

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Design Review Subcommittee

Monday, May 15, 2024

7:00 PM

Cassidy Conference Room, City Hall, 562 Main Street, Melrose

PRESENT: Carla Morelli, Michael Aveni, Paul King, & Tim Bailey

ABSENT: Jack Welch

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Massa, Senior Planner & Maya Noviski, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Carla Morelli Chair of the Design Review Subcommittee.

Case 22-009, 14-24 Tremont Street

Michael Lawson, Architect, David Lucas, Attorney, Greg Wilson, Landscape Architect, and Greg Young, Developer, appeared before the Board. Mr. Lawson reviewed changes to the plans since the Planning Board hearing. He explained that a stairway was added at the back of the outdoor amenity area to add a second means of egress. He noted that to comply with the building code, a lit gravel or grass path may need to wrap around from the back of the building to the front. There will be a brick wall along the back of the building to screen the pool from the railroad and the top will have architectural glass railings.

Details were added to the roof plan including the location of the heat pumps, which will be grouped along the corridors of the building to help with sound attenuation and reduce visibility. The units chosen will be taller than the previous ones shown--48 versus 53 inches tall-- and will sit on 18-inch vibration isolators. Mr. Lawson noted that a sound analysis will be conducted to ensure compliance with the noise ordinance. He showed a site line diagram that illustrates that the HVAC units will not be visible from the street. There will be two taller units at 72 inches that will be located by the elevator overruns so that they are partially screened by the elevators. The roof will be solar ready, and the Applicant is working with consultants to identify how many solar panels would be needed to provide enough power to the building. They will not move the HVAC units to a more visible location to accommodate space for the solar panels. The building is proposed to be all electric but there will be a gas generator at the end of the driveway for emergencies.

A precast panel or block wall is proposed along the driveway; however, the final product is still under review and will be submitted to the Subcommittee. The wall must have narrow footings and due to the changes in grade, will need to retain the earth in some spots and be above grade in others, which makes the wall selection more challenging. The retaining wall down by the trash pickup area will be brick.

Mr. Lawson reviewed the proposed exterior materials. He explained that the MBTA requires that the Applicant install a fence along the rear property line, which is proposed to be 6 ft. tall and made from galvanized chain link. The front canopy is pre-manufactured and will cantilever out over the entryway. The address sign for the building will have metal backing with metal letters. The lighting around the building will be cast downward. The lights on the sides of the building will be operated by tenants and the lights in front will be operated by the building managers.

Mr. Lawson noted that the units are designed to maximize natural sunlight. It was confirmed that there will not be additional storage space for tenants in the building.

Mr. Wilson explained that a mix of cobblestones and unitized pavers are proposed for the front driveway and the loading zone. The Subcommittee members requested that two tones of pavers are used instead of just one. There will be four bike racks in front of the building and black bollard lights. They preferred the bollards flat tops. The amenity space will have a concrete base with a turf panel, planting beds, a shade structure and pool, and planter walls. The landscaping plan includes a variety of seasonal plants and public benches along Tremont Street.

Members liked the different colored cobblestones and the black powder coated public benches. Members were supportive of the landscaping plan and the design of the building and did not have any comments or suggestions.

The Subcommittee will review the mockup of materials when it is ready and any changes to the plans that may arise during the next phases of the project.

Documents: Belden Brick Sample
Unilock Pavers
Layout and Materials Plan
Landscape Plan
Architectural Plans
Durisol Retaining Wall Designs

Case 23-003, 12-14 Sylvan Street

Sid Gehlot, Applicant, Yael Getz, Architect, and Steve Cefalo, Landscape Designer, appeared before the Board. Ms. Gaetz provided an overview of the design changes since the Planning Board hearing. The stone veneer was removed from the porches and the bases are now lattice rather than stone. The porch columns and roofs were also updated, and the wood will be composite. The awnings over the garage doors were removed and replaced with downlighting. The window along the staircase on Unit 3 was also modified.

Ms. Gaetz explained that there are three exterior light fixtures per unit that will be downcast. The windows will be double hung and will have black frames with white PVC trim around them. The siding will be vinyl and there will be two different colors; two of the units will be one color and the other two will be a different color. The roof will have charcoal shingles and there will be two garden beds with day lilies in the driveway area.

The Design Review Subcommittee requested that the Applicant change the lattice at the base of porch base to a different material and move forward with the original porch design with the double columns and the arched roof. The stone could be replaced with railings. The decking and porch ceiling are a different color, which is a nice contrast. The door could be a different color than the trim or window although it is not necessary. Members also liked the original awnings over the garages and suggested that the Applicant should consider putting them back but that was less of a concern because they are internal to the site. The exterior lights on the sides and rear of the building should be downlit only.

Members asked about the fence and Ms. Gaetz explained that the existing fence along the rear property line is a 6 ft. white vinyl solid fence which will be continued along the sides of the property. A double fence will not be installed along the rear property line where the existing fence is located. Members recommended that the fence follow the property lines until it is in line with the front of the building at which point it could turn in to screen the yards of the two front units. Gates could be added to allow access to all the yards for landscapers and others. Members also recommended adding a door from inside of the garage to the yard and adding shrubs between each unit's yard instead of fencing. Members suggested shifting the HVAC units for Units 2 and 3 away from Units 1 and 4 so that they are not clustered to mitigate noise impacts and adding vegetative screening for the residents. The team confirmed that a transformer is not needed on the site.

Members requested that the Applicant provide the specifications for the vinyl siding. Mr. Cefalo also noted that he will review the landscaping plan with the neighbors and will present an updated version at a following meeting.

The Subcommittee will find a time to meet again to review these requested changes when the revised plans are submitted.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.