



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2012-105

Date: January 3, 2013

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 167-169 Holland Street

Applicant Name: Rudi Pizzi, Director of Project Admin Tufts University

Applicant Address: Baliou Hall, Medford, MA 02215

Property Owner Name: Trustees of Tufts University

Property Owner Address: Baliou Hall, The Green, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02215

Agent: Martin A. Oppenheimer

Agent Address: Baliou Hall, Medford, MA 02215

Alderman: Robert Trane

Legal Notice: Applicant Rudi Pizzi, Director of Project Admin Tufts University and Owner Trustees of Tufts University seeks a special permit to alter a nonconforming structure under SZO §4.4.1 to replace the roof of the Tufts data center, increasing the height of the roof by two feet for a portion of the building that is not visible from surrounding area.

Zoning District/Ward: RA Zone / Ward 7

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: December 11, 2012

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – January 9, 2013

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

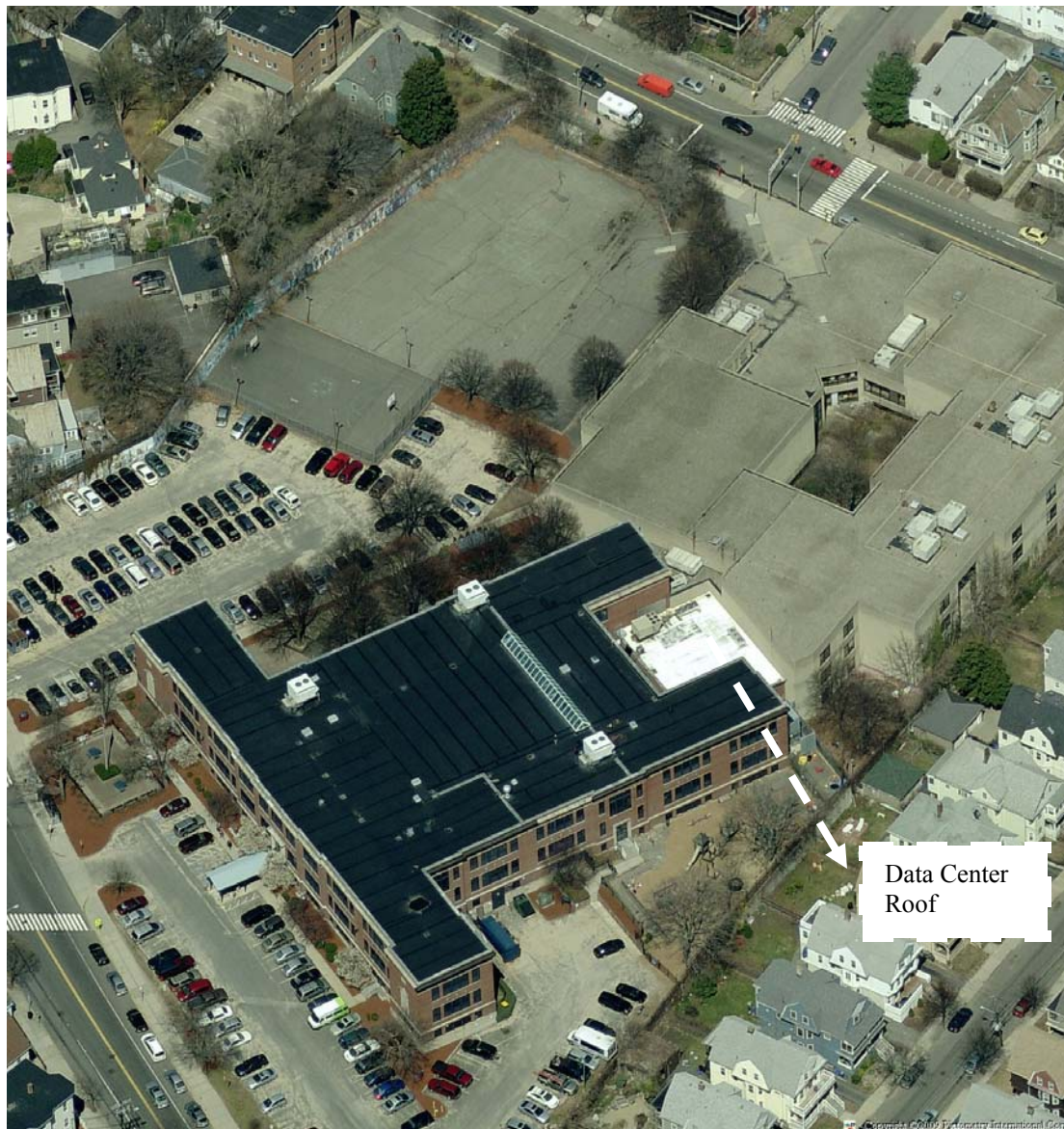
1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 137,227 square foot parcel on which is a three-story bricking building that is owned by Tufts for administrative employee offices (TAB building). The building houses several departments within the University including University Technology and Finance. The City of Somerville Senior Citizens Center and Tufts University Day-care is also located in the building. The building is generally open from 8am to 10pm and there are approximately 200 employees in the building.



