



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

STAFF PRESENT

CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *SENIOR PLANNER*
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER*

MEMBERS PRESENT

PETER WIEDERSPAHN
FRANK VALDES

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee will held a public meeting on **Thursday, January 22, 2009, 6:30 p.m.** in the third floor conference room of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. A quorum of three members was not present; however, because the Committee was making recommendations and not taking a vote, the meeting proceeded.

369-371 Beacon St: Applicant Beacon Street Hotel & Owner George Makrigiannis seek a special permit with Site Plan Review (SZO §7.11.10.5.b) in order to construct and establish a hotel of more than 10,000 gross sq.ft. BA zone. Ward 2.

The Agent and Architects introduced the proposed plans to the DRC (issue date October 30, 2008 / SPCD stamp date November 3, 2008).

The proposal is for a boutique hotel on an approximately 9600 square feet site. There would be 28 rooms and a 1700 sf restaurant. Parking would be underground and utilize a lift system for cars. There would be a screen wall between the loading area and the three-family dwelling adjacent to it. The siding would be Nichiha, which is an environmentally friendly product that looks like sandstone. There would be balconies on both sides of the building. The restaurant seating would be along the Beacon Street side of the building. The balconies and restaurant would add interest to the building and the street. The plaza would have steps to address the elevation change on the site. There would be minimal shadow effect on the surrounding properties.

The DRC made the following comments and recommendations (underlined):

The rooftop penthouse would help to hide rooftop mechanicals including cooling towers; however, the penthouse takes away from the trellis and the cylindrical focus of the building. Make the trellis more prominent vertically so that it is the monumental feature. The DRC was concerned that if the trellis was removed this portion of the building would become a back end and it should remain the focus. Do not remove the trellis from the plans.

There should be a drop-off space for taxis and other vehicles because the street can get congested. Ideas include creating a drop-off space in the plaza, on the sidewalk as a shared pedestrian/vehicle zone near the

restaurant, or in the street, which is sixty-six feet wide. The Architect explained that they do not have sufficient space to have a drop-off area onsite.

Having only one elevator could be difficult when it needs repair but the cost of an additional elevator is understandably limiting.

Add an entrance to the plaza from the rotunda. Add a door to the other side of the main entryway. The success of the restaurant will depend on pedestrian access. Add an entrance to the restaurant from the street.

The northern façade is undulating with vistas to Porter Square. The breakdown of this wall would help to cut down the noise from the train. It would be a nice feature to have natural light on the staircase with the glass exterior. It would be beneficial to have transparent doors to the corridors so that the light will filter into the core of the building.

The Applicant explained that the seller is responsible for remediation of the site and it is currently in phase II of the process.

There is a hotel proposed near Porter Square in Cambridge and another one in Davis Square. The Architect explained that the market research shows a need for more hotels. The DRC thought that a hotel makes sense in this location. The scale of the building is appropriate for the neighborhood and will act as a landmark in the area. The hotel will be an incredible improvement to the site and an enhancement to the neighborhood.