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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: **Wednesday, February 2, 2022**

DATE: January 28, 2022

TO: Subcommittee for Riverside Design Consistency Review

FROM: Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer

SUBJECT: Additional Review Information

At its regularly scheduled meeting on January 12, 2022, Urban Design Commission appointed a **Subcommittee for Riverside Design and Plan Consistency Review**. The Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the full Urban Design Commission for final Determination.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the members of the Subcommittee and the public with technical information and planning analysis which may be useful in the review and decision-making process of the Subcommittee. The Department of Planning and Development's intention is to provide a balanced view of the issues with the information it has at the time of the application's review. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the Subcommittee can take into consideration when discussing Riverside Design Consistency.

Dear Subcommittee Members,

The following is a brief discussion of the Riverside Design and Plan Consistency Review of Schematic Plans.

I. Roll Call

II. Regular Agenda

Riverside Design Consistency Review of Schematic Plans

Council Order Background

On September 9, 2021, City Council approved the Riverside Project. A new mixed-use development consisting of not more than 1,025,000 square feet of gross floor area (as such term is defined in Section 4.2.4.G.3) in ten buildings that are designed to maximize the principle of walkability and to create a vibrant, transit-oriented hub.

These buildings incorporate approximately 362,235 square feet of office and/or laboratory/research and development (i.e., life science) space, approximately 550 dwelling units, approximately 21,852 square feet of ground floor commercial space, accessory surface parking, and a multi-level parking facility in Buildings 9 and 10 that will provide parking for MBTA patrons and parking for the Project (the "Parking Garage").

Per the Board Order #27-20(2), general condition #9:

"All buildings, other than the Parking Garage, shall undergo a two- or three-step process set forth in Conditions #9 through 13 for review of each building to ensure the Project is constructed in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, this Amended and Restated Special Permit/Site Plan Approval, and the Design Guidelines.

9. Submission and Review of Schematic Plans

- a. *At the schematic design stage, the Petitioner shall file the following with the Director of Planning and Development and its consultants, the City of Newton's Urban Design Commission (the "UDC"), and the Liaison Committee:*
 - i. *individual building plans consisting of exterior renderings, preliminary building elevations, building footprints, and representative wall sections showing consistency with the Special Permit Plan Set and the Design Guidelines (the "Schematic Plans"); and*
 - ii. *a signed certificate from the Petitioner's architect and/or civil engineer certifying that the Schematic Plans are consistent with the Special Permit Plan Set.*
- b. *Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a complete submission of the materials set forth in Condition #9(a), the Director of Planning and Development will review and provide an opinion as to whether the Schematic Plans are in full compliance with the Special Permit Plan Set and consistent with the Design Guidelines. If the Director of Planning and Development's review requires the input or assistance from a peer review consultant, the Petitioner shall pay the reasonable fees for such peer review. The Director of Planning and Development's opinion shall be submitted in writing to the Petitioner, the Commissioner of Inspectional Services, the City Council, and the Liaison Committee. If it is the Director's opinion that the Schematic Plans are not compliant with the Special Permit Plan Set or inconsistent with the Design Guidelines, such inconsistencies shall be expressly identified.*
- c. *Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a complete submission of the materials set forth in*

Condition #9(a) (and concurrent with the review of the Director of Planning and Development), the UDC, after review of such submission at a public meeting, will provide an opinion as to whether the Schematic Plans are in full compliance with the Special Permit Plan Set and consistent with the Design Guidelines. The Petitioner shall provide the Liaison Committee and the Ward 4 City Councilors with notice of the date of the UDC's public meeting at least 14 days in advance and the UDC should make all efforts to take public comment. The UDC's opinion shall be submitted in writing to the Petitioner, the Commissioner of Inspectional Services, the City Council, and the Liaison Committee. If it is the UDC's opinion that the Schematic Plans are inconsistent with either the Special Permit Plan Set or the Design Guidelines, such inconsistencies shall be expressly identified.

