

**Design Review Committee
Aldermanic Chambers - Somerville City Hall
January 31, 2008 Recommendations**

Design Review Committee

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The City of Somerville Design Review Committee reviewed the following projects on Thursday, January 31, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.

56 & 61 Clyde Street (“MaxPak site”): The Applicant, KSS Realty Partners, and Owners, 56 Clyde Street Acquisition LLC & 61 Clyde Street Acquisition LLC, seek approval of a preliminary master plan (S.Z.O. §16.8.1) for a Planned Unit Development-B1 (PUD-B1) project to construct a residential development on five parcels of land (Map 33, Block A, Lots 24-28). The residential development is proposed to contain 199 units in five buildings and is subject to inclusionary housing requirements (S.Z.O. §13.2).

The applicant is requesting additional zoning relief for number of parking spaces (SZO §9.5.1.a), parking space dimensions (SZO §9.11.a), and side yard setbacks (SZO §16.5.1.g).

Residence B zoning district. Planned Unit Development-B1 (PUD-B1) Overlay district. Ward 5.

The Applicants and Agents presented the Preliminary Master Plan review for 56 & 61 Clyde Street.

The DRC was generally satisfied with the Preliminary Master Plan as presented and did not recommend many changes to the plan. The following comments and recommendations (underlined) were made:

Neighborhood Context

- The Plan exceeds the DRC’s expectations.
- The change in the heights that are adjacent to the Clyde Street neighborhood works well; it is good that Building A is taller so that Building C could get shorter in relation to Warren Street. The steel 5 story structure may be too costly; however, the DRC would not like to see building C get taller as a result of shortening the 5-story building.
- The architecture is respectful of the history of the site allowing it to merge with the surrounding neighborhood.

Building Design / Massing

- The spirit of the architecture and planning is positive.
- Architectural elements expand upon local elements such as bay windows, stoops, and triple deckers.
- The materials of the buildings and elements such as steel balconies are a more abstract expression of the history of the site. The buildings do not repeat the historical style but use the same language.
- Elevation B shows a good proportion of the build environment and the large open space.
- The topography is negotiated in a positive way.

Open Space

- There are 2 open spaces in the plan – the green public space and the connection to Community Path.
- Access to the Community Path is commendable.

- The plan creates a significant space and public open space that adds to the limited open space in Somerville.
- The plan to drive through the building to keep the quadrangle works well.
- The view down Clyde Street is inviting into the central open space.

Traffic and Parking

- DRC would not want the open space to be squeezed out of the plans to accommodate parking.
- The DRC recommends adding Zipcar designated parking spaces on the site to help to mitigate a parking waiver. The Applicant proposed adding them.
- Locating the parking underground so that it disappears is admirable.

Landscaping / Environment

- The Applicant has already removed the contaminated soil from the site.
- The soil that is excavated for the buildings will be used to raise the site. It will be a 5% grade, which is ADA compliant.
- Street furniture examples will be given at the special permit phase.