



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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**Case #:** PB 2016-14-R1 (11/2017)  
**Date:** January 30, 2018  
**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** Assembly Line Park – Building B

**Applicant Name:** Street Retail, Inc.

**Applicant Address:** 1626 East Jefferson St, Rockville, MD 20852

**Property Owner Name:** Street Retail, Inc.

**Property Owner Address:** 1626 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852

**Agent Name:** Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP

**Agent Address:** World Trade Center West, 155 Seaport Blvd, Boston, MA 02210

**Alderman:** Matthew McLaughlin

Legal Notice: Applicant & Owner, Street Retail, Inc., seek a revision to Special Permit with Site Plan Review–A, final level approval (Decision dated September 22, 2016) of the food service or retail buildings located within Assembly Line Park to add decorative screening to cover mechanical louvers on the east elevation of Building B.

Assembly Square Mixed Use District (ASMD); Planned Unit Development Overlay District - A (PUD-A) / Ward 1

Dates of Public Hearing: January 30, 2018

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**I. BACKGROUND & PERMITTING PROCESS**

The original application, PB2016-16, approved Assembly Line Park with two buildings that have ground floor and mezzanine levels. The use of the spaces will be retail or food service. The number of employees and hours of operation are unknown at this time because the tenants have not yet been determined.

***A. Review Requirements under the Somerville Zoning Ordinance***

The Applicant is seeking a revision to an SPSR-A approval. The fulfillment of the required findings is indicated as such in the attached Appendixes.



***B. Organization of Report***

The present report includes the following sections:

- Description of the Property;
- Description of the Proposal;
- Staff Findings for Special Permit with Site Plan Review–A; and
- Staff Recommendation for Board vote, including recommended conditions of SPSR-A approval.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

***A. Site***

The area of the entire linear park is 16,684 square feet or 0.38 acres. The park is in the middle of the right of way (Assembly Row) between Blocks 7 and 8 and spans the length of these blocks. The civic space is in the middle and has two pavilion buildings that have ground floor and mezzanine levels on either end.

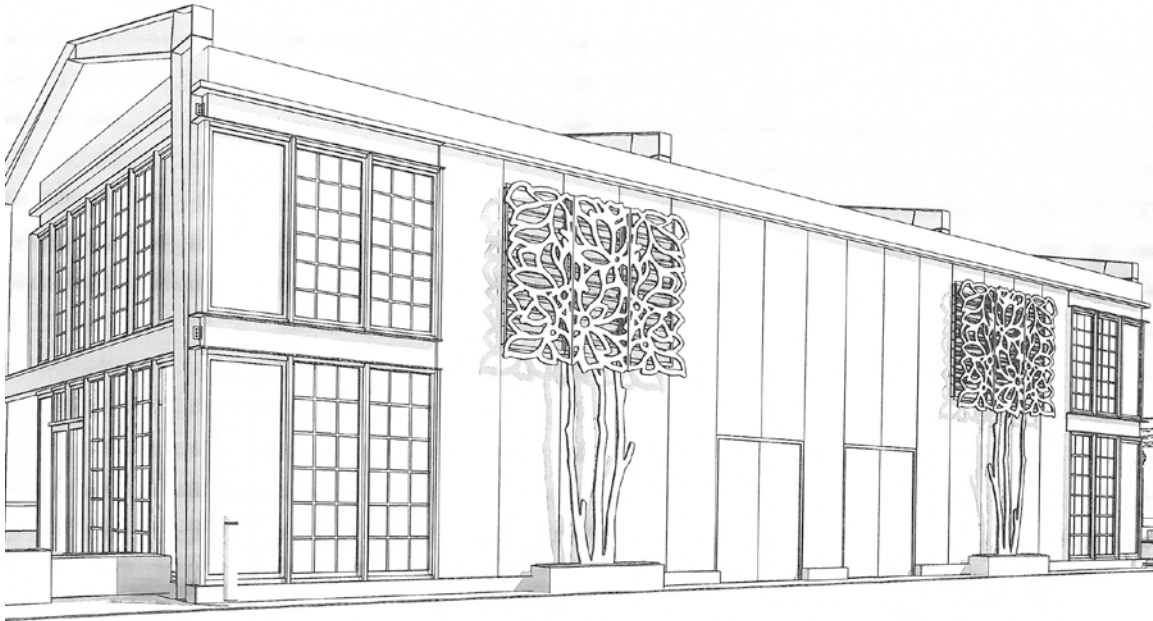
***B. Surrounding Area***

The area surrounding the proposed site contains Draw 7 Park on the opposite side of the MBTA Orange Line tracks and the developments of the Assembly Row Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5A, 6, and 11 are at or near full occupancy. Block 5B and Block 8 have been approved for an office building and residential respectively. Blocks 7 and 9 will continue to be a temporary parking lots and used for construction staging.

