



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

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

DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

44 White Street

February 4, 2025

The Urban Design Commission (UDC) met virtually via Zoom on January 14, 2025, and January 28, 2025, to review an **Apartment Building Type** proposed at 44 White Street in the MR4 zoning district of the Porter 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 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 January 14, 2025, Andrew Arbaugh, Deborah Fennick, Tim Talun, and Frank Valdes were present.

Following a presentation by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines for the MR4 district, the Commission voted on the preferred facade option for further refinement. The areas for further study included:

- Change the balcony railing material (not glass)
- Add planting at street in required 12' setback from curb and include street trees
- Make the vehicular garage door more opaque
- Verify building code and need for Passive House compliance as will affect window sizes and overall design
- Depth of overhang at balconies and across the front of the bays should be adjusted due to concern for snow collection
- Enlarge pergola and engage with design of headhouse more and change material to recess

Commissioner Deborah Fennick made a motion to recommend approving massing/façade Option 3, incorporating the guidance and modifications listed above. Commissioner Frank Valdes seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (4-0) and the project was continued to the next meeting.

At the meeting on January 28, 2025, Andrew Arbaugh, Deborah Fennick, Tim Talun, and Frank Valdes were present. Following a presentation by the Applicant and review of the design guidelines, the Commission determined that the design guidelines had been met and recommended additional design guidance which included:

- Integrate the volume of elevator/stair head house design with the pergola similar to the way the balconies engage with the bays
- Change the headhouse cladding to a darker specular metal finish that matches the pergola's color
- Update the balcony railings to ensure they are clearly visible as metal with horizontal cables, not glass
- Incorporate snow guards into the projecting band running across the bays
- Explore options for a perforated metal garage door to enhance sidewalk aesthetics and allow for air movement
- Redesign the green roof to be larger, have a more intentional relationship with the roof deck, and serve as an amenity for residents
- Include a street tree at the ground level during the Planning Board review

Commissioner Tim Talun made a motion that the design guidelines for the MR4 district have been met. Commissioner Andrew Arbaugh seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (4-0).

Commissioner Andrew Arbaugh made a motion that the additional design guidance as noted above be included in the recommendation. Commissioner Deborah Fennick seconded. Motion was approved unanimously (4-0).

Attest, by the voting membership:

Andrew Arbaugh
Deborah Fennick
Tim Talun
Frank Valdes

Attest, by the meeting Co-Chairs:

Dan Bartman
Luisa Oliveira

Preferred façade option (Option 3):

Note: Aluminum reglet to receive the panels must be the corner detail, shown above, and exposed foundation must be enclosed by panels as shown below

