



KHALSA DESIGN INCORPORATED
Architecture & Urban Planning

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TO: **City of Somerville**
Office of Strategic Planning and
Community Development
93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143
(617)-625-6600

DATE: 08-12-2021

FROM: Will Chalfant
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RE: Design Review Report for 371 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA

To Whom it may concern,

The proposed project first went before the Urban Design Commission (UDC) on October 9th, 2020. At this meeting we presented 3 options where the two “halves” of the building were clearly different in both style and aesthetic. The Design approach for this meeting was to have the left side of the proposal read as a traditional masonry building while the right side would read as a building that was added years later. Original designs done prior to the new zoning ordinance being passed portrayed a singular style for the entire façade. The new Zoning changed that. Below are the three options presented to the board.



Option 1

CC: File



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Option 2



Option 3

UDC staff agreed that the two halves of the building were fighting with each other and that while the building needed to read as two structures, the two structures needed to compliment each other. Our directive was to go with two “halves” that were either both contemporary, or both traditional, but not one of each. The feedback was to tie the two buildings together in some manner, use the same material on all four sides of the building, draw less attention to the garage entry along Highland. Lastly, while the buildings need to read as separate, the style and form should relate to each other and reference the program element. (Retail/ Residential Entry etc.)



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Meeting #2

In November of 2020 the UDC heard us again. Now with marching orders, the exterior was completely revamped. The result was a building that read as two separate buildings and had a simplified palette of materials and colors. The garage entry was now treated to read as storefront along with recessing the door slightly to provide more space for pedestrians. Both “halves” of the building are adorned in masonry detailing, providing texture that had previously been lacking. The Commercial corner of the building has been given more prominence to visitors coming along Highland Ave. from Davis Square. Lastly, the entire building is now masonry, providing a continuous material palette opposed to the previous iterations. Two color options were presented to the board at this hearing.



View of proposed building along Highland Ave



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View of proposed building coming from Davis Square



Color Option 2



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Meeting #3

December 2020 was our last meeting with the UDC. At this meeting the design presented before the Planning Board was finalized. The strong metal panel element that had previously separated the two “halves” has been revised to be masonry. The prominent cornice has been subdued slightly, while the texture added has remained. On the second half of the building the main entry has been clearly identified with a vertical picture frame which turns into a canopy. The masonry bays have had their cornices reduced to simplify the design and relate to the subtle but elegant masonry details for the first half. Storefront divisions are now uniform along the ground level, tying the two together while shielding the garage entry and maintain two separate building halves. This is the final design we have arrived at.



View along Highland Avenue



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View of proposed building coming from Davis Square

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