



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR

STAFF PRESENT

MADELEINE MASTERS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*

MEMBERS PRESENT

RICHARD GRAF
PETER WIEDERSPAHN
FRANK VALDES

Meeting Minutes & Recommendations

The Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Wednesday April 9, 2008 at 6:30 pm** on the third floor of Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

The Applicants and Agents presented their projects.

The DRC made the following comments and recommendations (underlined):

39 Endicott Avenue: (Applicant/Owner: Endicott Partners, LLC; Agent: Richard Di Girolamo) The Applicant seeks Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval under SZO §7.3 in order to construct an eight unit apartment building (including one affordable unit) on a 12,504 s.f. parcel. Residence B (RB) / Ward 7.

The DRC is reviewing this project for the second time. Some building elements have been redesigned and the height of each floor is a foot lower since the prior version of the plans.

It would be interesting to have an enclave of contemporary design comprised of the house across from 39 Endicott, the new building next door and this development.

The new plans effectively break-up the massing of the building by incorporating horizontal and vertical elements and by setting back the middle section of the building.

Mr. Valdes commented that the building would look like a house instead of a six-unit structure. The point of entry got smaller and is no longer distinguished.

The Applicants stated that they are struggling with the desires of the neighborhood for the building to mimic existing structures and their desire along with the recommendation from the DRC to create a modern structure. They discussed ways of bringing contemporary elements into the current design. Mr. Valdes suggested using glass for the middle section of the building as a contemporary material that would also break up the façade and create a sense of arrival and safety to the entrance. Mr. Graf pointed out that the pitched roof mimics the traditional neighboring structure (and all agreed that the pitch could get steeper); however, the horizontal effect of the mansard roof may be achieved with other horizontal

elements or materials. In further discussing the mansard roof, Mr. Wiederspahn added that mansards are historically ornate and the design for this building may not want to move in that direction. Mr. Graf discussed the clever detailing of the projected trim at the bottom of the mansard. The dormers popping through the mansard could reference the modern building. Mr. Valdes suggested wrapping the mansard roof with a contemporary material or adding details to the mansard roof. Ms. Masters commented that the neighbors may be in favor of the contemporary design if they feel that the bulk of the building is consistent with the existing houses in the neighborhood.

The building now looks like two different buildings but the “marriage” between them does not work well.

There was some discussion about the appearance of condensers on the roof with this design and the Applicant stated that they will address this issue.

The porches on the rear portion of the building are great because they are more contemporary; however, cable rails on porches are not allowed in Somerville (and many other locations) so the materials will change.

There is some undulation in the façade of the building with the step-back of the entrance and bay windows. Showing a 3-D rendition of the building would help to see this effect.

The DRC felt that they were close to a final design and have addressed many issues; however, they would like to see another iteration of the plans.

Redesign the building for the DRC to review at the next meeting.

23 Milton St: (Applicant & Owner Eden Naby Frye & Mary Naby Frye) The Applicants seek a special permit under SZO §4.4.1 to alter a dimensionally nonconforming structure by altering an existing dormer, raising a portion of the roof, demolishing a carriage house, and adding un-enclosed egress stairs. RB zone. Ward 6.

The ZBA is trying to address the neighbors' concerns that the increase in the height of the rear portion of the house will block light on their garden. The Architect, Josh Fenollosa, has drawn up four schemes and explained them at the meeting. The DRC strongly favored the scheme (labeled as C) with the ridge of the roof raised almost to the height of the existing house and the hipped roof for the stairwell along the length of the structure. The scheme with the flatter roof in the rear does not work well. Scheme C is a cleaner design - the elevation relates to the architecture of the house and there are matching rooflines. The DRC discussed the angle of the sun and thought that the increase in the roof height might not effect the light in the neighbor's backyard. Photos of the garden at different times of day would help to show what currently blocks the light and what the effect would be.

A light color for the exterior of the building may help to increase the reflection of light onto the neighboring properties.

The DRC agreed that this project is improving the architecture and life safety of the building.

The next meeting will take place on April 24 at 6:30pm.