



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

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

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

181 Pearl Street

December 10, 2024

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via Zoom on September 10, 2024, and October 8, 2024, to review an apartment building proposed at 181 Pearl St in the MR3 zoning district of the Winter Hill 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 Policy 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. At the meeting on September 10, 2024, Andrew Arbaugh, Deborah Fennick, Tim Talun, and Frank Valdes, were present. At the meeting on October 8, 2024, Deborah Fennick, Tim Talun, and Frank Valdes were present. At the meeting on October 10, 2024, recommendations that were incorporated into the design through the review process included: improving the landscape and streetscape to better integrate them the architecture, redesign the metal panels on the façade for a more elegant appearance, increasing the variation of the West façade, improvements to the entrance to the site that align with the stoop culture of the neighborhood highlighted, consideration for additional colors for the recessed balconies, and redesigning the roof to support future PV.

Following a presentation by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the MR3 district, the Commission provided the following final guidance and recommended modifications:

1. The continued evaluation of how light can be integrated into the entrance and the canopy
2. Continued evaluation of the materials of the canopy
3. A condition requiring the review of materials prior to submission of application for a Building Permit.

On September 10, 2024, Commissioner Valdes made a motion to recommend approving façade option 1, incorporating the guidance and modifications listed above. Commissioner Fennick seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (3-0).

On October 8, 2024, Commissioner Valdes made a motion that the design guidelines for MR3 district have been met. Commissioner Fennick seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (3-0).

On October 8, 2024, Commissioner Valdes made a motion to approve the additional design guidance listed above to be incorporated into the final design. Commissioner Fennick seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (3-0-).

Attest, by the voting membership:

Andrew Arbaugh
Deborah Fennick
Tim Talun

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Emily Hutchings, Acting Co-Chair



Sarah Lewis,
UDC Co-Chair

Preferred façade option (Option 1):

