

Placemaking at Tufts University
Building Energy 2001-NESEA
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The best way I can introduce the complex subject of Placemaking or Geomancy is through example. The following graphic and Tufts University place analyses is such an example. The placemaking tools I use are primarily map based. Using such tools as sacred geometry (geometries one finds in nature), Ley alignments (historic and/or nature features), and geometric framing one gains better understand of the power inherent in place. These tools can be applied in scale from home to continent. Through analyses of the interrelationships of these components of place the individual, institution or country can link fundamentally to their landscape and culture. What I have found in my research is that in many cases this occurs as a process of nature. Places that naturally link to these matrices of nature tend to prosper. Tufts is one such place.

There are many such auspicious places found throughout the world. Locally the city of Boston and New York exhibit these signature geometries. These inherent qualities of place give focus, mental clarity and fuel creativity. Through the use of placemaking tools one can be further augmented this power of place. During my presentation I will give many such examples of these geometries.

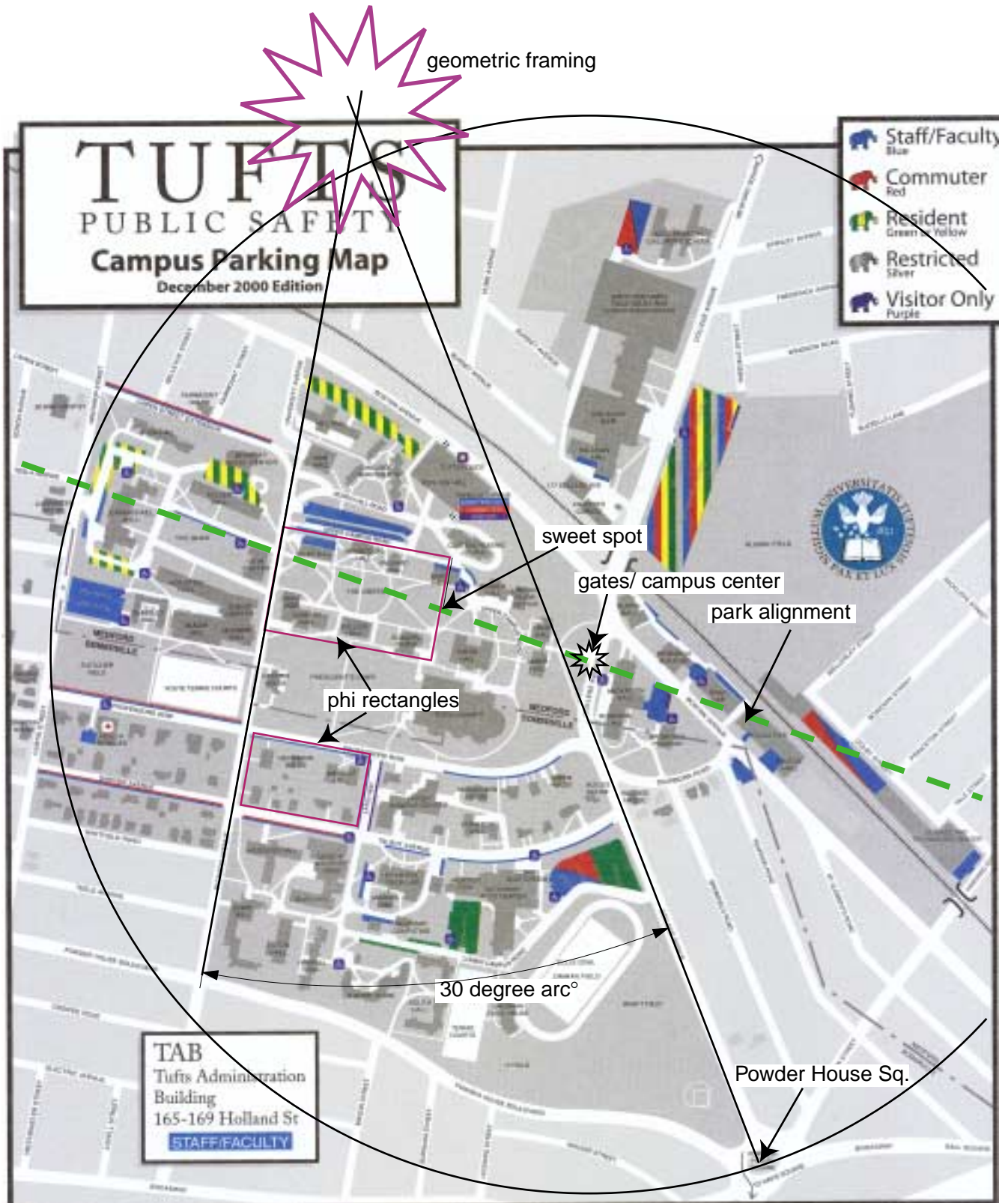


Whether by design or a synchronous events of nature and cultural development Tufts University lies on an alignment of city and national parks. Not seen in the graphic is the winding path of the Mystic River as it turns and embraces the campus. Alignments in nature are not unusual although straight lines are. Variously known as Ley Lines, Dragon Paths, or Chi forces this line represents a wave form of chi energy that fuels the creativity of the university.

The term Ley Line was first coined by Alfred Watkins in the mid 1800's. While traveling throughout the English countryside he noticed that there existed alignments of natural features such as notches in mountains, springs, and river fords that were interspersed with megalithic and contemporary church sites. Watkins further noted that many of the family and place names had a suffix of "ley", thus the origin of the term "ley lines".

To better understand the relative health of this line, extensive research into the alignments social and natural conditions would have to be undertaken. To increase and further focus the flow of chi or life force along this line, standing stones and other tools of placemaking could be employed at each of the sites noted

To further understand the dynamics of Tufts a closer look at the campus is required. To determine its signature geometry the geomancer must take into account the total of the campus geometry. To do this natural and civic features of the site are examined.



The result of this analysis are shown above. The center point through which the Park alignment courses are the entry gates of the campus. The radius of the circle

was determined by the length between the gates and Powder House Square. The circle inscribed by this radius encompasses the limits of the school property.

Roadways in the language of geomancy carry and focus chi as they are passage ways for the flow of air and egress. While the flow of natural forces follow the ley alignments, the flow of human energy follows roadways and footpaths. The entry point of human energy is thus via Powder House Square, affording a quality of place to do with chemical science, war, security and other uses associated with explosive powder. The Geometric framing is a dodecagon or 30 degree angle. Twelve is the number of community, thus affording the campus a strong sense of community.

Another placemaking tool is the phi proportion (1:1.618...). Note the two phi rectangles on the map. The larger of the two delineates the central original campus and present administration facilities. Phi is the proportion of life as this proportion is found in the natural proportion (sacred geometry) of the human body, trees, eggs, shells, flowers and classical architecture. Bisecting the larger phi rectangle is the park alignment which delivers nature to its door., a sweet spot, this is perhaps the most auspicious location on the campus in geomantic terms.

A preliminary work up, much more can be learned about the geomancy of the Tufts Campus with further on site review. Given the auspicious nature of Tufts the spring NESEA conference should power the future and inspire the participants.

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