



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**  
LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*

**MEMBERS PRESENT**  
JIM KIRYLO  
DEBORAH FENNICK  
FRANK VALDES  
MATT RICE

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES**

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Monday, January 31, 2013**, at **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:

**Assembly Square Block 2A and 2B (PB 2013-02 & PB 2006-59-R0710-AM)**

**Description:** The DRC reviewed a preliminary plan for 2A and 2B and made the following comments and recommendations.

***DRC Recommendation:***

2A - Overall they thought that the building was elegant. The building materials should appear the same inside and outside of the building to integrate it with the plaza. The building massing may be too fragmented with four separate volumes. They recommended being subtle with the top volume and not painting it a bright or bold color. There will likely need to be a short base to the building to better handle snow and other wear near the ground. The corners of the building should be detailed as glass corners – the rendering makes the corner look like a column. The Committee also discussed the exterior column location and moving it closer to or farther from the building but there was no consensus on a recommended change. The DRC did not request to see a redesign in another meeting; however, they did request to see material samples for the building before they are purchased.

2B - Overall they liked the composition of the building and called the design a refined historicism that appropriately integrated modern materials. They felt that the corner of the building at Artisan Way and Assembly Square Drive was successful; however, moving down the building to the plaza-side, since the second story terrace in the middle of the building is no longer part of the plan they wanted to see an



element along this façade that created some symmetry with the entrance on Artisan Way. On the opposite side of the building the drawings portrayed the transition between the masonry and glass curtainwall as jarring. The architect should show the inside turn of where these materials meet. The DRC also discussed ways of bringing some of the nuance that is on the masonry side of the building to the glass curtain wall. Some ideas were increasing the mullion size and having consistency in the mullion pattern or bringing some masonry to this side of the building. The DRC did not request to see a redesign in another meeting; however, they did request to see the transition between the masonry and the glass curtainwall and the material samples for the building before they were purchased.

### **Assembly Row Storefront and Signage Design Standards**

**Description:** The DRC reviewed a package of information related to Assembly Row’s storefront and signage design standards (size and location) including signage, canopies, lighting, etc. Tenants are allowed ‘individual tenant expression’ which means that each tenant comes with their brand.

#### ***DRC Recommendation:***

The DRC discussed the 60% versus 75% transparency requirement for anchor tenants and corner storefronts, flags and banners could have a negative impact if there was too much of them and that there could be competing colors with adjacent storefronts. The landlord will manage the second two items and this has not been an issue in their other developments. The DRC recommended approval of the standards.

### **315 Broadway**

**Description:** The DRC reviewed drawings for 315 Broadway proposing underground parking, first floor commercial, and 56 residential units, a total of 4 floors. The review process started with the Historic Commission. The new building will imitate the existing building with arched doorways, storefronts, and materials by floor. Several options were presented.



***At the applicant's first public meeting before the DRC (January, 31, 2012), the Committee recommended:***

The Committee acknowledges the input of the Historic Commission and agrees with their design recommendations to draw design details from the existing building and incorporate them into the design of the new building. These included an arched entrance for the residential units, a traditional windows fenestration pattern, the use of heavy headers and sills for each window, the integration of copper (which will patina with age) into the façade, the use of brick, a well defined corner at Broadway and Temple, and cornice/expression lines above the first and third stories. Recognizing the applicants attempt to meet these expectations, the Committee proposed using metal as an accent material rather than such widespread use as presented. The use of various brick colors accented by metal could do the job properly if well articulated to add shadows to the façade. There was also concern for the general design of the Temple Street façade of the building due to its length and visibility from multiple angles – greater attention needs to be paid to its rhythm, materials, and detailing especially at street level. The arched entrance to the upper story residential units appears stunted and should be redesigned as a well defined entrance that is at least two stories in height.

The DRC asked the Applicant to review the following items and return to another meeting for review:

- Use of pre-patina copper is not necessary; brick (possibly accent brick) will be more suitable with shadow line
- Temple street elevation needs more attention to detail because of size and visibility
- Column at corner entrance at Temple and Broadway is too heavy
- Do not proceed with the 'turret' version
- Provide site plan/context for future presentations
- Refine arches
- Identify programmatic elements of the building (label rooms)

Follow historic committee recommendations

-Heavy cornice line above first and third floors

-Use of patina metal

-High level of window detail regarding header and sills as well as traditional window fenestration pattern

-Use of brick and cast stone

-Well defined corner at Broadway and Temple Streets

#### **47 Hunting Street**

**Description:** The DRC reviewed drawings for 47 Hunting Street which includes 9 residential units with 5 stories. Half of the top floor is a green roof with some mechanical. The new plans included two means of egress and an elevator.

***DRC Recommendation:***

- Band above brick columns should also be brick
- Windows need to be more unified (could be larger) – there are too many shapes and mullion patterns.
- Railings should be consistent.
- Metal roof should not be red - bronze recommended.
- Besides the roof they liked the color pallet but some members felt that there are too many colors and elements on the building

**771 McGrath Highway - Cross Street East**

**Description:** The DRC reviewed drawings for 121 residential units at Cross Street East, including a fitness center on the ground level. The site includes the old Harris Playground and the back parking lot of Stop and Shop. Vehicular access to the site will be via Rt 38, Cross Street will continue to be closed. The NE corner of the building responds to the highway whereas the SE corner responds to the East Somerville neighborhood. The proposed building fits within the PUD requirements. Neighborhood benefits include park and developer will give General Insulation Building to the City.

***DRC Recommendation:***

The DRC appreciated the quality of the presentation and the design of the building. They did not have any recommended changes.