



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD

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To: Brookline Board of Appeals

From: Brookline Planning Board

Date: April 25, 2013

Subject: **Alter existing antennas and add four new antennas (Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association)**

Location: 910 Boylston Street

Atlas Sheet:	127	Case #:	BOA 2013-0033
Block:	437	Zoning:	S-25
Lot:	04-06	Lot Area (s.f.):	1,054,155

Board of Appeals Hearing: **Thursday, May 23, 2013, at 7:00 p.m.**

BACKGROUND

Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association (C.H.B.A.)

The religious and charitable purposes of the Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association are to operate a Sanatorium to provide nursing services for persons who rely solely on Christian Science teachings for healing and to operate a Christian Science nurses training school. Included in these operations are residential retirement and rest and study accommodations serving members of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, as well as visiting nurse services to Christian Scientists in the Greater Boston area.

SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD

The Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association is located on a heavily wooded and hilly site bordering Boylston Street (Route 9). At the foot of the hill, near Route 9, sits a smokestack on a one-story service building with a heating plant and maintenance space. The main structures on the campus, which was built in 1918, include the following: the Main Building, with administrative offices, care, rest, and study, nursing and resident rooms; the Associates Building, with dormitory rooms for nurses and other staff members; and the Carriage House, with eight apartments for nurses. The main drive has access to and from Boylston Street, and a second egress, which is a right turn only, is east of the main drive.

The neighborhood is predominantly residential, except for some office space on Boylston Street to the east. The abutting properties to the south include the Town's Singletree Hill Reservoir underground water tank and large estate-type dwellings. The Town of Brookline has a permanent access easement on the existing driveway to reach its water facility and owns a 16" water main under the driveway.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant, TMobile Northeast LLC, proposes to modify the existing wireless installation on the smokestack. The modification would include replacing the existing four antennas with four new ones, and adding another four new antennas, for a total of eight circling the outside of the smokestack. The antennas would all be substantially the same in appearance and dimension as the existing antennas, and mounted at the same height, 95 feet above the ground, or 81.2 feet above the roof. They would be painted to match the underlying brick of the smokestack. An existing equipment cabinet on the roof of the one-story structure would be replaced with a new cabinet with similar dimensions in substantially the same location.

FINDINGS

Section 4.09.6.c – Wireless Telecommunications Services: All wireless telecommunications antennas and mounts on a building, or any related equipment, fixtures, or enclosures, exceeding 10 feet above roof height shall *require a special permit* from the Board of Appeals, subject to the design review standards under *Section 4.09.7.a (1, 2)*. The standards are mentioned as follows:

They shall be as unobtrusive as possible when viewed from the street and from upper floors of nearby residences. Every effort should be made to have them blend in with the style and color of the building they are located upon and with the surrounding environment and not negatively impact property values or environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands or historic sites. Where necessary, screening shall be provided to minimize visible impacts. Items for evaluation during the approval process include color, finish, size, location on building façade or roof, camouflaging, and screening. Greater setback from the edge of a building may be required, if it helps to minimize visual impacts and improves overall aesthetics. *The Board of Appeals may grant a special permit* if an antenna is greater than 10 feet above the roof height, where the applicant can demonstrate that the additional height is necessary for proper functioning of the antenna or to allow a less obtrusive location.

Section 5.09.2.a – Design Review: Any exterior alteration or addition to a structure on a lot that fronts on Boylston Street, *requires a special permit for design review*. The following Community and Environmental Impact and Design Standards are most applicable:

- *Preservation of Trees and Landscape:* Since the antennas would be located entirely on the building, no landscaping or trees would be removed.
- *Relation of Buildings to Environment:* The applicant would locate a new equipment cabinet for the facility in the same location as the existing equipment cabinet, so additional shadowing or other effects are not expected.
- *Relation of Buildings to the Form of the Streetscape and Neighborhood:* The proposed antennas would be painted to match the smokestack's existing brick in order to camouflage their appearance.
- *Utility Service:* The supporting equipment cabinet would be located primarily in the same location as the existing, and supporting wiring will be concealed.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

The Planning Board is not opposed to this proposed antenna installation modification and expansion. The smokestack provides adequate height for the antennas, which will be camouflaged to match the existing brick. Additionally, the changes to the supporting equipment are minor and not expected to be visible. Overall, the installation has been designed to be unobtrusive. The wireless antennas that are currently on the smokestack are hardly noticeable from surrounding properties.

Therefore, the Planning Board recommends approval of the proposal and the submitted plans, prepared by ProTerra Design Group LLC and dated 2/8/13, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Prior to issuance of a building permit, final plans and elevations of the wireless facility and all supporting and concealing structures shall be submitted to the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning for review and approval.
- 2) The panel antennas shall be painted and textured to match the structure to which they are affixed.
- 3) All antennas and related equipment shall be removed if abandoned or not in operation for a time period of twelve months or longer.
- 4) Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Building Commissioner a removal bond of \$5,000.
- 5) Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a \$1,500 monitoring/inventorying fee to the Building Commissioner.
- 6) Prior to a final sign-off on a building permit, a final review and approval of the site shall be made by the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning.
- 7) Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Building Commissioner to ensure conformance to the Board of Appeals decision: 1) a final site plan, stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; 2) final plans and elevations of the wireless facility and all supporting equipment; and 3) evidence the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

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Views of the smokestack as seen from both Route 9 (above) and while on the subject property (below).