- d. *Upon receipt of the written consistency opinions referenced in Condition #9(b) and (c) above, the Petitioner may proceed to the design development stage. If either the UDC or the Director of Planning issues an opinion that the Schematic Plans are inconsistent with either the Zoning Ordinance, the Special Permit Plan Set, or the Design Guidelines, the Petitioner must submit revised Schematic Plans in accordance with Condition #9(a)."*

Buildings 1-4 Design Consistency Review

The applicant has submitted Schematic Plans for review. The UDC, after review of such submission at a public meeting, is required to provide an opinion as to whether the Schematic Plans are in full compliance with the Special Permit Plan Set and consistent with the Design Guidelines.

The Director of Planning and Development has requested input/assistance from peer review consultant, Form + Place. Please refer to Form + Place's memorandum (**Attachment A**) which provides a high-level commentary on the "consistency" of the project. Staff agrees with Form + Place's comments and recommendations regarding buildings 1-4.

In summary, buildings 1-4 appear to be consistent with the Riverside Special Permit Plan Set and additional design development (as noted in Form + Place's memo) will address specific criteria in the Design Guidelines. The one aspect that does not appear to be consistent is integration of the grand stairway into building 4. Staff seeks recommendation from the Subcommittee regarding buildings 1-4 and the redesigned stair and open space that connects Grove Street to Research Square.

On January 26th, applicant submitted an updated presentation for Buildings 1 and 2 that incorporates minor revisions to what was previously submitted. Specifically, the presentation has slightly adjusted the rendered height of Building 3 as shown in comparison with Buildings 1 and 2 and shows proposed exhaust fan stacks for the buildings on the elevations and renderings. Staff is reviewing the updates and will provide comments on the updates at the meeting on February 2nd. The updated plans can be found at this link:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/80201/637788028803330000>

Documents/Submissions:

All the documents previously submitted about this project can be found at the following link:

<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/planning/development-review/high-interest-projects/riverside-special-permit-2020>

The agenda, staff memo, and packet documents for February 2 and all upcoming Subcommittee meetings will be posted at the above link as well.

Buildings 1 and 2 submissions

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79835/637782846258070000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79839/637782846625270000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79841/637782846780270000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79837/637782846447930000>

Buildings 3 and 4 submissions

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79879/637782847559530000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79877/637782847400600000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79873/637782847056530000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79875/637782847229670000>

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/79881/637782847720670000>

Council Approved Documents

Council Order

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/80101/637787158811970000>

Approved Design Guidelines

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/80111/637787159126670000>

Approved Architectural Plans

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/80105/637787158934470000>

Approved Civil Plan Set

<https://www.newtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/80107/637787159002270000>

Attachments:

Attachment A: Form + Place Memorandum



MEMORANDUM

DATE: 28 January 2022

TO: Neil Cronin, Chief Planner
Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer, Planning & Development Department
Katie Whewell, Senior Planner

FROM: Michael A. Wang, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Form + Place, Inc.
John M. Rufo, AIA, Form + Place, Inc.

RE: **Riverside Station Schematic Design Consistency Review – Buildings 1, 2, 3 & 4**

The following memorandum is intended to provide a high-level commentary on the “consistency” of the Schematic Design packages for Buildings 1-4 at Riverside Station when measured against the architectural plan set entitled “Riverside Master Plan”, dated August 5, 2021, and included as part of Exhibit A in the Recorded Council Order.

In addition, we will offer feedback on the evolution of the exterior design of each building and its potential “consistency” with the Riverside Station Development Design Guidelines, dated August 2021. Compliance with the Design Guidelines will ultimately be judged upon submission of a Design Development package, which will include completion of the Evaluation Template.

The Schematic Design packages being utilized for this review are Elkus Manfredi’s Riverside SD Plan Set, dated January 12, 2022, for Buildings 1 & 2 and the Schwarz / TAT SD Review Plan Set, dated January 18, 2022, for Buildings 3 & 4.

BUILDING 1

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Ground Floor Comparison drawing [PDF P. 7] in the “Buildings 1 & 2” package, dated January 12, 2022, depicts a series of de minimis changes to the Building 1 footprint that are part of the typical design evolution to a building of this nature in this type of proposed context. Most notably, the carving out of a recessed entry on the corner at Main Street, ties in appropriately with the previously proposed loggia along the Road A frontage and serves both to enhance the development’s sense of “gateway” and address Research Square, located diagonally across Main Street. According to the Elkus Manfredi Design Narrative [01.12.22], the combined gross zoning area for Buildings 1 & 2 has been reduced by 11,148sf from 362,235sf to 351,087sf.

