

MEMORANDUM

DECEMBER 5, 2013

**TO:** BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND  
PETER MEADE, DIRECTOR

**FROM:** HEATHER CAMPISANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT  
REVIEW  
MICHAEL CANNIZZO, URBAN DESIGN  
RAUL DUVERGE, PROJECT ASSISTANT

**SUBJECT:** SHOWA BOSTON INSTITUTE ART. 80E VESTIBULE ADDITION  
PROJECT AND FOURTH AMENDMENT TO MASTER PLAN  
420 POND STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN

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**SUMMARY:** This Memorandum requests that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”): (1) authorize the Director to issue a Certification of Approval for the construction of an approximately 100 square foot vestibule addition to Wing One of the Showa Boston main building located at 420 Pond Street in Jamaica Plain, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”); (2) approved the Showa Boston Institute Master Plan, as amended by the Fourth Amendment to Master Plan, as required by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal (the “ZBA”) decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered BZC-9718 (the “1987 ZBA Decision”); and (3) recommend approval to the ZBA of the zoning relief from the requirements of Article 9, Section 9-1: Extension of Non-Conforming Uses and Reconstruction and Extension of Non-Conforming Buildings, as requested by Showa Boston in its appeal in BZC-32476.

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**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

Showa Boston Institute (“Showa Boston”) 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 Boston has been in operation at the existing site on Pond Street in Jamaica Plain since 1986, pursuant to zoning relief granted via the 1987 ZBA Decision.

Located six miles from downtown Boston atop Moss Hill in Jamaica Plain, Showa Boston’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 Boston has shared certain of 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.

The 1987 ZBA Decision contained a proviso requiring that Showa Boston prepare a "master plan" for review by the Jamaica Hills Association (the "JHA") and approval by the Authority before undertaking any major expansion of existing buildings or new development on the site. Since the Authority determined that Showa Boston's "master plan" requirement was not governed by the Institutional Master Plan requirements of Article 80 of the Code, the Authority determined instead that Showa Boston's "master plan" requirement was governed by the provisions of the 1987 ZBA Decision.

In 2004, Showa Boston filed a combined initial Master Plan (the "Master Plan") and Amended Application for Small Project Review with the Authority. The 2004 Master Plan sought approval for a single institutional development project (the "Project"), specifically the construction of a three-story, approximately 44,000 gross square foot academic facility, known as the "British School of Boston Elementary and Secondary School Building". The Authority approved the Master Plan and Project with support from the JHA, and construction of the British School of Boston Elementary and Secondary School Building was completed in 2005.

In January 2008, Showa Boston filed its first amendment to the Master Plan (the "First Amendment to Master Plan") and a combined Application for Small Project Review, seeking the Authority's approvals for a single development project called the "Dormitory Enclosure Project". The Dormitory Enclosure Project initially called for the construction of 1,000 square feet additions to all ten (10) of Showa Boston Boston's student dormitory wings. After review and consultation with the Authority and the JHA, Showa Boston revised its plans to provide for the dormitory wings to be enclosed in phases and requested and obtained approval for the enclosure of three (3) wings in Phase 1 (Wings 2, 3 and 4) at that time. In 2009, with the support of the JHNA and the approvals of the Authority and Board of Appeal (the "ZBA"), Showa Boston enclosed three (3) additional dormitory wings in Phase 2 of the Dormitory Enclosure Project (Wings 6, 7 and 8).

On January 13, 2012 Showa Boston filed its Second Amendment to the Master Plan (the "Second Amendment to Master Plan") and a combined Application for Small Project Review with the Authority, seeking the Authority's approvals for three (3) development projects consisting of: (i) approximately 2,000 square feet of work for the enclosure of Wings 9 and 10 to add 20 beds (the "Dormitory Enclosure Project"); and (ii) an approximately 3,200 square foot classroom addition (the "Academic Addition Project"); and an approximately 2,800 square foot addition to Showa Boston's existing cafeteria (the "Cafeteria Addition Project"). The Dormitory Enclosure Project and the Academic Addition Project were completed in the Fall of 2012. To date, construction of the Cafeteria Addition Project has yet to be undertaken.

