



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MEMBERS

DEBORAH FENNICK
SARAH RADDING
JORDAN SMITH
FRANK VALDES

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, October 25, 2018**, at **6:30 p.m.** in the **3rd Floor Conference Room of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.**

The purpose of the meeting was to review and make recommendations on the following proposals:

1. **Approval of Minutes from the August 20, 2018 meeting**
 2. **Approval of Minutes from the August 30, 2018 meeting**
 3. **Approval of Minutes from the September 13, 2018 meeting**
 - a. Frank Valdes made a motion to approve the minutes of the following meeting 8/20, 8/30, and 9/13 (as amended). Jordan Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 4. **Approval of Minutes from the September 27, 2018 meeting**
 - a. The consideration of these minutes was continued to the next scheduled meeting.
 5. **Assembly Row Block 5B – Grand Union Boulevard:**
 - i. **Project Description:** Applicant and Owner, Street Retail Inc., seek a review of the revised design prior to a building permit application for the construction of a previously approved (PB 2017-05) commercial building of approx. 237,600 sf office space, 489 structured parking spaces for shared use with Block 5A.
 - ii. **Project Team:** John Flaherty and Patrick McMahon, FRIT. Chris Leary, architect from Jacobs.
 - iii. **Project Highlights by the Project Team:**
 1. No major changes from the originally approved. The biggest change is that they pushed the building out to add approximately 3,000-3,500 square feet of floor plate. That change necessitated another floor of parking.
 2. No change in the exterior materials, that include terra cotta, curtain wall, painted metal, and still plans on doing something interesting on the garage.
 3. The design of the screening on the open air parking garage is not yet complete and the Applicant will come back to the DRC when those details are further developed.
- b. **DRC Comments:**
1. The DRC stated that the proportions and the materiality of the proposed building work.

2. The DRC would like the Applicant to get creative with the garage screening and would like it to become an artistic element.
3. The DRC suggested that the garage lighting should be differentiated from the rest of the building and would like to see a night-time rendering when the project comes back to the DRC.

6. Assembly Row Block 8 – 300-398 Assembly Row:

- i. Project Description: Applicant and Owner, SRI Assembly Row B8, LLC, seek a review of the revised design prior to a building permit application for the construction of a previously approved (PB 2017-06) mixed-use building with approx. 26,500 sf retail space, 500 residential units, and approx. 500 parking spaces.
 - ii. Project Team: John Flaherty and Patrick McMahon, FRIT. Erin and Eric, architects from Stantec.
 - iii. Project Highlights by the Project Team:
 1. Programmatic changes along the ground floor include moving the secondary lobby closer to T head house and moved back of house operation away from Revolution Drive onto Great River Road.
 2. Architectural changes include; lighter material to transition to Partners, Fiber-cement in the middle changed to light beige brick, refined window spacing to more residential rhythm, and glass on the tower element.
 3. The Applicant will construct a mock-up in the field for DRC review.
- b. **DRC Comments:**
1. Overall the DRC concurs with the proposed materials and suggested that the floating yellow boxes should not be brick. The DRC suggested that the applicant consider an alternative material that integrates more with the rest of the structure.

7. 56 Roland Street (hotel):

- i. Project Description: Applicant, CPC-T Innerbelt, LLC, and Owners, Paradigm Direct Roland, LLC and the Somerville City Club, are seeking design review for a proposed seven-story mixed use residential building and attached parking garage. The proposal will require zoning relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - ii. Project Team: Jack Englert and Ben Zimmerman, Criterion Partners Development, along with their supporting professionals
 - iii. Project Highlights by the Project Team:
 1. The proposed project includes a six story suite-style hotel and seven story mixed-use building with 205 residential units and a relocated Somerville City Club in the ground floor.
 2. Materials on the hotel include EIFS, wood banding, metal panel, composite metal, and a masonry base.
- b. **DRC Comments:**
- a. Pedestrian Experience
 1. The ground floor plan turns its back on Washington Street. The Applicant should look at ways to enhance the pedestrian experience, particularly along Washington Street.
 2. The columns at the corner of Washington Street and Inner Belt Road don't create an arcade. They will just push people away from the entry at the corner.
 3. There should be an entrance off Washington St that is inviting and connects to the back parking area.
 4. Brand needs to adapt to the urban public realm.
 - b. Materials
 1. EIFS is not an appropriate urban building material.
 2. There are too many materials in general that that are more appropriate for a suburban setting.
 3. The corner of the building along Washington Street toward Sullivan Square needs activation.
 - c. Floor Plan

1. The applicant should consider including a café that could benefit from all the foot traffic, and help bring added activity to the site.
2. The Applicant should relocate the fitness center on the ground floor so that it is not along Washington Street.

8. 0 & 20 Inner Belt Road and 56 Roland Street (residential building):

- i. Project Description: Applicant, CPC-T Innerbelt, LLC, and Owners, Paradigm Direct Roland, LLC and the Somerville City Club, are seeking design review for a proposed seven-story mixed use residential building and attached parking garage. The proposal will require zoning relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - ii. Project Team: Jack Englert and Ben Zimmerman, Criterion Partners Development, along with their supporting professionals
 - iii. Project Highlights by the Project Team:
 1. The proposed project includes a six story suite-style hotel and a seven story mixed-use building with 205 residential units and a relocated Somerville City Club in the ground floor.
- b. **DRC Comments:**
1. Exhaust vents should not be placed on the façade.
 2. Applicant should consider partnering with Holiday Inn on a shared parking arrangement.
 3. The horizontal lap siding looks too residential for a building of this scale. Consider an alternative material.
 4. The City Club feels like it disappears too much. Consider giving it a larger presence and more activation along the street.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed

NOTICE: While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided in these minutes, do not rely on this information as the complete and accurate portrayal of the events in the meeting without first checking with the Planning Division staff. If any discrepancies exist, the decisions filed by the Committee serve as the relevant record for each case. The Planning Division also maintains audio recordings of most Committee meetings that are available upon request.