Building Height [157.6’], as well as the number of proposed floors [8 stories + PH], have remained unchanged from the design presented on July 30, 2021. It is worth noting that the façade treatment of the penthouse levels gives the appearance that the building is in fact nine (9) stories in height, as the

lower PH level is clad in the same architectural style and materials as the eight (8) stories below. This architectural approach should help to visually reduce the scale of the mechanical penthouse levels, but it will be important to understand more about the treatment of the glazing at the lower penthouse level, such as whether it is intended to be vision glass or spandrel glass and how the lighting will be handled at this level, relative to the floors below.

DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMENTS

Buildings and Urban Design

Building 1 seems appropriately scaled for its role as a “gateway” building to the development. The vertical emphasis of the façade design is consistent with its role as a signature building, given that it is fronting on the Route 128 corridor and will be seen from a distance. As one approaches the development from the west, larger architectural moves – a double-height terrace at the 3rd & 4th levels and the connecting bridge element - reinforce the sense of gateway and create a clear sense of a “base” for the building that helps with the transition to the important pedestrian environment along Main Street and in Research Square. The new recessed entry area at the corner provides welcomed relief to the pedestrian environment in an area that likely will be impacted by vehicular movements. The arcade that extends out to the edge of the sidewalk on Road A also provides a protected pedestrian environment and serves to appropriately narrow the view corridor to the MBTA Maintenance Facility to the north.

Buildings and Architectural Design

With respect to the main architectural frame of Building 1, the grouping of two floors into a vertically proportioned reading compliments the tower-like qualities that seem desirable for this location in the development. This is contrasted nicely by the architectural frame of Building 2. The breaking of the frame on the west and east facades of Building 1 with vertical “slots” of curtainwall, which work in conjunction with the extents of the upper PH screen, further emphasize the verticality of the building. The visual interest created by the large double-height terrace, the associated projecting curved bay element and the bridge, provide architectural character for the west, south and east facades. The north façade, which consists solely of the architectural frame, and does not have any additional façade articulation, is less engaging - it is, however, intended to be a tertiary façade.

As revealed in the massing studies, the north façade extends upward to screen the lower penthouse level. It will be important to understand whether the frame is intended to still be infilled with glazing or if this might be an opportunity to introduce another material – metal panel, perforated screening, etc. – to give the north [as well as portions of the east and west] façade more of a sense of a “top.”

The “aggregation” of the terrace elements, which had been rendered previously as multiple “cut-outs,” is a positive design evolution. One intriguing aspect of the earlier design, however, was the choice of a different color material to highlight the terrace areas – perhaps, this can be reintegrated as the design continues to develop. The subtractive quality of the upper terraces has the effect of creating a strong two-story base for the building.

Building Façade Design and Materials

The change in material and color to the main architectural frame of Building 1 to an off-white terra cotta cladding should have a positive impact on the overall architectural design of the development by

providing a welcomed contrast to the nearby brick residential buildings. The incorporation of a smaller glazing module, as well as the addition of vertical fins, on the connecting bridge is an example of a level of architectural detail that will be welcomed, especially for enhancing hierarchically important façade areas. It is anticipated that this level of detail will continue to emerge as the building transitions into the design development phase.

In summary, the schematic design package for Building 1 appears to be consistent with the approved Riverside Master Plan drawing set. While the primary materials and overall architectural design of this building seem strong, it is presumed that additional design development will address specific criteria in the Design Guidelines, as noted above.

BUILDING 2

GENERAL COMMENTS

As with Building 1, the Ground Floor of Building 2 includes minor reductions to the footprint. The carving out of a recessed entry area at the corner of Research Square and Main Street provides welcomed relief to the street wall and sponsors an effective dialogue with Building 1's entry.

The building height [109'], as well as the number of stories [5] is consistent with the July 30, 2021 design package. Again, the inclusion of the lower penthouse level within the expression of the main architectural frame gives the building an appearance of a six (6) story façade. This feels appropriately scale for the Route 128 frontage but may merit further refinement on the east façade oriented towards the square. The enlarging of the serpentine screened penthouse area on the west side of the upper penthouse area increases the perceived massing of the building from the highway but this does not present any concerns from an architectural scale or urban design perspective.

DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMENTS

Buildings and Urban Design

Building 2 plays a very important role in the overall urban design character of Riverside Station since it both frames a major gateway into the project and fronts on Research Square. The large, double-height urban terrace overlooking the square should contribute to enlivening this important open space that anchors the west end of the development. The connection of the pedestrian bridge into this terrace area provides visual connectivity to Building 1, and forms a dynamic, transparent portal.

One aspect of the building that might merit more study, from an urban design perspective, is how the Research Square frontage is articulated, especially at the ground level. While the recessed corner entry helps by breaking the continuous glazing line at the sidewalk, the way the building meets the ground still presents significant scale challenges for creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. This is exacerbated by a loading area that now takes up almost two full bays of the building [previously rendered as one bay], fronting directly on the square and proximate to the residential Building 3 entry. In fact, the bay to the south [left on the East Elevation] of the loading area consists of back of house uses that look out onto the Building 3 loading area, so it may not include vision glass either. The end result is that almost half of the length of this very public façade will require a creative design approach in order to contribute to an active streetscape. One potential solution to providing more articulation to the ground level of

Building 2 would be to elaborate on the design of the entry canopy that extends out near the corner of Main Street. This canopy could continue to the south towards the loading area – perhaps even as a trellis-like element – adding pedestrian scale and visual interest to the base of the building.

Buildings and Architectural Design

The evolution of Building 2's facades away from a more rigorously horizontal frame towards proportions that are more neutral seems appropriate, given that the building is already horizontal in nature. The conceptual design presented in the summer of 2021 was also characterized by diagonal bracing elements. While these certainly offered visual interest, their scale was quite monumental and challenging to mediate on the Research Square frontage. Moving these elements in-board was a good solution. As with Building 1, the incorporation of the lower penthouse area into the zone of the main building frame, gives the building the perception of a six (6) story structure instead of five (5). And the treatment of the glazing at the lower penthouse level will be important to evaluate. The addition of the serpentine penthouse screen adds visual interest to the upper penthouse level. The degree of transparency of these roof screens, how they are lit and how signage is integrated will all be important details. One potential variation that could create a more dynamic base / middle / top reading would be to explore how the roof screen might engage into / behind the upper section of the main building frame, expanding on the West Elevation concept presented in June 2021.

The current West Elevation frame consists of three somewhat similar zones. It is only the subtle omission of the intermediate secondary frame element that makes the middle zone of the building distinct. While this provides a clue to the bridge / terrace zone that dominates the north and east facades, it might be interesting to introduce another level of architectural detail in this zone [not dissimilar to the slightly projecting curved bay on Building 1]. Another opportunity that might merit exploration would be to acknowledge the interconnecting stair that is on the north façade of Building 2 and links the bridge, terrace and amenity areas to the lobby below. Some registration of this element on the façade could enhance the “gateway” moment as one crosses the threshold into the development.

Building Façade Design and Materials

The use of a unique “dark-painted metal cladding” on the main architectural frame of Building 2 is very appropriate, setting this building apart from Building 1 but, perhaps more importantly, the collection of brick residential buildings that line Grove Street and Main Street. In general, the transparent quality of the building will help enliven Research Square and provide a focal point at the western end of the Main Street view corridor. The interconnecting bridge should work to knit together the architectural palette of Building 2 with Building 1, providing an opportunity to add a high level of visual interest and articulation. The detailing of the entry canopy, the area around the loading doors and the ground floor level, in general, will be critical to achieving a welcoming pedestrian environment.

In summary, the schematic design package for Building 2 appears to be consistent with the approved Riverside Master Plan drawing set. While the primary materials and overall architectural design of this building seem strong, it is presumed that additional design development will address specific criteria in the Design Guidelines, as noted above.

BUILDING 3

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Building 3 footprint remains largely consistent with the Special Permit plans, with only minor adjustments due to the reportioning of the main tower facing Research Square and the shifting of some façade elements along the Grove Street frontage [and facing Research Square]. The overall square footage change for Building 3 is de minimis and, when taken in conjunction with Building 4, results in a loss of 578sf and one residential unit. The building remains seven (7) stories tall with only a minor change in height [within 1'-0"].

