



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

10 Washington Street

February 16, 2022

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via GoToWebinar on November 23, 2021 and February 1, 2022 to review a **4-story Commercial Building** proposed at 10 Washington Street in the Commercial Industry (CI) zoning district of the Innerbelt/East Somerville neighborhood of Somerville. The purpose of design review, as established by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, is for peers in the professional design community to provide advice and recommendations during the schematic design phase of the architectural design process. In accordance with the UDC's adopted Rules of Procedure and Section 15.1.4 Design Review of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, this recommendation includes, at least, the following:

1. Identification of the preferred schematic design option
2. Identification if applicable design guidelines are satisfied
3. Guidance and recommended modifications to address any design issues or concerns

Design review was conducted over the course of two meetings and the Commission guided the Applicant through various recommendations and suggestions to the applicants preferred façade design concepts. Recommendations that were incorporated into the design through the review process included the following:

- Coordinate design choices for streetscape details and materials with abutting projects at Roland and Crescent Streets.
- Consider creating usable green spaces around the building, using seating, raised planters and other details.
- Consider the corner of Innerbelt and Washington as a more appropriate location for the building entrance, welcoming those walking from Union Square, rather than driving from other directions.

Following a presentation of the design by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the Commercial Industry (CI) zoning district, the Commission provided the following final guidance and recommended modifications:

- Add streetscape details along Roland Street to match the design on the opposite side, including plantings and street trees, even if Roland Street is to be designated an alley. Streetscape designs should complement those chosen for adjacent buildings.

- Incorporate a higher percentage of native plantings within the overall planting palette.
- Rework the cornice of the glazing inserts to match or be lower than those for the brick at the top of the building.
- The “false” windows on the Crescent Street façade need further detailing and development.
- Metal screening used at the roof to enclose the mechanical equipment should be of a dark colored material.
- The curved wood bench at the corner of Inner Belt Road and Washington Street be set back to ensure a more usable experience.

The Commission voted unanimously (3-0, with Commissioner Valdez absent) to recommend approving façade option 4 for further development at their November 23, 2021 meeting. At their February 1, 2022 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to indicate their preference for a lobby entrance facing Crescent Street and perpendicular to Washington Street, voted unanimously (4-0) to apply the additional design guidance listed above, and voted unanimously (4-0) that the design guidelines for the Commercial Industry zoning district were satisfied.

Attest, by the voting membership:

Tim Talun
Deborah Fennick
Andrew Arbaugh
Frank Valdes

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Sarah Lewis
Luisa Oliveira



Sarah Lewis,
UDC Co-Chair
Director of Planning & Zoning

Façade Evolution



Inner Belt Rd at Washington St – 11/23/21



Washington St – 11/23/21



Inner Belt Rd at Washington St – 1/11/22



Washington St – 1/11/22

Items of Remaining Concern

Washington Street entry



Blank "false" windows at Crescent Street



10 Washington Street – P&Z #21-134

Urban Design Review Report

The Project team met with the Urban Design Commission on November 23, 2021, and February 1, 2022. The following provides a summary of the UDC's key recommendations and a description of any changes to the proposed development made because of the feedback.

- **Comment:** Coordinate design choices for streetscape details and materials with abutting projects on Roland and Crescent Streets.
 - **Response:** The project team has agreed to make best efforts to match the previous paver details in the perimeter furnishing zones along Innerbelt & Washington Street with those used by the project at 20 Innerbelt Rd.
- **Comment:** Consider creating usable green spaces around the building, using seating, raised planters, and other details.
 - **Response:** The project team has implemented useable green space at both the main building entrance and at the corner of Innerbelt Rd. and Washington St. The corner greenspace also incorporates public facing seating.
- **Comment:** Consider the corner of Innerbelt and Washington as a more appropriate location for the building entrance, welcoming those walking from Union Square rather than driving from other directions.
 - **Response:** The location of the building's core does not allow for a movement of the lobby to this location. Additionally, the lobby is located to encourage pedestrian traffic from the Sullivan Square Orange Line and Bus Stations, which are a substantially shorter walk than to Union Square.
- **Comment:** Add streetscape details along Roland Street to match the design on the opposite side, including plantings and street trees, even if Roland Street is to be designated an alley.
 - **Response:** Due to the pre-approved thoroughfare right-of-way width, the 10 Washington Street project does not have the ability to adjust the sidewalk design approved by the 20 Innerbelt Road project. Additionally, the landscape architect has determined that the shade cast on Roland by the 20 Innerbelt Project would significantly limit the feasible growing space along Roland Street. The project team has increased the number of proposed street trees along both Washington Street and Innerbelt Road.
- **Comment:** Incorporate a higher percentage of native plantings within the overall planting palette.

- **Response:** The project team has adjusted the planting plan to include species native to the immediate ecosystem. The project team has also increased the number of proposed street trees along both Washington Street and Innerbelt Road.
- **Comment:** Rework the cornice of the glazing inserts to match or be lower than those for the brick at the top of the building.
 - **Response:** The cornice has been reworked to fall in-line with the brick portions of the façade. This change is reflected in the project's renderings
- **Comment:** The "false" windows on the Crescent Street façade need further detailing and development.
 - **Response:** The project team has provided additional detailing for the false windows along Crescent Street, and will make best efforts to ensure that those architectural features are as close to the condition of the building's other fenestration as possible.
- **Comment:** Metal screening used at the roof to enclose the mechanical equipment should be of a dark colored material.
 - **Response:** The project team has agreed to ensure that the rooftop screening material will be a dark material. This change is reflected in the project's renderings.
- **Comment:** The curved wood bench at the corner of Inner Belt Road and Washington Street be set back to ensure a more usable experience.
 - **Response:** The bench located at the Innerbelt Road and Washington Street corner has been set back to ensure anyone sitting on the bench does not obstruct the sidewalk walkway. This change is reflected in the plans and renderings.