



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION

STAFF PRESENT

SARAH LEWIS, *SENIOR PLANNER*
ALEX MELLO, *PLANNER*

MEMBERS PRESENT

DEBORAH FENNICK
FRANK VALDES
SARAH RADDING

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, February 22, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.** in the **3rd Floor Conference Room, 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/recommendations from the November 2, 2017 meeting

Deborah Fennick made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2017 meeting as presented. Frank Valdes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a vote of 3-0.

- 2. 434 McGrath Highway (PB 2014-23):** In October of 2014, the Planning Board granted approval to construct one new four-story building composed of 48 residential units and small retail/service space. A condition of approval was that the Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors (to the Design Review Committee for review and comment and) to Planning Staff for review and approval prior to construction. Other design related conditions include: the exterior façade shall be composed of real brick and the residential windows on the upper floors shall not be composed of vinyl.

Changes are to replace the light brick with a light cast stone.

DF: lower cornice also GFRC? (yes)

FV: Balcony material (white aluminum powder coat)

DF: contrast between cornice and cast stone

FV: grid articulation within the cast stone should be differentiated between the bottom and the top. Heavier at bottom.

All agree that the substitution for the cast stone is a better material.

Wants to see a scale differentiation as the cast stone panels move up.

SR: same color? (hard to match)

DF: might as well contrast

To conclude the DRC conditional approved the proposed materials. However, the architect shall provide updated elevations that break down the massing of cast stone as it goes to the top, to also see more details on the balconies, and darken the cornice.

- 3. 114 Broadway (PB 2017-29 and ZBA 2017-134):** 5-story mixed-use (CCD-55 Murray & Sons) next to and in front of East End Grille project (118-120 Broadway). 2146sf of office on ground floor, 8 residential units (including 1 affordable) that average 402sf/du instead of 600 sf, and no parking due to 89.6% coverage.

FV: Is there another articulation other than arches? (can do a more cast head stone) Not a big fan of the balconies, can the architecture be enhanced, more articulated into the façade? Look stuck on. (vertical supports to look more like a bay or semi-circle Juliet balcony, will be French doors opening onto balcony). Look into support on balconies.

DF: balconies look tacked on. Integrate more with the façade. Maybe screening for the balcony.

FV: balconies should not become storage for the tenants.

DF: why not just bring brick up to the top since it's co-planar?

SR: agrees to bring the brick up to the top. Arches, pilasters look too thin. Staying rectilinear may be best also up at the top.

DF: type of brick that is more contextual but also playful, norman brick. (we can do hand-detailed brick)

Tim Talun: treat the different doors on either side different so you know the different uses. (canopy over the residential entrance) Recess lobby doors.

4. **845 McGrath Highway (PB 2017-27):** Planned Unit Development Preliminary Master Plan (PUD-PMP) for 0.85 acres in the ASMD to develop a transit-oriented mixed-use development of two buildings. Applicant also seeks relief under Section 6.4.12.A for additional building height. One building will be 147' to the top of roof containing up to 180 hotel rooms, and the other, 235' high containing approximately 215 residential units. Both supported by 9,515 square feet of ground floor retail and restaurant space, with parking relief for 293 structured spaces.

FV: part of ASQ design standards? (No) So many building entries may want to limit the amount of entries to better define the entrances and enhance the urban realm. (so many entrances because of retail spaces should be depicted differently on the plan)

SR: three levels of parking above the entrance level, would like to see other examples of how that is masked.

Perhaps a different program crossing the courtyard. (outdoor space on top of bridge crossing courtyard. Open air garage. Tried green screen and louvers). Try more parking underground. (very high water table also trying to get above the highway line).

FV: how do you hide the parking? (show how that is articulated)

FV: rental units, try 0.75 space per dwelling unit.

FV: try to reduce the parking impacts. Lift system.

DF: try to imagine how nice the courtyard could be with the parking. Strengthen the connection to the underpass.

FV: that connection is really important and should not be overlooked.

Sarah Lewis: street cross sections to incorporate into the PUD guidelines.

Joe Nissenbaum: theory on driverless cars no need for parking in the future.

5. **Boynton Yards:** 2 office/lab buildings in Boynton Yards that will submit under the current zoning but are designed to be appropriate for the proposed overlay in the new ordinance. Building 1 a 10-story office building with retail on the ground floor (139,000gsf) at the northeast corner of South Street and Earle Street. Building 2 is an 8-story lab building of 235,000gsf with retail on the ground floor.

FV: Likes the articulation of the weave being more visible.

DF: very provocative. Lighten building 2 a little bit. A lot of people would access from Windsor Place with the green line. Maybe try to get away with less parking. Maybe have more orientation toward Windsor Place.

FV: appreciates how it is built for now and considering the future around the building without taking away from the design. Liked the option of the brick from building 1 bringing it into building 2.

DF: liked more steel in building 2.

SR: lots of buildings we see today contain a wide range of materials. Likes the purity of the idea of familiar materials used in singular ways. Likes the brick weave idea.

FV: detailed elevations are good

DF: entry to the site from the station is key.

The DRC recommended that the project team incorporate the feedback given tonight and come back at a later date.

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.