

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

270 Elm Street

May 26, 2022

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via GoToWebinar on March 1, 2022 and April 12, 2022 to review a **Civic Space (Through Block Plaza)** proposed at 270 Elm Street in the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) zoning district. 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 (2) meetings and the Commission provided the Applicant with various recommendations and suggestions on the Applicant's preferred façade design concepts. Recommendations that were incorporated into the design through the review process included the following:

- The design should be broken apart from the linearity of the current design to allow for more community/gathering spaces.
- The seating/benches should be arranged to allow for people to face each other.
- Red bricks should be incorporated into the design of the space.
- The design should be further programmed to activate the space.
- The Applicant should work with Public Space and Urban Forestry (PSUF) Division on selection of the types of trees that would best fit the space.
- A trash/recycle solar compactor is a requirement pursuant to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The Applicant should add the compactor to meet the requirement.

Following a presentation of the design by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the Commercial Core 4 (CC4) zoning district, the Commission provided the following final guidance and recommended modifications:

- The reconfiguration of the benches facing Elm Street to wrap around the perimeter of the planter to create connected gathering spaces.
- Provide additional details on catenary lighting, including fixture density and the type of fixtures prior to the Planning Board.
- Refinement of sculptural art and commitment to an artist

On April 12, 2022, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend approving option 1 with the following modifications: articulated planter, all concrete cast in place through the plaza, and pervious pavers in the field area only. On April 12, 2022, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) that the applicable design guidelines (Through Block Plaza) were satisfied. The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to incorporate additional design guidelines (listed above).

Attest, by the voting membership:

Tim Talun
Deborah Fennick
Frank Valdes
Tim Houde
Cherri Ruane

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Sarah Lewis
Cortney Kirk, Acting Co
Chair



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

Plaza Evolution

Option: 01



Option: 02



Option: 03



March 1, 2022



Approved Iteration - April 12, 2022

APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Through Block Plaza			
LANGUAGE	SATISFIED?	PRIORITY?	NOTES
Adjacent buildings should provide ground level spaces fronting onto the through block plaza for commercial uses including, but not limited to, the arts & creative enterprise, eating & drinking, and retail use categories.	YES (5-0)		
Exterior walls fronting onto the through block plaza should meet the ground story fenestration and blank wall standards for the appropriate building type to every extent practicable.	YES (5-0)		
Upper story balconies and terraces overlooking the through block plaza are encouraged for adjacent buildings	YES (5-0)		