



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

495 Columbia Street

11/1/2021

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via GoToWebinar on October 12, 2021 to review the **9-story Lab Building** proposed for 495 Columbia Street in the High Rise zoning district of the Boynton Yard sub area of the Master Planned Development overlay district and the Boynton Yards neighborhood of Somerville. The purpose of design review, as established by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, is for peers in the professional design community to provide advice and recommendations during the schematic design phase of the architectural design process. In accordance with the UDC's adopted Rules of Procedure and Section 15.1.4 Design Review of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, this recommendation includes, at least, the following:

1. Identification of the preferred schematic design options
2. Identification if applicable design guidelines are satisfied
3. Guidance and recommended modifications to address any design issues or concerns

This project previously received a formal UDC recommendation on May 26, 2021. After several negotiations with the abutting neighbors, a compromised design solution was established, resulting in a new 9-story massing for the entire building including 64 Webster lot. The approved façade design from the previous building design remained the same with minor variations incorporated to reflect changes made to the design through abutter negotiations.

Following a presentation of the amended building massing by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the HR district, the Commission provided the following final guidance and recommended modifications:

- Continue to work with relevant City Departments on the design of the separated bike lane along Columbia Street, specifically examine how the lanes will begin and end.
- Corner of Columbia Street and Webster Ave building façade needs to be explored further to find elements that will create a sense of a "gateway" into the neighborhood possibly through the use of a chamfered corner.
- Penthouse proportions needs to be looked at further; Needs more vertical or horizontal expression to feel more in place with revised building massing.

The Commission voted (2-1) that the revised 9 story building massing meets the previous UDC recommended façade and voted unanimously (3-0) to incorporate additional design guidance.

Attest, by the voting membership:

Frank Valdes
Deborah Fennick
Tim Talun

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Cortney Kirk
Sarah Lewis



Sarah Lewis,
UDC Co-Chair
Director of Planning & Zoning

Previous Preferred Massing & Revised Façade Design Option



Revised 9-story Massing

