



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

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**STAFF PRESENT**

LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*  
ADAM DUCHESNEAU, *PLANNER*

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

DEBORAH FENNICK  
JAMES KIRYLO  
MATTHEW RICE  
FRANK VALDES

**RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES**

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, April 28, 2011, 6:30 p.m.** in City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

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

**378, 380, 384, 388 and 390 Somerville Ave (Case #PB 2010-23)**

Review of changes since the last DRC meeting where the Applicant presented.

**Legal Advertisement:** Applicant W. James Herbert & Jean Herbert and owners W. James Herbert, Sr., & Jean L. Herbert, and The William James Herbert Family Trust & the Jean L. Schultz Herbert Family Trust seek a special permit with site plan review under SZO §6.1.22.D.1 to construct a new five story building and a special permit to establish 30 residential units in the building (§7.13.E). The building would also include approx. 6,500 sf of retail and 36 parking spaces, 30 of which would be underground. The applicant proposes to retain the façade of the historic structure at 378-384 Somerville Avenue and incorporate it into the new building. The structures at 388 and 390 Somerville Avenue would be demolished. CCD-55 zone. Ward 2.

**SPGA:** Planning Board

**Hearing Date:** Anticipated to be May 19, 2011

This was the second time this project had been presented to the DRC for review. Overall the Committee members were very pleased with the changes that had been made since the last time the project came before the DRC.

The DRC asked about the following aspects of the project and the Agent's/Architect's response is after the (r).

- With regard to the awnings or the sheds above the windows on the third floor, is this a flat treatment or is this some type of standing seam? – (r) I have seen it done successfully with a standing seam.



- What is going on with the design at the northwest corner of the building? Is this an entryway? – (r) The building is cantilevered here and then there is a drive to get into the garage.

On the southeast corner of the building, some type of treatment could be used to correlate the historic building to the new structure. On the corner of the entryway to the garage there should be some type of treatment on the historic building. Additionally in the southeast corner, an element of vertical separation is needed between the old and the new building on the second and third floors. This could perhaps be achieved with some type of trim expression or band in this location. At the same time, the design here should not make this area of the structure look important.

The DRC felt that the applicants had done very well with the new design and that the tower now seems more inclusive with the rest of the project. The new design achieved the delicate balance between the fully modern look of the new building and the historic look of the existing building.

### **63-67 Summer Street (Case #ZBA 2011-01)**

Review of the design for a conversion of a commercial structure into two dwelling units before the case goes to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**Legal Advertisement:** Applicant & Owner Mark Grassia seeks a Special Permit with Site Plan Review to convert a nonconforming commercial structure into two dwelling units under SZO §7.3, one of which would be an affordable unit as defined in §13. The Applicant also seeks a special permit to alter the nonconforming structure by altering window and door locations under §4.4.1. RB zone. Ward 3.

**SPGA:** Zoning Board of Appeals

**Hearing Date:** To Be Determined

This was the first time the project had been presented to the DRC for review. Currently on the property is an existing two-family structure and a four unit commercial building. The Applicant is proposing to renovate and alter the commercial building to create three residential units in that structure with one unit on the first floor and two on the second floor. The final product would be a site with five residential units, with one unit being affordable, and associated parking.

The DRC asked about the following aspects of the project and the Agent's/Architect's response is after the (r).

- Is there any possibility to narrow the driveway or to change its location to reduce the amount of pavement in the plan? – (r) The Department of Public Works and Traffic & Parking prefer the proposed location of the driveway. As far as narrowing the driveway width, this is something that we would like to do but we are limited by the requirements of the zoning. However, this is something we can look into.
- Where will the parking be for the two-family building? – (r) We are proposing five parking spaces in the off-street parking area so each unit on the site would be allocated one parking space.
- Are the units going to be condominiums? – (r) Yes, that is correct, and one of the units would be affordable.

The Committee would like to see typical floor plans for each of the units as well as the other elevations for the proposed three unit structure.

There seems to be a lack of symmetry, or a break in the symmetry, in the design of the proposed three unit structure. Right now, the front of the building along Summer Street almost has the appearance of the



back of a building. Perhaps all of the entryways to the proposed three unit structure can be tied into a single entryway. The design could also work well if all three entryways were separate with separate stoops and if they were all scaled appropriately with the front façade.

The abruptness of a pedestrian entering the three unit structure off of the street level needs to be considered in the design. The general massing of the structures and the location of the parking on the site seems to work well though.

The driveway on the site could be narrowed and some type of vegetative buffer could be worked in along the property line. There is an opportunity here to have less pavement on the site.

It would be helpful to see the other buildings on adjacent properties as well as the location of proposed utilities on the site plan to give a better context of the surrounding area.

It would be nice to see a variation of the proposed design with different roof forms, porch elements, windows, locations of bay windows, locations of entrances, and other design elements.

