

From: Caitlin Cameron
To: Fraser, Jean
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Subject: 118 Congress Street comments - PB hearing 1/28/14

Because of the building's size, design strategies which include variation and articulation are important. I continue to feel, as in my previous comments, that the project is successful in this regard in its use of materials, fenestration, variation in roof line and form, and the incorporation of landscape elements such as green screens and rain gardens. The East and South elevations have improved in response to workshop comments. Staff has two further comments/suggestions regarding 1) Retail storefront and 2) Building overhangs.

The mixed-use project will ideally enhance the street wall with its active retail storefront windows and close proximity to the sidewalk. It is for that reason staff would like to see the retail storefront window returned to the East elevation which has been removed in the latest iteration of the design. For urban design reasons, any additional landscaping would be more appropriate as vertical gardens or in the furnishing zone of the sidewalk along with the street trees rather than adding landscape elements to the retail facades.

In regards to the architectural elements proposed to overhang the public right of way, unlike other exceptions where this kind of easement over the right of way was granted, this project is not limited by site constraints, existing structure, or by maintaining historical character. The articulation of the facade is a benefit to the streetscape and produces a good design that meets the design standards. If the Planning Board decides that the overhangs into the public right-of-way are not appropriate, then staff would encourage the resulting design solution maintain the current quality of design in regards to facade articulation and variation of form.

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