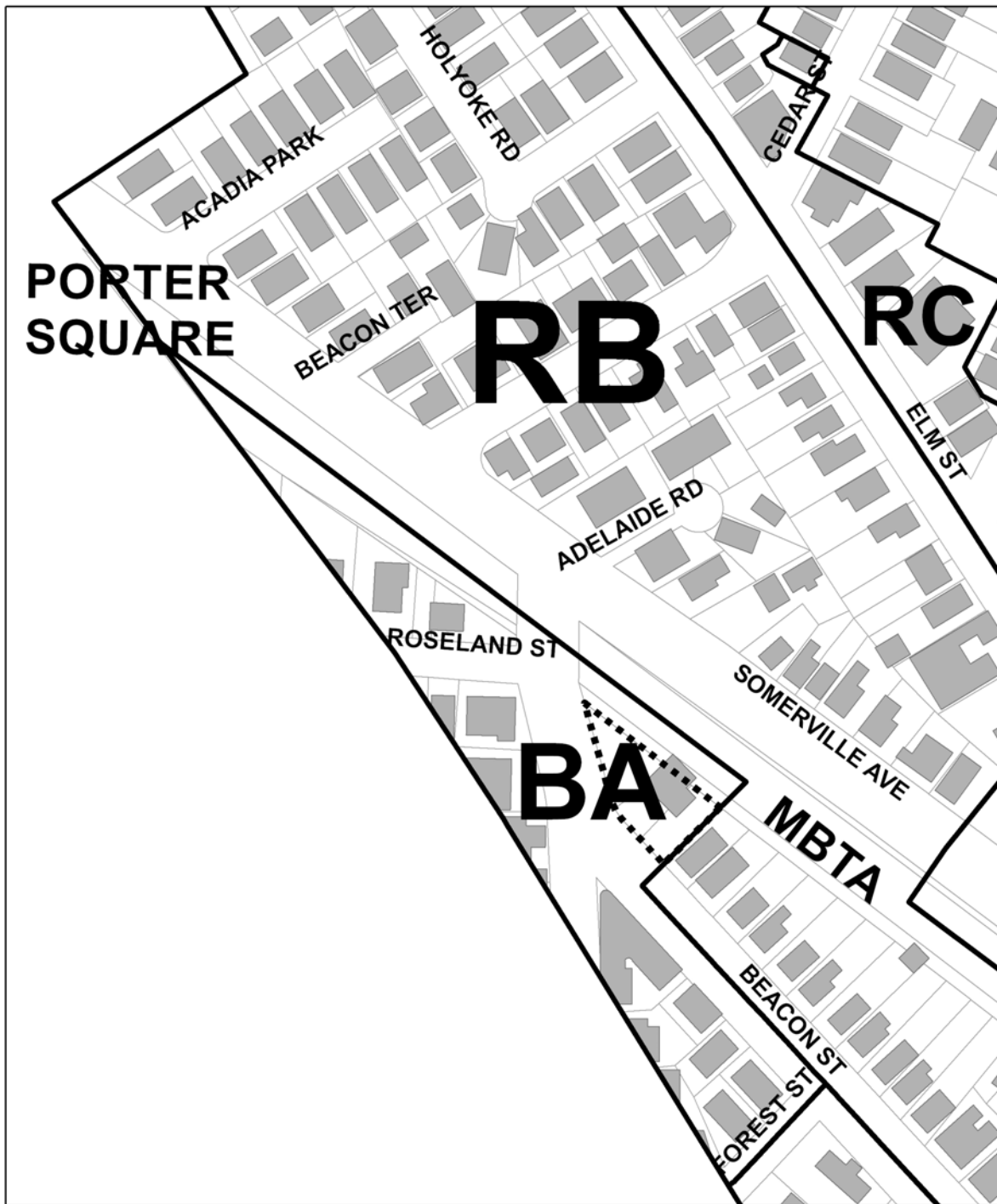
The Applicant has been responsive to the requests of the various City Departments and to community input received at several community meetings. Through this process the proposal has been redesigned to include among other things the screening of the mechanical equipment with a more prominent vertical trellis, a two vehicle pick up and drop off area that works in conjunction with a 4 ft wide bike path and 7 ft sidewalk, a public landscaped plaza, redesigned signage and separate entryways for the hotel and restaurant. Staff finds that these alterations have improved the proposal and consider this an important development for the City and the Porter Square area.

