



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

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION

STAFF PRESENT

AMIE HAYES, PLANNER
LORI MASSA, SENIOR PLANNER

MEMBERS PRESENT

MATTHEW RICE, CHAIR
JULIE BRADY
DEBORAH FENNICK
JAMES KIRYLO
FRANK VALDES

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, September 26, 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:

50 Middlesex Avenue

Description: The DRC reviewed the signage design for the café on the first floor of the building that is largely a self storage building. The self storage signage has previously been approved by the Committee. The café sign originally was shown as being on top of the canopy at the tower element of the building. The sign would not be visible by a pedestrian at that location. The current signage proposal is to install vinyl stickers to the windows. The signs will not be lit but the café owner intends to keep the lights on even when the café is closed. The store lights as well the ambient light at the site will illuminate the signage. The colors are complimentary to the Assembly Square signs painted on the building. The DRC asked that the cup graphic be applied inside of the glass so that it matches the graphics of gears on the glazing above the café. They also asked that a typo be fixed in the text of the sign.



Proposed signage for the café at 50 Middlesex Avenue

595 and 589-593 Somerville Avenue

Description: Review of the design of residential/commercial developments at 595 and 589-593 Somerville Avenue.

The Architect reviewed the joint site plan for both of these proposed developments. The proposals will add 3 or 4 street trees and 5 parking spaces in front of the buildings by closing up the existing curb cut. There were two site plans presented with the usable outdoor space shown in different locations. The DRC preferred the scheme with the usable open space behind the single-family house. The space could be divided up with benches or landscaping to make a section feel private for the house and the rest usable by the residents of the multi-family buildings.

The DRC recommendations on the design for 595 Somerville Avenue include:

- simplifying the brackets on the porches on Spring Street,
- enclosing the first floor of the porches so that they appear integral to the building and not tacked on, and
- extending the wall on Spring Street that covers the parking so that it meets the end of the building above.

The Committee discussed the challenges and realities of the tucked in parking in the back of the building.



View from the corner of Somerville Ave and Spring St

The DRC comments on the design for 593 Somerville Avenue include:

- the height of the building is accentuated because the mansard is in the middle and the squared off elements are on the ends,
- the symmetry of the building makes it feel more prominent than it should be compared with the buildings on either side,
- the accessibility of the units should be considered since an elevator is not shown, and
- the materials of the mansard will be important and the DRC would like to see a sample.
- At the residential structure that will be relocated, the DRC requested that the structure be raised two-three feet so that the original proportions of the high brick foundation are maintained. The Applicant noted that the accessible unit for the development would be located within the residential structure, and in response the DRC noted that the accessible requirement will need to be accommodated while still preserving the original foundation proportions.

39-43 Elmwood Street / 40 Cameron Avenue

The Applicants were not yet ready to present Review of material and color samples. They will appear at the next DRC meeting.

Other Business

None