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
GEORGE PROAKIS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
MELISSA WOODS, PLANNER
AMIE HAYES, PLANNER

MEMBERS PRESENT
JULIE BRADY
DEBORAH FENNICK
JAMES KIRYLO
MATTHEW RICE

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, July 25, 2013,** at **6:30 p.m**. in City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

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

97 Prospect Street
Description: This is the second meeting the DRC reviewed the design concept of a new 7 unit building at 97 Prospect Street. This project will have an elaborate front entry, underground parking, and landscaping along Prospect St. The DRC addressed the following:

- Red brick is used to connect the building to the existing neighborhood. However, there is not enough red brick to create that connection. The Applicant should consider a way to increase the amount of red brick on the site or a better way to integrate the building into the neighborhood.
- The entrance to the garage needs more articulation of material. Since there is a large cantilever above, the structure could be expressed as an engaged pilaster on the side wall with ship-lap siding leading into the garage.
- The depth of the steel beam supporting the building over the entrance ramp into the garage should be increased so that its appears appropriate relative to the loads that it is supporting.
- The surface bike parking is not necessary. Tenant bike parking can be accommodated in the storage areas in the basement. Visitor bike parking can be accommodated on the sidewalk.
- It was suggested that the open louvers that are used as natural ventilation for parking garage could incorporate the cable rail that is used at the front of the building.

The Applicant will incorporate the design changes and proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The DRC requested that Planning Staff include the following standard condition in the staff report, "Applicant

shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to the Design Review Committee for review and comment prior to construction."

90 Washington Street

Description: The DRC reviewed the design for a residential/commercial development at 90 Washington that includes 159 residential units and 5 commercial spaces. The building has a long façade and the Applicant likened that to styles of architecture in numerous European cities. There is a transparent base (retail), floating infill, a grounded block that faces Cobble Hill, and floating infill (residences). The building will have painted metal panel, a fiber cement panel system, brick, and corrugated metal siding. The DRC addressed the following:

- Members of the DRC appreciated the expression of the long building instead of an attempt to make it look like a grouping of smaller buildings.
- The materials and detailing of the European facades are achieving something that the project proposed is not yet on par with.
- The building needs relief and shadow in order to mitigate the size of the building. It should aspire to the European façade precedents that were presented, but utilize contemporary expressions of those design concepts. This could include devices as sun shades, vertical fins, changes in color and recessed windows
- The Applicant should propose some further design development for the retail environment at street level that illustrates the expected level of activity. This could include a study of the relationship between the landscape design and the storefront.

The Applicant will incorporate the design changes and present at the next DRC meeting.

17-21 Village Street

Description: The Applicant presented the design of an 'adapted mill building' for a 6 unit residential building on Village Street. There is an old warehouse, being converted to a single family, on the front of the lot. Materials include Nichiha simulated stone panels, Hardi plank siding, and metal siding. The DRC addressed the following:

- The stair tower does not match the aesthetic of the remainder of the building. The tower is multipurpose as the staircase and the entrance to the building and needs to reflect that focus.
- The building, with the exception of an expressed tower, could be 'quiet.'
- The fenestration pattern is acceptable.
- The simulated stone panel proposed does not tie into the design aesthetic of the building.
- Color renderings will be helpful to convey the design.

The Applicant will incorporate the design changes and present at the next DRC meeting.

170 School Street

Description: The Applicant presented the design of a new residential and commercial building at 170 School Street with 5 residential units and 1 commercial space. The DRC addressed the following:

- The pediments above the entrances need further design consideration in form and material.
- Window fenestration for the first floor residential unit should be studied, including the potential of a bedroom window, and the potential for adjusting the windows along School Street to provide additional privacy for the unit.
- The retail space is small and possibly unusable to a desirable tenant.

The Applicant will incorporate the design changes and present at the next DRC meeting.

2-8 Broadway

Description: Review of the design for a residential/commercial development at 2-8 Broadway. The building will have up to 5 retail spaces and 11 residential units. Two and four Broadway will be significantly rehabbed; 6-8 Broadway will be a new 4-story building. The building will have a storefront system, Hardi Artisan plank siding, and Nichiha illumination panel. The DRC addressed the following:

- The tower on the 6-8 Broadway building should be grounded. This should be accomplished by eliminating the recess at the base of the tower and bringing the full tower form down to the sidewalk.The material on the tower should not be differentiated because the massing would read better as 3 elements instead of 4.
- The neighborhood signage banner needs to be a light color to contrast with the darker colors of the building.
- A mural, instead of the community banner, should be incorporated into the left elevation (visible from people walking from Sullivan Station). Lighting the mural would provide a good way of activating that end of the building during the evening.

The Applicant will incorporate the design changes and the DRC will review these changes electronically. The DRC requested that Planning Staff include the following standard condition in the staff report, "Applicant shall provide final material samples for siding, trim, windows, and doors to the Design Review Committee for review and comment prior to construction."