

Urban Design Committee
City of Somerville
93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: 44 Broadway – UDC Comments

Per the binding and voted upon recommendations of the UDC, the design of 44 Broadway is incorporating the following:

- Façade design option #1 - A design scheme that clearly distinguishes between a lighter building (with a wood look and white trim on one side, darker masonry look on the other)
- The vehicular entrance to the building is located on George Street - The garage entry has been explored from every angle and glad the UDC agreed with the George Street Location
- A tripartite design of the facade along Broadway - although slightly different than the design recommendations of the Zoning Code, the UDC agreed with our approach.

Per the recommendations that were not voted on

1) Member Fennick recommended that the massing of the dark “building” (right side) should be adjusted to better anchor the appearance of two buildings. The logic for the massing of that side of the building should be different when compared to the massing of the light “building” (left side). The upper story step back of 10’ is required by zoning, but the upper and lower story portions of the façade could be co-planer individually, without an offset portion, to increase the dissimilarity the dark and light buildings.

After our meeting with the UDC we looked at two additional massing studies. The current design shows the 'dark building' as two masses/jogged facade, one measuring at 32 feet wide and the other 42 ft wide. For the first massing study, we looked at removing the jog and having a straight facade along Broadway measuring 74ft long. For the second massing study

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we looked at jogging the facade 3 times, with three segments measuring roughly 24 feet wide. For the first massing scheme, having a 74ft long mass did not seem to complement the neighborhood, it just felt too large at the corner of George Street, which is primarily 2-3 story buildings. When we looked at the second option, there seemed to be a conflict between the door spacing on the ground floors at about 30ft, and the spacing of the facade at 24ft. During our initial conversation with Rebecca Cooper, we had always envisioned this facade as a reinterpretation of a city block lined with Brownstones--similar massing, similar materials, but with each building feeling distinct, all at a human scale that feels very walkable and unimposing. We think the Option 1 design concept successfully creates this feeling.

2) Members Fennick and Arbaugh recommended the inclusion of additional ground-level landscaping along the building's facades to every extent practicable and encouraged

We couldn't agree more with this approach. Our current strategy is to wait for more information about who the ground floor tenants will be and then work with our Landscape Architect, MDLA, to modify the design to be appropriate to the tenant. For example, if the corner commercial areas do not become a restaurant or a cafe, we could increase the vegetative landscape at these areas.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Sima". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Philip Sima, RA + CPHC
Balance Architects, Inc.