Loading is accommodated in the only location where access is feasible and, while thoughtfully positioned adjacent to the Building 2 loading area, landscape buffering and other place-making strategies will be critical to creating a pedestrian-friendly plaza area in front of the main entry.

DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMENTS

Buildings and Urban Design

The January 18, 2022 architectural rendering entitled “Research Square View” that captures Building 3 does not offer a particularly complimentary perspective of the tower, but the elevation sheet provides more clarity to the proportions and depth of this important element. The Building 3 tower still holds its position at the head of Research Square and architecturally seems distinct enough from the two towers that are now incorporated into Building 4.

The Grove Street facades strive to provide a well-articulated street-wall that is appropriate at both the scale of the local context as well as when viewing from afar on Route 128. While the grade varies significantly along the Grove Street frontage, the quality of the pedestrian environment will only be enhanced by attention given to how the building meets the ground – particularly addressing large areas of masonry wall. The secondary entry at level 2 and its associated roofline, though not depicted in the Grove Street rendering, should play an important role in how the building is presented at this important corner of the development.

Buildings and Architectural Design

The evolution of major and minor massing elements along the Grove Street frontage succeeds in reinforcing key building nodes – the entry, the significant bend in the façade and the corner – by utilizing primary and secondary façade elements in a hierarchical way. The “splitting” of the major tower element at the bend in Grove Street, allows the building to address each segment of the street-scape more frontally. It also presents an opportunity for a unique approach to the “webbing” between these two segments of the building.

It is important to acknowledge that different rendering styles – a hand sketch versus a computer model – can give a very different impression of overall design intent. That aside, there are some positive qualities in the April 13, 2021 rendering “Grove Street Looking North” that are not as apparent in the January 18, 2022 views. The previous design offered a clear contrast between the materiality of the upper story and the balance of the building by rendering the top with a white frame and extensive areas of glass. If you Zoom in on the most recent renderings, you can see that the intent is still there to utilize a different material [called out as metal panel in the same zone on Building 4], but the color does not

offer as much contrast. This may be purposeful, as the balconies have similarly changed in their materiality, but the effect [at least in the renderings submitted] is to not offer as distinct a reading of building “top.”

The vertical section of façade between the two tower elements at the bend in Grove Street might also be well-served by more contrast in materials [lighter mullion color], helping to visually break up what is a lengthy façade.

That said, the renderings do show a tremendous amount of thought has gone into brick detailing, with unique coursework being utilized in very complimentary and thoughtful ways. This level of detail is often only perceptible from a close distance so, replacing a precast cornice element with purposeful brick coursing may not have the same architectural impact when, for example, it comes to providing a visual cap for a tower element so that it feels finished and proportionally correct [see the tops of the twin Grove Street towers elements].

Building Façade Design and Materials

To reiterate, the level of brick detailing depicted in the renderings indicates a high level of articulation is intended for these facades. Integrating a little more contrast in color between the various materials – brick, metal panel, windows, etc. – could help with issues of scale and visual interest, particularly on the long facades.

In summary, the schematic design package for Building 3 appears to be consistent with the approved Riverside Master Plan drawing set. Additional design development can address criteria in the Design Guidelines, as noted above.

BUILDING 4

GENERAL COMMENTS

While the Building 4 plans generally follow the profile of the Special Permit submission, there are a few minor changes – especially at the 7th floor level – which are incorporated to facilitate design revisions to three important building elements – the new Research Square tower at the main entry, the east tower near Amphitheater Green and the reading of a demised building at the west end, adjacent to Building 3. Each of these adjustments play an important role in defining the urban environment of the development. The new tower, with associated main building entry, at the corner of Main Street and Research Square, presents itself as the hierarchically most important building element. Appropriately detailed to be the taller than the east tower, it serves as a vista termination when entering the project between Buildings 1 and 2 from the west. It also gives Building 4 a more significant architectural presence on the square, providing animation and visual interest at the ground level.

The second tower, to the east, has evolved in its shape and is purposefully detailed to be smaller in stature – both footprint and height – than the entry tower. Its octagonal shape addresses long views from multiple angles, including the view corridor from Transit Square looking west, and gives it a sculptural quality appropriate for its immediate setting on Amphitheater Green. The finer-grained architectural detailing of the towers on Building 4, as well as those on Building 3, should serve to make

these elements more unique from the base building facades. The rethinking of the materiality and color of the panels between the windows, for example, could provide a more vertical reading that would further emphasize their role as focal points in the urban landscape.

