



**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  
LORI MASSA, SENIOR PLANNER  
AMIE HAYES, PLANNER  
MELISSA WOODS, PLANNER

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

MATTHEW RICE, CHAIR  
DEBORAH FENNICK  
JAMES KIRYLO  
TANYA PAGLIA  
FRANK VALDEZ

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**RECOMMENDATIONS and MINUTES**

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Thursday, November 14, 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:

**625 McGrath Highway**

**Description:** Materials review for a previously approved project.

The Applicant presented materials for the 625 McGrath Highway project and the plans approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The design has changed considerably since its final review by the DRC. The fiber cement siding will be Hardie Artic White, Autumn Tan, Navajo Beige, and Heathered Moss. The doors will be mahogany with a dark stain.

**39-43 Elmwood Street / 40 Cameron Avenue**

**Description:** Materials review for a previously approved project

The Applicant did not present.

**10 Allen Court**

**Description:** Review of the design of a 4-unit residential development at 10 Allen Court.

The Applicant presented the design for a 4-unit residential development. It is a 4 story building of Georgian design. There is garage parking on a portion of the first floor.



The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The overall height of the building should be diffused by delineating the materials. The first floor should have a trim board separating it from other levels and siding with a greater exposure than the rest of the building. This detail should be carried through on all sides of the building, and the horizontal trim board should be reflected on the corner pilasters so that they do not run the entire four stories of the building un-broken.
- The garage doors should match the siding color chosen so they recede into the background. This elevation will face Park Street.
- The fenestration, especially on the front façade, should be symmetrical.
- The landscape plan needs more development including species type. Street trees should be considered.
- The DRC requested the following items be located for the next presentation: bike parking, mechanical systems, gas meters, and trash storage.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and come back to the DRC on December 19, 2013.

### **235 Lowell Street**

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

The Architect addressed the changes made since the last presentation including the updates incorporated from the DRC and City consultant Russ Preston. The building has cementitious lap siding with an 11” exposure on the bottom two floors and vertically seamed metal siding at the top floor. A landscape wall of rusticated block has been incorporated to create a streetwall and flatten the front yard at the elevated grade. Other changes include a header detail over the front door, the vertical location of the material change at the third floor, and the building material carried on the balconies.



*235 Lowell Street Rendering*

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- The rooflines are a clash of geometry and extremely visible from Lowell Street as you come over the bridge, the new development at 231 Lowell Street, and throughout the neighborhood. The roof line should be an organized composition when viewed from the sides and rear of the building. A review of the roof line should consider the railings, the balcony separation element and the roof slopes as part of the overall design gesture.

- The colors of the materials were changed from the previous iteration of the design and appear to be reversed. Typically one would expect a color on the bottom and a neutral tone on top. The Architect explained that this is supposed to be a ‘theme on greys.’ The DRC requested a more accurate rendition of the material palette, as the upper color was rendered as a vibrant green.
- The thin band/shadow line separating the change in materials is not substantial enough. A recessed channel detail was suggested as a potential improvement by the DRC. In addition, the proposed detail of having the metal siding project out beyond the face of the lap siding may appear clumsy and unrefined. The Applicant should consider pushing back the face of the upper surface so that it at least aligns with the surface below.
- The white window trim should not be used in the metal siding as it would appear as a foreign material/detail within the metal siding.
- The corner boards do not help the 2 story mass read as a form, the Applicant should consider using a thicker fiber cement product that miters or the use of a detail that avoids the use of corner boards.
- The third floor windows appear to be crowded by the roofline, and may need to be reduced in height to better resolve the Lowell St. elevation. The transom in the third story windows may not be possible.

Three residents of the neighborhood were in attendance. After comments made on the proposal the DRC made the following recommendation:

- The landscape wall material should be reconsidered.
- The location of the street trees should be considered with respect to maintaining the code required sidewalk widths.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and submit electronic plans no later than November 25<sup>th</sup>. The DRC will respond with comments to be incorporated or with a request to see the Applicant at the December 19, 2013 meeting.

### **182 Broadway**

**Description:** Review of the design of a mixed use 19 residential unit and 3 commercial space development in East Somerville.

The Architect presented the revised design for 176-182 Broadway. The residential parking was moved underground which allows for 3 commercial spaces with 19 residential units above. The building will be brick veneer, vertical terne coated metal siding, and green aluminum window trim.



*182 Broadway Perspective*

The DRC recommendations on the design include:

- Increasing the presence of the first floor commercial space by decreasing the height & depth of the cornice band at that level and increasing the storefront window height. The Applicant should review the potential of raising the cornice band above the storefront, at the center of the building below the metal panel, and at the corner of the building closest to the parking access drive. The applicant should also review the potential of changing the low cornice band to a metal that matches the paneling, as opposed to using a simulated stone material.
- The wing wall at the garage ramp should be extended to align with the building above.
- The DRC would like to review the final storefront design/layout once the leasing is better understood in terms of the number of retail tenants.

The Applicant will incorporate the design suggestions and proceed to the Planning Board.

**Other Business**

None