The subject property received a special permit in June of 1986 for Tufts University to add mezzanine floors, construct a parking structure providing basketball courts on the roof deck and landscaping surrounding the grounds. The property received another special permit in 2011 to construct canopies over the entrances to the building.

2. Proposal: The proposal is to replace the roofing of the data center and modify the structural roof framing for code compliance. The roof will be located a few feet taller than the existing roof. The data center is located at the back of the property adjacent to the Powder House School building. Its roof is 22 feet tall and is surrounded by a taller building that is 45 feet in height.

A new diesel powered emergency generator will replace an existing generator on the northwest side of the building. It will have an acoustical enclosure and an exhaust muffler for noise control.



3. Nature of Application: The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to several dimensional requirements, including landscaped area, building height, and setbacks for the attached Powder House School building.

The proposed roof alteration would not affect the nonconforming aspects of the building. The roof of the data center will continue to be below the 35 foot height limit in the RA district; however, lawfully existing nonconforming structures other than one- and two-family dwellings may only be altered by special permit under §4.4.1 of the SZO.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The surrounding area is comprised of single-, two-, and three-family homes, a municipal building, a park, and Teele and Davis Squares.

5. Impacts of Proposal: Because the data center is surrounded by taller portions of the building, the modifications will not be visible from the street and abutters and will not impact the surrounding area.

6. Green Building Practices: The new roof will be reflective to promote energy efficiency. Recycling of the roof materials will be conducted by the general contractor and applicable sub-contractors. Waste will be removed and stored in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

7. Comments:

Fire Prevention: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4.1):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

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."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The height of the roof will not be greater than the height allowed in the district and the change will not be visible from the surrounding area.

3. Consistency with Purposes: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to conserving the value of land and buildings and the purpose of the residential

districts in making an upgrade to this institutional building that will not be visible from the residential abutters.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."

The new roof height will allow for the code compliance for the renovated data center. The change to the roof was designed to be compatible with the surrounding area as it will only be visible from a bird's eye view.

5. Adverse 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.

The roof height change will not adversely impact the environment and the new generator will have an acoustical enclosure and exhaust muffler for noise control such that there should not be an audible increase in noise between the old and new generators.

III. RECOMMENDATION**Special Permit under §4.4.1**

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	Approval is for the increase in roof height of the data center. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>Dec 11, 2012</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>Dec 5, 2012</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site Plan, Site Scan, Floor Plan, Building Elevation, Sections)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	Dec 11, 2012	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	Dec 5, 2012	Plans submitted to OSPCD (Site Plan, Site Scan, Floor Plan, Building Elevation, Sections)
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
2	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.							