In January 2013, Showa Boston filed a third amendment to its Master Plan (the "Third Amendment to Master Plan"). The Third Amendment to Master Plan sought the Authority's approvals for a single development project identified and described as an 80-seat Classroom Addition Project (the "Classroom Addition Project"). The Classroom Addition Project involved the construction of approximately 1,500 s.f. on the front (or north) side of the Main Showa Boston Building. The Classroom Addition Project was completed in mid-October of 2013.

Showa Boston Boston's proposed fourth amendment to its Master Plan (the "Fourth Amendment to Master Plan") seeks the Authority's approval for a single Proposed Project, an approximately 100 square feet Vestibule Addition Project (the "Proposed Project").

### **PROPOSED PROJECT**

Showa Boston (the "Developer") proposes an approximately 100 square foot vestibule addition to Wing One of the Showa Boston Main Building. The proposed vestibule structure would provide Showa Boston and, more-particularly at present, the British School of Boston, with an enclosed waiting area space for the British School of Boston's youngest students for protection from the elements.

### **PUBLIC PROCESS**

The Jamaica Hills Association reviewed and voted not to oppose the Proposed Project, Showa's Fourth Amendment to Master Plan and ZBA Appeal, as evidenced by the Association's public comment letter dated November 14, 2013, and submitted to the Authority.

The Developer has also met with the Zoning Committee of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council and received unanimous support for the Proposed Project, Showa's Fourth Amendment to Master Plan and ZBA Appeal.

## ZONING

The Proposed Project is located in the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood District and is therefore governed by Article 55 of the Code. According to Boston Zoning Map 9A, Jamaica Plain Neighborhood District, the Campus is located within a Conservation Protection Subdistrict (CPS). Additionally, Section 55-10 of the Code establishes the Campus as the Nazareth / Showa Conservation Protection Subdistrict.

The Proposed Project is subject to the applicable Development Review and Approval Regulations of Article 80 of the Code. More specifically, the Proposed Project, based on its size (considered together with Previous Projects), is subject to the applicable Site Plan Component regulations of Section 80E-2. Accordingly, pursuant to Section 80E-3, the scope of review of the Proposed Project consists of Site Plan Component review.

Although Elementary and Secondary School is an allowed use within the Nazareth/ Showa CPS, and the Proposed Project complies with all dimensional regulations and off-street parking and loading requirements, the Proposed Project requires zoning relief from the requirements of Article 9, Section 9-1: Extension of Non-Conforming Uses and Reconstruction and Extension of Non-Conforming Buildings. Showa Boston has filed an appeal with the ZBA in BZC - 32476 seeking the above-described relief.

## 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 by the Fourth Amendment to Master Plan, complies with the proviso to the 1987 ZBA Decision. Therefore, staff recommends: (1) that the Director be authorized to issue a Certification of Approval for the construction of an approximately 100 square foot vestibule addition to Wing One of the Showa Boston Main Building, located at 420 Pond Street in Jamaica Plain, in accordance with Article 80E, Small Project Review of the Boston Zoning Code; (2) that the Authority the Fourth Amendment to Master Plan, as required by the City of Boston Zoning Board of Appeal decision dated April 14, 1987 and numbered BZC-9718; and (3) that the Authority recommend to the ZBA approval of the zoning relief from the requirements of Article 9, Section 9-1: Extension of Non-Conforming Uses and Reconstruction and Extension of Non-Conforming Buildings, as requested by Showa Boston in its appeal in BZC-32476.

Appropriate votes follow:

**VOTED:** That the Director be, and hereby is, authorized to issue a Certification of Approval, confirming that the proposal by Showa Boston to construct an approximately 100 square feet vestibule addition to Wing One of the Showa Boston Main Building, located 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 Authority hereby approves the Fourth 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; and

**FURTHER**

**VOTED:** That the Authority hereby recommends approval to the ZBA of the zoning relief from the requirements of Article 9, Section 9-1: Extension of Non-Conforming Uses and Reconstruction and Extension of Non-Conforming Buildings, as requested by Showa Boston in its appeal in BZC- 32476.