



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

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

STAFF PRESENT

GEORGE PROAKIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*

MEMBERS PRESENT

JULIE BRADY
DEBORAH FENNICK
JAMES KIRYLO
CHERILYN RUANE
FRANK VALDES
PETER WIEDERSPAHN

RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, March 25, 2010, 6:30 p.m.** in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall, 93 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA.

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

56-61 Clyde Street - MaxPak – revisions to the Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) case # PB 2008-07

The Applicant and Architect explained the changes to the design since the 2008 Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval.

OVERALL

The DRC found that the new proposal was substantially similar to the originally approved design. The design maintains the same spirit and many of the same details, which the DRC has supported in the past. The changes to the plan appear logical. The Committee appreciates that the developers are pursuing LEED certification.

BUILDINGS D1, D2 & D3

The DRC discussed the location and details of the left-most front doors (buildings D1 and D2, front elevation). They suggested that these doors could be moved over to the right and the wood siding could be extended so that the distance between the bay and the doors would be the same as it is for these elements on the right side of the buildings.

The DRC recommended that the material of the panels in place of windows should be metal so that it is consistent with the corrugated metal siding. The introduction of another new material would add too many elements to the design. There is already the introduction of the natural stained wood since the



original approval. The DRC understood the need to slightly reduce the number of windows to achieve LEED certification. The Applicants will use similar HVAC systems as they installed in the LEED Silver building that they recently built on Endicott Avenue.

The Committee discussed the paint on the metal siding. It will be prefinished but the Applicants have not yet chosen a color scheme.

Three sides of the building would be corrugated metal siding and the fourth side would be fiber cement. The fiber cement was introduced for cost savings. There was concern about this material for the facades that abut Clyde Street because this face will be the front for people that drive to the site. If the fiber cement appears almost the same as the metal, but not a perfect match, it would reduce the perceived quality of the metal. Keep the metal siding on all sides of buildings D1 and D2. They were not concerned about the fiber cement for the façade that faces the railroad tracks (building D3, back elevation). People on the train or on the other side of the tracks would not be able to distinguish the quality of one material from another. There was discussion about whether the fiber cement board should be the same color as the metal siding or a different color. On the one hand if the fiber cement is a different color it would be more distinguishable from the metal siding. On the other hand, another color would add to the palette, which members wanted to limit.

The Applicants stated that if two fiber cement boards are required to achieve the height of the elevation along the rail the seam would be hidden by the fence that will be constructed.

They discussed the screens that will divide the patios in the rear of the buildings. The materials will be metal and wood to achieve a blend of privacy and security. There will be screening at the ends of the patio, which the DRC supports.

Another element discussed was the downspouts. The DRC understood the need for the scuppers. They recommended that the pipe continue up to the top of the roof and that the location of the pipes are as close to the actual dividing line of the units as possible.

The parapet around the condensers was an effective way to screen the condensers visually and acoustically. The Applicants stated that they have designed the condensers to be the least impactful because condensers would affect the tenants of the units (more so than neighbors) and the marketability of the units.

LANDSCAPING

The Committee discussed the grade change in the back of the D3 building. Originally this area was going to be fill with a retaining wall and a pump station. The revised plan is to keep the grade and there would be a swale to direct water to a catch basin. The revised plan would allow for walk-out basements for the D3 building. The walk out basements would be a positive change. They would give people a place for storage, easier access for bicycle storage, provide more natural light and air in the unit, and use the natural grade. The DRC wanted to ensure that the grade would allow people to access their unit from this side of the property. The Applicants said that the proposed grade would be 3%, which people would be able to navigate, and there would be a path, made of stone dust or similar material, along the backs of the units.

They advised the applicant not to use invasive plant species, which were on their plant list. These species included Norway Spruce and bamboo.



Abutters had the following comments:

- There are bad/abrasive examples of straight concrete patios in the area - recommended using wood or a composite material.
- The basements in this neighborhood flood so the units should include sump pumps/water proofing.
- The movement of soil during construction should be considered so as to not impact abutting properties.
- The developers should consider noise mitigation for the condensers.