Building 4 loading is still handled curbside on Main Street, which seems preferable to introducing additional traffic and trucks into Research Square. By shifting the back of house functions to the east along Main Street, the main Building 4 entry can now occupy the corner on the square.

The visual demising of the western end of Building 4 is subtle but effective and gives the wrapper of Research Square an urban feel, as though two buildings sharing a common party wall. One challenging aspect of this newly demised facade is that one might expect to see an entry into this “building” on the square but, instead, one finds residential units at grade looking directly onto the sidewalk. The way that this portion of Building 4 meets the ground might merit further study, perhaps including how landscaping could create a buffer zone at the base. The westernmost portion of this base, adjacent to the public stair, is quite close to the street and could be an alternative location for an amenity use, as opposed to a residential unit, which would have little privacy.

DESIGN GUIDELINES COMMENTS

Buildings and Urban Design

From an urban design standpoint, the most significant change proposed to date [with respect to Buildings 1-4] is the redesign of the “grand stair” that connects Grove Street to Research Square. While there are countless examples of urban stairs being integrated into loggias at the ends of buildings [Italian hill towns], this is a notable change from the Special Permit approved Site Plan that has an impact on an important open space amenity. One might argue that having the stair covered from the elements could allow for safer passage but, this relocation under Building 4 also has the effect of “privatizing” what was a major urban interconnecting stair. As it is currently rendered, the stair does not seem to encourage pedestrian engagement with open space that potentially could be integrated into the terraced landscaped. The trees shown in the sloped open space in the January 18, 2022 rendering have the effect of further privatizing this potentially usable open space by blocking the visual connection from Grove Street into the square. Site lines down the stair itself will likely be blocked by the stepping building volume and the new alignment results in the stair landing at a pinch-point on the square instead of spilling into the plaza in front of Building 3, where one would discover the tower and be reoriented axially into the center of the space. The previous iteration certainly offered a more ceremonial connection to Grove Street. One possible approach could be to incorporate the required elevator into the end of Building 4 while leaving the grand stair as part of an engaging terraced open space.

Buildings and Architectural Design

As far as the building’s overall architectural character, there have been many notable improvements, including the elimination of the multi-level covered porch element on Main Street in favor of the new corner entry tower. The building has a well-conceived approach to base, middle and top, with cornice lines purposefully manipulated to emphasize the intended hierarchy of the towers and distinguish the demised portion of the building at the west end. The individual balconies add visual interest.



The elimination of the upper story setback on both frontages at the demised building location, as well as the detailing of the windows, serves to further reinforce the unique design qualities of this segment of Building 4.

The detailing in the brickwork on this building, such as the rusticated rendering of the building's base, shows a high-level of design intent. Certain areas, such as the infill panels between the windows on the octagonal tower, might present an opportunity for the introduction of a secondary material. As with Building 3, a contrasting material [or color] could serve to further emphasize certain design goals, like the verticality of a tower element. The lighter metal panel and metal roof elements utilized in the recessed terrace areas on the seventh floor are good examples of this.

Building Façade Design and Materials

The proposed redesign of Building 4's facades generally respond thoughtfully to the urban condition. The use of brick as the primary material, with stone, pre-cast and other accent materials integrated, give this building an appropriate scale and architectural quality. While fenestration patterns, and the ratio of glass to wall surface in general, have evolved from earlier renderings [see April 13, 2021], the resulting architectural expression is quite successful. Detail level decisions should reinforce the larger façade moves currently represented and will help refine certain key design components, such as how the building meets the ground.

In summary, the schematic design package for Building 4 reveals an evolving architectural design that is contextual and will compliment the overall development. Continued refinement of the façade detailing can address criteria in the Design Guidelines, as noted above. The integration of the grand stair that connects Grove Street to Research Square into Building 4 is the one aspect of the site design that does not appear to be consistent with the approved Riverside Master Plan drawings. As currently proposed, the redesigned stair and open space will have an impact on a public amenity and will challenge the visual connectivity into the project from Grove Street.