

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

256-260 Elm Street

May 26, 2022

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via GoToWebinar on March 1, 2022, April 12, 2022, and April 26, 2022 to review a **Lab Building** proposed at 256-260 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 three (3) 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 Commission requested the building design on the ground-floor be further integrated with the public realm on Elm Street to create a more welcoming retail space.
- The rear and front façade of the building design be differentiated. The rear façade on Herbert Street should be reduced in scale.
- The band that separates the ground floor from the second floor and wraps around the building should not be continuous and further developed to allow for individual retail storefront signage.
- The façade's terracotta cladding should be further developed to read as a screen.

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:

- On the rear façade facing Herbert Street, investigate the terracotta cladding coming down towards the ground level.
- Study whether a granite base at the base of the piers would work for this design.

On April 12, 2022, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend approving façade option 3 with the terracotta cladding. On April 26, 2022, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) that the applicable design guidelines (Commercial Core 4) were satisfied. The Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to incorporate additional design

guidelines (listed above). Commission member Frank Valdes was absent at the second meeting and did not take part in the vote.

Attest, by the voting membership:

Tim Talun
Deborah Fennick
Tim Houde
Frank Valdes
Andrew Arbaugh

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Sarah Lewis
Cortney Kirk, Acting Co-Chair



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

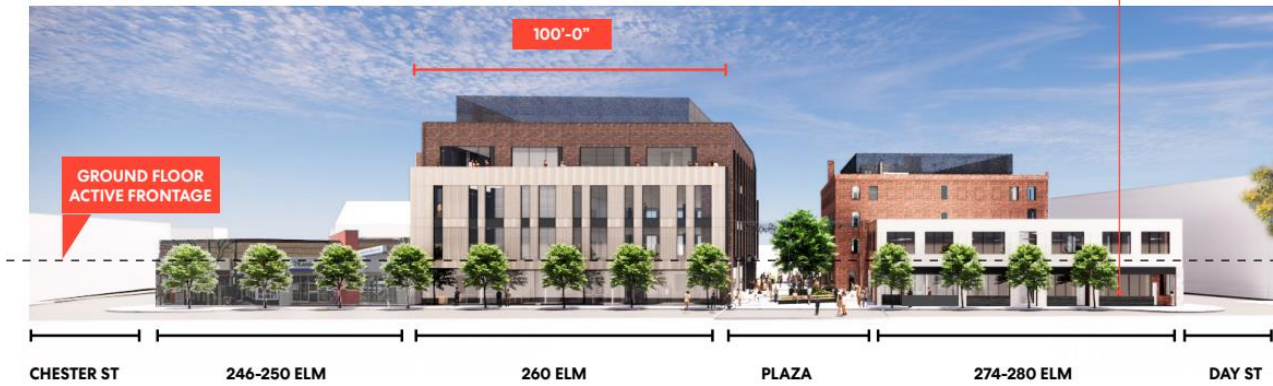
Façade Evolution



March 1, 2022



April 12, 2022



Approved Façade – April 26, 2022

APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

CC4 – Commercial Core 4			
LANGUAGE	SATISFIED?	PRIORITY?	NOTES
Facades should be visually divided into a series of architectural bays that are derived, in general, from the building's structural bay spacing	YES (5-0)		
Piers, pilasters, or other features defining each architectural bay should either extend all the way to the ground or terminate at any horizontal articulation defining the base of the building	YES (5-0)		
Architectural bays should align, in general, with individual or groups of storefronts and lobby entrances.	YES (5-0)		
Piers, pilasters, or other features defining each architectural bay should always project forward and be uninterrupted by any horizontal articulation, excluding any horizontal articulation used to differentiate the base of the building.	YES (5-0)		
The facade of buildings with five (5) or more stories should be visually divided into, at least, a horizontal tripartite division (a base, middle, and top). The horizontal divisions may not shift up or down across the width of the facade.	YES (5-0)		
Vents, exhausts, and other utility features on building facades should be architecturally integrated into the design of the building and should be located to minimize adverse effects on pedestrian comfort along sidewalks and within open spaces.	YES (5-0)		
Buildings at terminated vistas should be articulated with design features that function as focal points.	YES (5-0)		
Fenestration glazing should be inset from the plane of exterior wall surfaces	YES (5-0)		
Ribbon windows should be avoided.	YES (5-0)		
Monotonous and repetitive storefront or lobby systems, awnings, canopies, sign types, colors, or designs should be avoided.	YES (5-0)		
Storefronts and lobby entrances should include awnings or canopies to provide weather protection for pedestrians and reduce glare for storefront display areas. Awnings should be open-ended and operable.	YES (5-0)		
Lobby entrances for upper story uses should be optimally located, well defined, clearly visible, and separate from the entrance for other ground story uses.	YES (5-0)		

CC4 – Commercial Core 4			
LANGUAGE	SATISFIED?	PRIORITY?	NOTES
Lobbies should be limited in both width and total area to preserve floor space and frontage for other ground story uses. Buildings should use any combination of facade articulation, a double-height ceiling, a distinctive doorway, a change in wall material, a change in paving material within the frontage area, or some other architectural element(s) to make lobbies visual and materially distinctive.	YES (5-0)		
The selection of materials, fenestration, and ornamentation should result in a consistent and harmonious composition that appears as a unified whole rather than a collection of unrelated parts	YES (5-0)		
The type and color of materials should be kept to a minimum, preferably three (3) or fewer	YES (5-0)		
Two (2) or more wall materials should be combined only one above the other, except for bay windows	YES (5-0)		
Wall materials appearing heavier in weight should be used below wall materials appearing lighter in weight (wood and metal above brick, and all three above stone).	YES (5-0)		
Horizontal or vertical board siding or shingles, regardless of material, should be avoided.	YES (5-0)		
Architectural details and finish materials for the base of a building should be constructed of architectural concrete or pre-cast cementitious panels, natural or cast stone, heavy gauge metal panels, glazed or unglazed architectural terracotta, or brick.	YES (5-0)		
Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) should be avoided.	YES (5-0)		
Mechanical penthouses and screening should be located to minimize adverse environmental impacts on civic spaces, sidewalks, and abutting lots	YES (5-0)		
Vents, stacks, railings, and other components of mechanical equipment required to be outdoors or to project above a penthouse should be limited in height and located toward the center of the roof to every extent practicable	YES (5-0)		