

## Riverside 1 & 2

Newton, MA

01.12.22

### Design Narrative – Schematic Plans Submission – Buildings 1 and 2

*The following narrative describes the design intent of each building, highlighting how the design remains consistent with the Special Permit drawings and Design Guidelines, and how it has advanced to the current, Schematic Plans submission.*

#### General

Building heights remain as submitted in the July 30, 2021 Special Permit documents: Building 1 is 8 stories plus mechanical penthouse and Building 2 is 5 stories plus mechanical penthouse. Total gross zoning area for Buildings 1 and 2 has reduced from 362,235 SF, as filed in the 07.30.21 documents, to 351,087 SF.

Changes are primarily to the exterior architectural expression of the two buildings. The design intentions of these changes are to lighten the visual bulk of each building and to aggregate the exterior terraces with the bridge on level 3, in order to emphasize the physical and programmatic connectivity between the two buildings at that floor. Uniting the double-height bridge and terraces also connects the two buildings compositionally and increases the visual impact of both the terraces and the bridge.

The intentional contrast of the two buildings – in their massing proportions as well as in the material and colors of the architectural frame and its cladding – remains, maintaining an important aspect of the Design Guidelines.

#### Building B1

The development of the exterior expression of Building 1 has advanced, primarily with regard to the material of the architectural frame and the location and articulation of the terraces and amenities on level 3.

The architectural frame will be constructed of off-white terra cotta panels, intended to lighten the visual bulk of the building and to contrast more with the traditional red brick of its residential neighbors. General proportions of the exterior frame remain as previously designed: expressing an 11' lab planning module by two stories, or 29', in height.

The series of vertically proportioned terraces that occurred in different locations on each façade has been consolidated into two large double-height terraces, now located on level 3, one on either side of the connecting bridge. One terrace faces south, toward Building 2, and one faces southeast, toward Research Square. At the southwest corner, facing Route 128, a double-height expanse of curtain wall wraps around the curved corner. On level 3, amenity spaces will be located behind this projecting curtain wall element. By uniting amenity space, terraces and the bridge, all in one horizontal band at level 3, these unique elements have greater visual effect and mutually contribute to the idea of a gateway, an important element of the Design Guidelines.

### **Building B2**

The exterior architectural expression of Building 2 has also been changed to lighten the apparent visual bulk of the building, primarily by eliminating the expression of external lateral structural bracing. (The bracing has been relocated to the building cores, as is more typical.) The proportions of the architectural frame are less horizontal than previous, and now relate to the 33' horizontal structural bay spacing and a two-story vertical dimension of 29'. This almost-square frame proportion further lightens the visual appearance of the frame. Building 2 has retained the use of dark-painted metal cladding, intentionally contrasting with the very light terra cotta cladding of Building 1.

Similar to Building 1, the previous multiple terraces of Building 2 have been consolidated to one large double-height terrace, with associated amenity space, located on level 3. Compositionally, this terrace connects to the bridge and to the terraces of Building 1, creating greater visual effect while emphasizing the programmatic and visual connectivity that has now been concentrated on level 3. In addition to emphasizing the gateway character of the bridge, the location of Building 2's terrace at its northeast corner allows it to enliven and contribute to the green space of Research Square as well as to be a visual terminus to the bent geometry of Main Street – another expressed desire of the Design Guidelines.

The articulation of the top edge of Building 2's penthouse against the sky has been both simplified and visually dematerialized by wrapping it in a serpentine enclosure of perforated metal cladding.

**Bridge**

The bridge design has been both simplified and significantly strengthened. It is expressed as an independent architectural element with material and color connections to both buildings. Its structural framing elements are clad in metal, like Building 2, and that metal cladding is painted off-white, matching the terra cotta color of Building 1. Its supporting columns have moved internal to the glass facades of the bridge. The glazing module of the bridge is 3'-8" on center – tighter, and therefore more vertical, than the 5'-6" module of the building glazing – and this vertical pattern is heightened by the addition of 12" deep vertical fins at every glazing joint.

The glass façade system of the bridge extends in to the building terraces, emphasizing the connection. The consolidated articulation of amenity spaces, terraces, and bridge into one continuous two-story architectural ribbon connecting the east façade of Building 2 to the south façade of Building 1 establishes a strong visual element that ties Main Street to Research Square to Route 128, contributing to Design Guidelines intentions of urban placemaking and arrival.



### Site Narrative – Schematic Plans Submission

*The following narrative describes each building's relationship to its immediate site plan surroundings.*

Buildings 1 and 2 combine to form an urban-scale gateway to the Riverside development. Their commercial scale relates to both the open space dimensions of the Route 128 right-of-way and to the speed of its vehicular traffic, while establishing a significant gateway into Riverside.

The buildings' relationship to Recreation Road is direct and monumental; their relationship to Main Street is urban; their public lobbies orient to the public open space of Research Square; and their service areas are pushed to the north and south.

At their western edge, along the Recreation Road, a linear planting strip at the roadway and a green buffer separate the multi-use pathway from both street and building. Sidewalks along Main Street, between the two buildings, are treated as urban sidewalks, with a planting strip at the curb and generous walkways. The east facades of the two buildings have very different conditions at grade. Building 1 is tight to the street. An arcade separates the building from the

roadway, and creates a protected circulation path that allows views past the east façade of Building 2 and into the edge of Research Square. Building 2, in contrast, fronts directly onto the western side of Research Square.

Entry lobbies are located on the southeast and northeast corners of Buildings 1 and 2, respectively, relating to each other urbanistically while both orienting toward the public open space of Research Square. Building 2 locates its lobby and a potential amenity or retail space directly relating to the length of the green space within the square. The building's loading and service area is located south of that, with access from the hardscaped roadway that is integrated into the landscape of the square. Loading for Building 1 is located on the north, accessed from the service road that connects to the MBTA Riverside maintenance facility.

Exterior terraces will provide desired open space immediately adjacent to tenant space. Locating these terraces and an interconnecting bridge on level 3, above the treetops of the surrounding streets and Research Square, creates a second opportunity for the buildings to participate in the network of urban spaces that will weave Riverside together. This also creates a series of architectural elements that, by being raised up only a few floors, will enhance and contribute to the human scale of Main Street, Research Square, and Route 128.