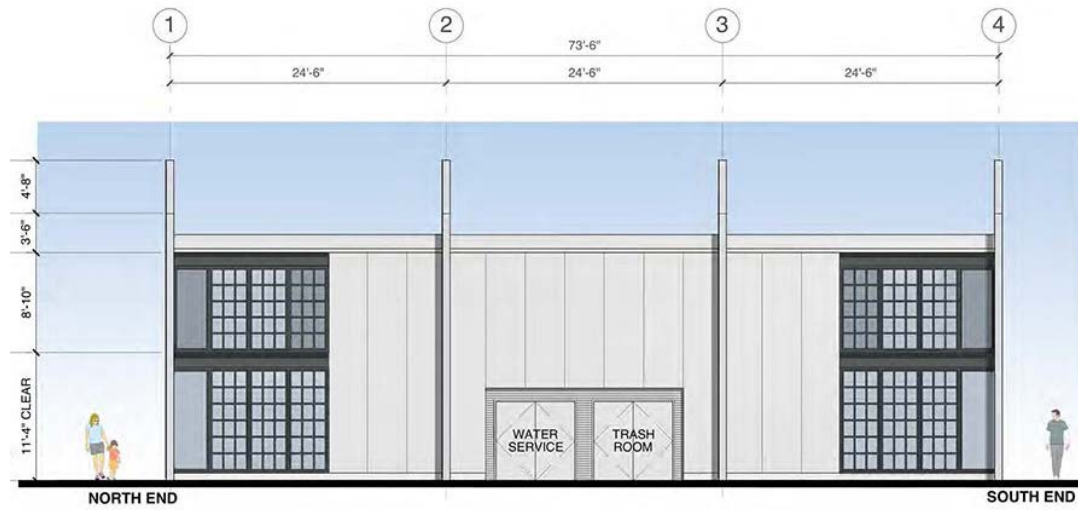
**III. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

***A. Overall***

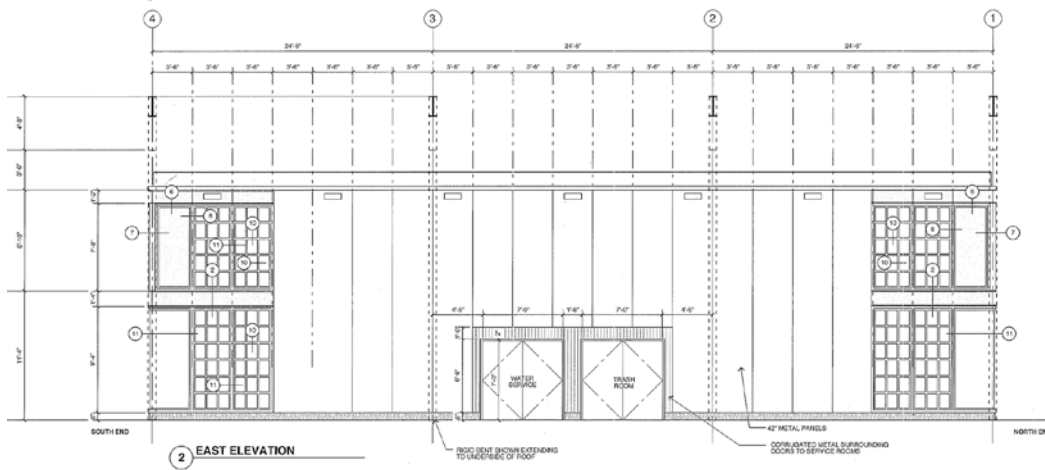
This request is to gain approval for decorative screen to cover mechanical louvers that were added during construction and changes the building from the approved elevation.



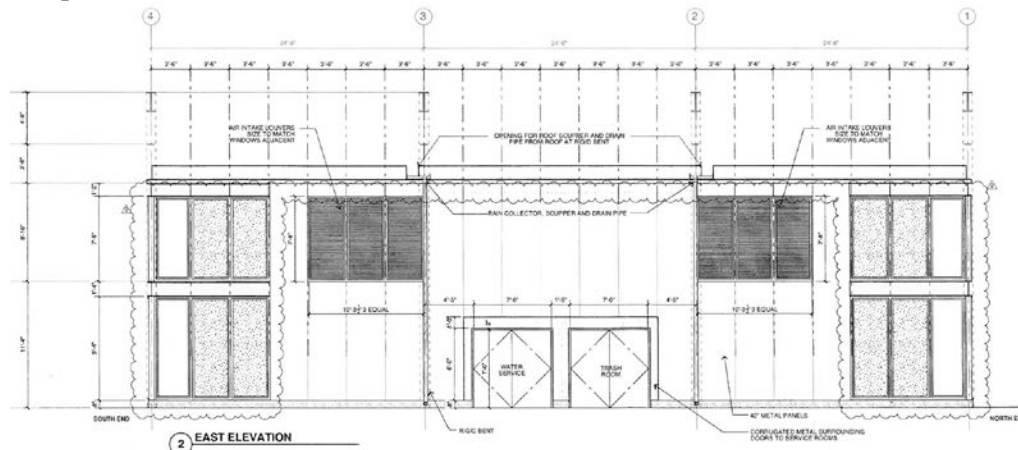
The original approved elevation is shown below. This elevation shows no louvers and four bays of fenestration at each end of the building.