Although Planning Staff is recommending approval of the requested Special Permit with Site Plan Review, the following conditions should be added to the permits:

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes										
1	Approval is for the construction of a 19,318 nsf, 35 room hotel and restaurant. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant and/or its Agent: <table><tr><th>Date</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>11/3/08</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerks Office</td></tr><tr><td>1/22/09 (12/15/09)</td><td>A4 - Shadow Study</td></tr><tr><td>3/30/09 (12/15/09)</td><td>Proposed Beacon Street Signing and Striping Plan (Pickup/Dropoff)</td></tr><tr><td>8/3/09 (12/15/09)</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (A0-A3 and elevations)</td></tr></table> Any changes to the approved site plan or elevations that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive ZBA approval.	Date	Submission	11/3/08	Initial application submitted to the City Clerks Office	1/22/09 (12/15/09)	A4 - Shadow Study	3/30/09 (12/15/09)	Proposed Beacon Street Signing and Striping Plan (Pickup/Dropoff)	8/3/09 (12/15/09)	Plans submitted to OSPCD (A0-A3 and elevations)		Plng.	
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2	The applicant shall install signage to be approved by Planning Staff that clearly demarcates the below grade parking access area and the pick up and drop off area, including a time limitation.	CO	Plng											
3	All new utility lines shall be placed underground in accordance with the SZO and the policies of the Superintendent of Lights and Lines.	CO	ISD											
4	The applicant shall establish the existing foundation conditions of structures abutting the subject property, if desired by the neighboring owners. The applicant shall repair any damage as a result of hotel construction.	CO	ISD											
5	All deliveries shall be made to the loading dock below street grade and shall not occur between the hours of 7pm and 7am Monday thru Friday or between the hours of 7pm and 9am on Saturday and Sunday.	Perpetual	ISD											

6	Delivery trucks shall be limited to mid-sized vehicles and shall at no time occupy the pick up and drop off area.	Perpetual	ISD	
7	The seating area for the restaurant shall be closed to the general public from 11pm to 6am.	Perpetual	ISD	
8	Public access to the landscaped plaza area directly from the sidewalk shall be maintained.	Perpetual	ISD	
9	The Applicant shall develop a demolition plan in consultation with the City of Somerville Inspectional Services Division. Full compliance with proper demolition procedures shall be required, including timely advance notification to abutters of demolition date and timing, good rodent control measures (i.e. rodent baiting), minimization of dust, noise, odor, and debris outfall.	Demolition Permitting	ISD	
10	Landscaping shall be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association.	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
11	The applicant shall provide a "Drainage Plan" and an "Inspection and Maintenance Plan" for the drainage system. This report shall be prepared and stamped by a registered professional civil engineer and approved by the Engineering Staff and/or city consultant.	Building Permit	Eng.	
12	The Applicant, successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and any storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Perpetual	ISD	
13	The Applicant shall at his expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed of concrete subject to DPW approval.	CO	DPW	
14	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P	
15	To the maximum extent feasible applicant will utilize strategies during demolition and construction to mitigate dust and control air quality, to minimize noise and to implement a waste recycling program for the removed debris.	During Demolition & Construction	OSE/ISD	
16	The underground fuel tanks on this site must be removed under the supervision of the Fire Prevention Bureau and	CO	FP	

	in accordance with DEP regulations. Permits will be required for these removals. If any unanticipated tanks are found during excavation, all work on-site must immediately cease and the Somerville Fire Department must be contacted.			
17	Notification must be made, within the time period required under applicable regulations, to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) if there is any release of oil, hazardous materials, or regulated hazardous substances at the site. The City's OSE office and the Board of Health shall also be notified.	CO	OSE /BOH	
18	The applicant shall submit an exterior site lighting plan to be approved by Planning Staff that demonstrates sufficient lighting for public surveillance. The exterior lighting intensity shall have little to no effect on the properties surrounding the facility.	CO	Plng.	
19	The applicant/developer shall implement green management practices for the hotel. The applicant/developer shall meet with Planning Staff prior to filing with ISD for a building permit and prior to filing with ISD for a final sign off to identify and discuss the sustainable practices to be implemented. Staff approval of these measures is required.	PB	Plng.	
20	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final sign-off on the building permit to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	CO	Plng.	



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