



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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PLANNING DIVISION

STAFF PRESENT
GEORGE PROAKIS, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
MELISSA WOODS, PLANNER

MEMBERS PRESENT
MATTHEW RICE, CHAIR
DEBORAH FENNICK
JAMES KIRYLO
TANYA PAGLIA

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, October 24, 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:

595 and 589-593 Somerville Avenue

Description: Review of the design of residential/commercial developments on Somerville Avenue.

The Architect reviewed the joint site plan for both of these proposed developments and addressed the comments that were incorporated from the previous meeting. For the 593 Somerville Ave building these included removing any architectural brackets, shielding the parking, changing the porch dividers from white to yellow, and keeping the commercial space on Somerville Ave. The 589 Somerville Avenue building extended the mansard roof.



595 and 589-593 Somerville Avenue Elevation



The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The cornice at the top of the mansard is too large and needs to be scaled appropriately.
- The rooftop equipment needs to be set back and screened to protect abutters, especially because of the change of grade, to mitigate equipment noise. Site lines from the far side of Somerville Ave. should be reviewed for the visibility of the screening and equipment. These elements should be pushed back from the street as far as possible to conceal their appearance from Somerville Ave.
- The obscured glass at the first floor residential unit at 595 Somerville Avenue is still awkward because of the similar patterning to the commercial space, and the proximity of this residential living space to the public sidewalk. Instead of frosted glass, panels in the same pattern or display boxes for the adjacent commercial tenant could be used.

The Committee discussed the commonality of first floor residential units along this portion of Somerville Avenue. It was undecided whether this context should be carried forward for new construction projects.

The Applicant will incorporate the suggestions and proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

235 Lowell Street

Description: Review of the design of a 6-unit residential development at 235 Lowell Street.

Before the Architect made a project presentation, Planning Staff summarized the planning process that has taken place in this neighborhood because of the Green Line Extension. The neighborhood plan for the Lowell Street station should be released for comment in November. In the meantime, the City's consultant, Russ Preston, provided written comments on proposal. These comments were given to the DRC. After this introduction, the Architect reviewed the site plan and renderings for the project. The building will be fiber cement clapboard, cedar plank accent, and a vertically seamed metal siding on the top floor. The DRC was handed feedback from Russ Preston



235 Lowell Street Rendering

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The top story is too busy and does not tie in with the context of the building. Suggestions to improve the third story include: using a less contrasting color/material, lessening the overhangs on the roof, organizing the appearance of the roof volume from the length of Lowell St. and the surrounding properties, and lowering the 3rd floor material to create a string course under the windows.

- The DRC appreciated being able to see through the corners of the third story because of the window layout.
- The DRC felt that the simple treatment of the window openings (without ornate trim materials) on the lower two stories as shown in the renderings was appropriate given the surrounding industrial precedents.
- The use of wrought iron is well done.
- The front wall that Mr. Preston proposed should be included in the rendering. The DRC requested that the design of this wall be studied so that the masonry material to be used reinforces the overall design intent of the project.

Several residents of the neighborhood were in attendance. They asked that the building be held to a high standard of design because of its presence in the neighborhood. The building needs to fit within the context of the neighborhood, right now it is somewhere between industrial and residential.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and come back to the DRC on November 14, 2013.

182 Broadway

Description: Review of the design of a mixed use 19 residential unit and 1 commercial space development in East Somerville.

The Architect presented a new development for the Patsy's site at 182 Broadway. The building will be mixed use with 1 commercial unit on the first floor and the residential entry with 19 residential units above. The parking will be beside and behind the building. Materials include brick, limestone Nichiha panels, and a vertically seamed metal siding for the top floor.



182 Broadway Perspective

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The 3 parking spaces on the side of the building are too visible from Broadway. The Applicant should consider either putting the parking underground (since the option of locating parking on the site creates an unacceptably awkward urban streetfront), or reducing the scale of the development so that the required parking total is at least three spots less than currently planned.
- The faux- limestone panel planned for the center of the building is too heavy of a material to use in a large expanse, consider alternate materials.
- The pergolas do not fit in with the context of the building.
- Considering raising the cornice line between Levels 1 and 2 so that the commercial space has more prominence.
- Present colored images that convey a color palette and textures/finish materials

- For any future presentations, prepare drawings to review the design that include the surrounding context in plan, elevation and perspective.
- Show bicycle parking.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and come back to the DRC on November 14, 2013.

1119-1133 Broadway

Description: Review of the design of a new floor of residential on an existing mixed use building.

The Architect presented a design for an additional floor at 1119-1133 Broadway in Teele Square. The first floor commercial façade will stay the same but the façade of Level 2 will be incorporated into the new façade on Level 3. The existing bays on Level 2 are covered in a vertical aluminum siding and have rounded corners. This renovation/new floor will match the abutting building and be a more appropriate design than the existing treatment.



182 Broadway Perspective

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The DRC complimented the Applicant on the contextual and historical character of the design.
- The cornice on the newly added story should be reduced in scale so that it is sized proportionately to the existing adjacent building's cornice.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and proceed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

9 & 39 Medford Street

Description: New residential development in TOD-100 district.

The Project Team presented the design for a residential development at the Millbrook Cold Storage facility. The contemporary design incorporates 3 metal panels. The project will be applying for LEED Gold Certification.



9 Medford Street Rendering

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The DRC congratulated the Project Team on the adaptive re-use of the building and improved site.
- The Applicant should work with Mass Dot to assure greater landscaping and definition on the railroad property since it divides the site.
- The guardrail separating the site from the railroad property should function as a guardrail but needs more design consideration.
- The finishes of the exterior metal wall panels need to read differently to achieve the effect in the renderings presented.
- The top floor should be articulated during the evening hours by either providing more/larger windows so they are lit up at night or by illuminating the darker portions of the metal panel from the exterior. Dark sky considerations associated with the LEED rating being pursued should be accounted for when deciding on the method of adding illumination to the upper story.
- Creating passages between the artist spaces and shared building functions. This will allow spaces to be shared and increase the opportunity for innovation.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and send an electronic package for DRC review and comment.

39-43 Elmwood Street / 40 Cameron Avenue

Description: Materials review for a previously approved project.

The Applicant presented materials for the 39-43 Elmwood property. The fiber cement siding will be Hardie Monterey Taupe and Timber Bark. The windows and door frames will match Marvin Integrity Bronze and the doors will be a green/bronze tone to match SW 6174 Andiron.

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- Using a historic accent color on the doors.

The Applicant will represent the materials for the 40 Cameron building on November 14, 2013.

Other Business

None