

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Design Review Subcommittee

Thursday, May 29, 2025

7:00 PM

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

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

ABSENT: None

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Carla Morelli Chair of the Design Review Subcommittee.

Case 22-002, 453-463 Franklin Street

Sammy Patel, Commercial Tenant, and Robert Johnson, Owner, appeared before the Subcommittee. Mr. Patel presented two different designs for the retail sign, which will read Franklin Market Wine & Spirits. One is a black aluminum panel with white letters and one is a white aluminum panel with black letters. The sign is proposed to be attached to the canopy with brackets which is above the entrance to the retail space. The letters are proposed to be raised and 0.5 inches thick. The sign is proposed to be 18 sf.

Members preferred the black sign with white letters and wondered if it would be lit. Mr. Patel explained that the sign will not be internally illuminated. Mr. Johnson noted that 3-4 inch can, or puck lights can be installed inside the canopy to shine over the entrance and sign and the electrical wiring will not be visible. Members agreed that the proposed sign location is optimal since there is limited space on the building given the location of the gooseneck lights in the typical sign band space above the storefront. The Board asked if there would be signs in the windows. A rendering of window signs was presented, which included lettering at the bottom of the windows. Members said that the graphics must be installed on the inside of the glass and not comprise more than 30% of the window area per the zoning. The Applicant may want to include the name of the business as a window sign to have visibility for those heading west on the Franklin Street.

Mr. Johnson provided an update on the outstanding items requiring Design Review Subcommittee approval. He presented pictures of the raised granite planter along Franklin St., which has perennial plantings, and the landscaped bed along the northern side of the building which has shade tolerant plants. He explained that because of the rate at which water travels down the driveway, the bed has crushed stone rather than mulch since the mulch would spill out of the bed during heavy rain.

Mr. Johnson also discussed the screening of the rooftop units, which are about 50-60 inches tall. He explained that the screening is challenging because the roof is made of rubber and he does not want to penetrate it or go through the insulation. He presented a rendering showing intermittent walls, set in from the edge of the roof and in front of groups of condenser units. He suggested that the screening be made of Hardie Board or EIFS and have similar detailing to either the top or bottom of the building. He worried that solid panels would pose a greater safety hazard if there were strong winds.

Members agreed that the screening should be the same color as the top floor and should not be taller than the units. Members wondered if there could be a black box around each group of units and Mr. Johnson commented that that would violate clearance requirements for the units; however, there are movable systems that could work. Some members felt that continuous screening was preferable to intermittent screening. One Member suggested a screening system with black metal slats rather than panels.

Members requested that Mr. Johnson provide an updated plan for the screening and renderings of the building with a view of the roof from five feet off the ground.

Documents: Retail Sign Elevations & Renderings
 Pictures of Raised Planter & Landscaped Bed

Case 22-008, 31-39 West Wyoming Avenue

Phil Tarabelsi, Architect, and Sathuan Sa, Owner, appeared before the Subcommittee. Mr. Tarabelsi presented the proposed materials and colors for the building. He explained that the base will be a precast grey limestone. The first floor will be made of a mix of red and orange brick. The siding for the second through the fourth floors will be made of smooth Hardie Plank with an 11-inch exposure. The building will have an alternating color pattern. The proposed colors are Evening Blue and Monterey Toupe. The window trim will be black and made of Hardie Board. There will also be a black matte aluminum frame around some of the windows. The Juliette balconies will have black aluminum railings. There will be a black Hardie Plank underneath a chestnut-colored metal slat for additional detailing underneath the balconies and the windows within the aluminum frames.

There will be square sconces around the first floor of the building and on the exterior side of the retail space underneath the patio. There will also be lighting embedded in the roof above the patio. There will be a storefront window system along West Wyoming Avenue. There is a 3 ft. band between the first and second floors and plans show the address sign on the band on the corner of the building at the intersection of West Wyoming Avenue and Berwick Street. There is also enough space for the retail sign to be located on the band and once a tenant is identified, they will come before the Subcommittee so Members can review the proposed sign.

There are black metal screens attached to the building over the openings on the rear to shield the parking, which is underneath the building.

Members wondered about the material of the roof above the patio on the corner of the building and Mr. Tarabelsi explained that it will be membraned. It was not designed to be accessible for

residents. Members wondered if the rooftop condensers will need screening and Mr. Tarabelsi explained that there are parapets that will screen the units. Members appreciated the use of brick on the first floor and did not recommend any changes to the proposed design or materials of the building.

Members discussed the landscape plan. Members preferred a raised planter along Berwick Street and requested that the benches shown on the renderings and referenced in the decision were added to the landscape plan. Mr. Tarabelsi also noted that the transformer will need to be setback farther away from the building than what was shown on the approved plans. Members discussed the fence along the northern property line and wondered if it is on the subject property or on an abutting property. Mr. Sa was not sure, and Members requested that he provide that information. They were not in favor of the installation of a white vinyl fence on the property line since it does not match the style of the building and installing a vinyl fence next to an existing one is not a good practice. One Member suggested adding a black aluminum gate at the edge of the fence to indicate the limits of the private property.

Documents: Bowerston Brick, Smooth Cherry Flash & Sunfire Flash
 Grey Precast Limestone
 Evening Blue & Monterey Toupe Hardie Plank
 Chestnut-colored Aluminum Slat

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.