

MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Hearing
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting

Present:

David Roache
Bryan Thorp
Chris Coughlin
Daniel Gelormini
Benjamin Rosenberg

Absent: Jeffery Ugino, Raj Singh

Staff Present: Lori Massa, Director and City Planner, & Adam Forrester, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting was conducted via remote participation. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting were found on the City of Melrose's website, at www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public could adequately access the proceedings in real time, or in the event that we are unable to do so, on the mmtv3.org website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings was posted as soon as possible after the meeting. A link was also available on www.cityofmelrose.org.

Application materials were posted to the City's website: www.cityofmelrose.org/board-appeals.

CASES BEFORE THE BOARD

21 003 - 12-16 Essex Street – review of exterior building materials and colors related to condition of Comprehensive Permit approval

Dana Lopez, Wakefield Associates Inc., appeared before the Board to present an update on the 12-16 Essex Street project.

Mr. Lopez presented an overview of the proposed exterior building materials and colors for this project. There is a physical mockup of the materials onsite that Board members reviewed ahead of the meeting.

The material presented were the following:

- Cement board system used (material, size, joint system, color).
- Panels are hardi plank material. Material is smooth.

- Detailing of the panels.
- Historical colors have been selected.
- Color and thickness of the brick proposed for the first floor.

Board Members questions/comments focused on:

- The colors used are not right for the area. The design should be updated to use colors that blend in with the buildings in the Downtown area (Tans, blues, blacks, etc., no reds or yellows)
- The architectural style should complement the buildings in the Downtown Melrose Historic District.
- Joints for white panels and color panels should be similar size. Joints shown on plans do not match.
- The design of the panels on the plan is not how it will look in execution.
- There is a mix of too many architectural styles. The design would be better if the design of all sides were more consistent.
- Use more vertical elements to break up the large wall.
- Are there textured materials available for the paneling?
- How are the panels fastened to the building?
- If the brick is the lighter brick option, mortar color should be closer to the color of the bricks.

Mr. Lopez went over more detail about how the exterior material will be installed on the building. He went into detail on how the panels will be fastened and how the half-thickness brick is attached to the building.

Ms. Massa, Director and City Planner, shared an overview of the original design of the building that the Board asked to be updated to visually breakup the western wall. The Board requested a revised design for the wall that is more cohesive with the other sides of the building.

The Board asked Mr. Lopez to update the exterior design of the building. The Board asked for the following design updates to be made:

- Choose one cohesive color palette. Currently, there are too many colors.
- The back of the building can be clapboard with the exception of the vertical nickel gap at the decks. It is only minimally visible due to the proximity of the abutting building.
- Change the right-side elevation to similar materials and details as shown on the rest of the building.
- The brick material should be the darker red color over the lighter brick color.
- Provide the grout color on the brick mockup that will be used.
- Change the clapboard in the corner towers to panels.

Mr. Lopez will reach out to the architect about the requested changes and an updated plan will be sent to the ZBA for review when ready. The ZBA will discuss the updated plan at a future meeting.

Documents:

Updated Architectural Plans dated 1.11.24
Photos of on-site mockup

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2025.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm