

**LAW OFFICES of
RICHARD G. Di GIROLAMO**
Attorneys at Law
424 Broadway
Somerville, MA 02145
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Richard G. Di Girolamo  
Anne M. Vigorito, Of Counsel

Tel: (617) 666-8200  
Fax (617) 776-5435

Breanna Rolland, Of Counsel  
Kendall Curro, Paralegal

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November 29, 2023

City of Somerville  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

**RE: 2-4 Alpine Street, Somerville, Massachusetts – Development Narrative**

The site located at 2-4 Alpine Street is approximately 7,587 square feet and is located in a MR4 Zoning District. The site currently houses a two (2) story commercial masonry building. The building type for this proposed development will be a general building.

The proposed development will be four (4) stories, with 1,384 square feet of commercial space on the first floor. There will be twenty-six (26) residential units comprised of twenty-two (22) one-bedroom units, three (3) two-bedroom units, one (1) studio unit. The proposed development includes thirty (30) long-term and five (5) short-term bicycle parking spaces.



City of Somerville

## URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

### **DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION**

#### **2-4 Alpine Street**

March 1, 2022

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via GoToWebinar on January 11, 2022, February 1, 2022, and March 1, 2022 to review a **4-story General Building** proposed at 2-4 Alpine Street in the Mid-Rise 4 zoning district in the Magoun Square 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 three meetings and the Commission guided the Applicant through various recommendations and suggestions on the applicants preferred façade design concepts. Recommendations that were incorporated into the design through the review process included the following:

- Increase the setbacks to allow for outdoor seating along the bike path and Cedar Street as a café/restaurant right on the community path.
- Remove the bike racks from the side of the building fronting onto the bike path.
- Design the commercial space to better embrace the community path.
- Further develop the cornice bands on the bays along Cedar Street to match the cornice bands on the bays along Alpine Street.

Following a presentation of the updated design by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the Mid Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district, the Commission provided the following final guidance and recommended modifications:

- Add the Cedar Street bay back into the design unless unfeasible as coordinated with Eversource.
- Explore providing resident long term bike parking in a more usable location at the ground level.

The Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend approving Façade Option 2 and made additional comments regarding further development of the scheme to meet the district's design guidelines. At their March 1, 2022 meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) that all design guidelines for the MR4 district had been satisfied and the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to prioritize design guideline E of the MR4 District. Finally, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to include the additional design guidance listed above in their recommendation.

Attest, by the voting membership:

Tim Talun  
Deborah Fennick  
Tim Houde  
Frank Valdes

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Sarah Lewis  
Luisa Oliveira



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

## APPLICABLE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

| MR4– Mid-Rise 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Architectural bays should align, in general, with individual or groups of storefronts and lobby entrances.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) | Yes       |       |
| Buildings at terminated vistas should be articulated with design features that function as focal points.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Fenestration glazing should be inset from the plane of exterior wall surfaces.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Ribbon windows should be avoided.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Monotonous and repetitive storefront or lobby systems, awnings, canopies, sign types, colors, or designs should be avoided.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |

| MR4– Mid-Rise 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |              |           |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| LANGUAGE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | SATISFIED?   | PRIORITY? | NOTES |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| The type and color of materials should be kept to a minimum, preferably three (3) or fewer.                                                                                                                                                                    | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Two (2) or more wall materials should be combined only one above the other, except for bay windows.                                                                                                                                                            | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Horizontal or vertical board siding or shingles, regardless of material, should be avoided.                                                                                                                                                                    | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| 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<br>(4-0) |           |       |
| Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) should be avoided.                                                                                                                                                                                               | YES<br>(4-0) |           |       |

### Façade Evolution



Cedar Street at Alpine Street – 01/11/2022



Cedar Street at Alpine St – 02/01/2022



Alpine Street – 02/01/2022

## Items of Remaining Concern

Incorporating the Cedar Street bay, and more long-term resident bicycle parking in an accessible location