The elevation from the building permit application (shown below) shows reduced fenestration at the north and south ends of the building - three bays instead of four but still showing windows.



The as-built condition provided with this application (below) shows the extent of the changes that were made during construction without prior Staff or Planning Board approval. Note the mechanical louvers and the blank panels instead of windows.



The design change became evident upon final review by Planning Staff and Inspectional Services when the Applicant applied for a Certificate of Occupancy. The three bays of panels are acceptable, but the exposed mechanical louvers create a “rear” appearance to the building that was intended to be a four-sided pavilion. The decorative louvers proposed are an acceptable approach to visually screening the necessary but unsightly louvers.

### ***B. Site Design and Access***

The park is rectangular and located in Assembly Row between Blocks 7 and 8. Building B is setback from the eastern edge along Assembly Row with the main entrances internal to the block. There are no proposed changes to the site design or access.

### ***C. Building Shape and Placement***

Building B is a 2,000 square foot rectangular building with a 315 square foot mezzanine and is the subject of this revision. There is no change to the building placement or shape. Building A is still under construction.

### ***D. Uses***

The use of the building was proposed to be restaurant and/or retail (§7.11.10.1.1.B or 7.11.10.2.2.b or 7.11.9). It is currently occupied by Caffe Nero – a coffee shop and café.

### ***E. Linkage***

Linkage requirements were specified with the original approval.

### ***F. Inclusionary Housing***

The provisions of SZO section 13.2 did not apply to this project as there is no residential.

### ***G. Landscaping and Open Space***

There are no changes to the landscaping or open space percentage.

### ***H. Parking, Loading and On-site Circulation***

There is vehicular access on either side of the linear park with one lane and one lane of parallel parking. There are no proposed changes to the parking, loading, or circulation.

### ***I. Form and Design of the Building***

The overall design goal was to pull attention and activity to the middle of the park, which extends under a trellis next to Building B. The northern and southern facades of the buildings have elevations with significant transparency to be the most visible. The sides of the building were intended to be secondary; however, as the east side of Building B abuts an extension of the open space with a trellis over it so was also designed as a primary elevation. The west elevation, the subject of this revision, became the sole secondary elevation on which service activity and mechanical elements could be located.



***J. Signage***

Staff reviewed the retail signage based on the Assembly Row Storefront and Signage Design Standards as required by the original approval and found the proposal acceptable.

***K. Waivers & Other Relief Requests***

There are no waivers requested with this revision. However, for information, waivers were sought with the original application including relief from providing a 3D model, shadow analysis, loading bay size requirements, required façade recesses and percentage glazing.

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT/COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

There are no additional comments at this time.

**V. STAFF FINDINGS FOR REVISION TO SPSR-A**

***A. General Application Requirements***

As identified in Section 16.8 of the SZO, Staff finds the revision to the SPSR-A meets the application submittal requirements. No change to Appendix A of original approval.

***B. Required Findings of Fact for PUD***

The Planning Board determined that the PMP met the required findings for a PUD PMP, but indicated that some issues would require further review at the SPSR-A submittal. The Staff has reviewed these required findings as they relate to the revision to the SPSR-A application and find that they have been met. No change to Appendix B of original approval.

***C. Requirements for SPSR (SZO §5.2.5)***

The Staff finds that projects submitted for SPSR-A under this PMP meets the findings required. No change to Appendix C of original approval.

***D. Waiver Standards***

There are no waivers requested with this revision. No change to Appendix D of original approval.

**VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant and the attached findings, the Planning Staff finds that the application for a Revision to a Special Permit with Site Plan Review–A under the PUD-PMP approved by the Planning Board on December 14, 2006 and as amended on August 5, 2010, June 19, 2014, February 18, 2016, and April 6, 2017 meets the goals of the City for this site, the purposes of the district, and the provisions and purposes of the Ordinance. Therefore, the Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested Revision to the Special Permit with Site Plan Review–A.

This approval is based on the application stamped in at the City Clerk's office on November 21, 2017, including schematic 3-dimensional rendering and revised building elevations.

All conditions in Appendices E and F of the original approval remain unchanged. However, Staff

recommends that an additional condition be applied to the approval of this revision:

The Applicant will submit final detailed drawings along with material and color samples for the decorative screens/art installations, covering the mechanical louvers on the west elevation of Assembly Line Park Building B, prior to fabrication of those screens to Planning Staff for review and approval.

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.