

# City of Salem Designer Selection Committee

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

A meeting of Salem’s Designer Selection Committee was held Tuesday, June 9, 2020 via Zoom.

**Voting Members Present:** Jenna Ide

Michael Lutrzykowski (delegated by Tom St. Pierre)

Elizabeth Peterson (delegated by Tom Daniel).

**Non-Voting participants:** Esmerelda Bisono, Sustainability and Resiliency Coordinator

Margaret Wood, Owner’s Project Manager, Anser Advisory

The meeting convened at noon via Zoom. The agenda was the interview of the first of five design teams that were previously shortlisted for the design of the Pioneer Village Living History Museum and Visitor’s Center. The two teams interviewed on this date were Schwartz Silver and LDa. Each interview was limited to an hour.

The following three firms are scheduled to be interviewed on June 16th as follows:

12noon: Spencer Silver Vogt

1pm: Oudens Ello

2pm: bh+a

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Schwartz Silver Interview

Participants:

* Jonathan Traficonte, Schwartz/Silver, Principal: jtraficonte@schwartzsilver.com
* Stewart Marshall, Schwartz/Silver, Project Manager: smarshall@schwartzsilver.com
* Kyle Zick, Principal, Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture: kzick@kylezick.com
* Matt Kirchman, President, ObjectIDEA, Museum Interpretive Planning: mkirchman@objectidea.com
* John Wathne, President, Structures North: jwathne@structures-north.com
* Doug Kelleher, Principal, Epsilon Associates, Permitting: DKelleher@epsilonassociates.com

Introduction:

* Experienced team, four members of team are Salem residents, including Stewart Marshall, John Wathne, Doug Kelleher, and Matt Kirchman.
* 40 years in business
* Almost all work begins with master planning.
* Many LEED projects
* Many public buildings focused on the visitor experience
* Have worked on many historic buildings
* Team includes:
	+ Matt Kirchman, founder of ObjectIDEA: his portfolio includes numerous interpretive sites.
	+ Kyle Zick, KZLA: has worked on many historic and interpretive sites.

Presentation (see attached PPT):

* Described working process
* Presented list of Conceptual Criteria
* Could move buildings by crane and barge
* Opportunities to connect Pioneer Village with other sites on the peninsula
* Presented and discussed several strategies

Why Schwartz Silver?

* Functional, award-winning design.
* Museum and Master Planning expertise.
* Historic Building expertise.
* We work to a budget.
* We are natural collaborators.
* We are personally committed with deep ties to City of Salem

Shared Sketchup model at beginning of Q&A.

Elizabeth: wanted to learn more about ObjectIDEA’s Plimoth Plantation project. Matt: Plimoth Plantation received a grant about 10 years ago: project focused on visitor confusion about different voices and the order in which they were encountered. ObjectIDEA worked with the curatorial team and hosted workshops on the site: outcome was a decision to reverse the flow of the encounter. Original sequence was: start with visitor center, then encountering first person interpreters who spoke as settlers. Then exited through Hobbaomock site who spoke in the first person: “my people built structures like this”. Immersion trajectory was backwards. By flipping encounters: start with Hobomock, conclude visit in first person interpretation. This is now the interpretive voice.

Elizabeth: wanted to hear more about connecting Fort Lee to this project. Jon: Visitor’s Center could launch many other connections. Gathering cultural institutions together and trying to make connections. Project is an opportunity to share and connect the resources.

Jenna: wanted to talk about challenge of natural qualities of the site, including ledge: siting buildings, construction. Historical reality is that what you see is what they would have encountered. How do you tie natural components of site into design? Jon: you would embrace the contours and materials, you would not blast. Many of structures did not have foundations. Try to locate parking in areas that are naturally flat already. Opportunity for edge condition and natural landscape: look at making a path along the edge. John W: If you take buildings up to a bluff where they are more exposed, you would want to strengthen before moving them, then use needle beams to lift them. We think you could float them around the harbor on a barge, then lifted off the barge and put on the receiving foundations. Could design dry laid stone walls to hide the modern foundations. Kyle: could avoid doing grade changes by filling in lower areas.

Mike: wanted to know what the team thinks is their greatest strength. Jon: greatest strength is having four team members from Salem. In addition, Schwartz Silver has a history of working on these types of projects, from conceptual design to reality. Enjoy bringing them to reality. Our goal is: be creative and smart. John W said he would be “So OK to work on this!”

Jenna: we have structured this as a collaborative process. We want to know that the team we are meeting is the team. Jon: Stewart Marshall and I will be involved from beginning to end. Conceptual design requires senior staff. Stewart said that consultant team members are critical and would not change.

Interview concluded at 12:52.

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LDa Interview

Participants:

* Douglas Dick, AIA, LEED BD&C, Principal: ddick@lda-architects.com
* Michael Waters, AIA, Principal: mwaters@lda-architects.com
* Thomas Jonak, AIA, Associate and Project Manager: tjonak@lda-architects.com
* Naomi Cottrell,  Principal, Crowley Cottrell Landscape Architecture: naomi@crowleycottrell.com
* Lisa Howe, Director, Building Conservation Associates: lhowe@bcausa.com
* Matt Kirchman, President, Object Idea, Inc.: mkirchman@objectidea.com

Presentation (see attached PPT):

Our approach: weaving it all together.

Village as an exhibit Public support

History & Future Sustainability

Architecture Universal Design

Site and Landscape Cost & Schedule

Naomi spoke about landscape and interpretation. Landscape as movement.

Doug spoke about architecture approach.

Lisa spoke about historical approach.

Michael spoke about “Village as Exhibit”. Lots of listening, hearing, proof of concept.

Lisa spoke about “Weaving it all Together”. Important due to George Francis Dowd and recreation of first period buildings.

Michael spoke about the importance of visitor’s center.

Naomi: landscape is the fabric around which all of activities happen. Understand opportunities of being close to water, proximity to Willows: how can it be part of the larger interpretive sites throughout the City. Choreography on interpretation.

Michael: choreography is great metaphor: memorability and comfort as goals.

Doug: spoke about approach to sustainability.

Q&A

Elizabeth: asked for team to elaborate on work with Native Americans and emphasized the importance of these voices in the project. Elizabeth emphasized the importance of these voices. Elizabeth also noted the developing relationship with the Peabody Essex Museum: hoping to either display artefacts or reproductions. Matt Kirchman described four projects of ObjectIDEA’s that are completed or in process. Commonality was the importance of helping these voices to translate what is desirable and important to communicate into the language of the visitor. Naomi spoke about work at the overlook in Aquinnah where Wampanoag tribe owns the land.

Jenna: current site gets flooded, new site will be out of storm zoning. But there are wetlands, ledge, lots of challenge. Very typical site in terms of challenges, but this is a historical interpretation: what are your thoughts on the challenges and opportunities? Michael: want to work with the land and topography. Doug noted that these were the same challenges at Halibut Point. Naomi: if you are putting your head in the framework of the early settlers, you don’t blast. What does the true nature of the site want to be? At Halibut Point team is allowing some areas to become meadows, which also multiplies the positive ecological impacts. Design has worked hard not to cut: avoiding cutting goes back to cost effectiveness and achieving multiple positive impacts with this single move.

Mike: What was work at Plimoth Plantation that was mentioned and how does it relate? Doug: much of site wants to be fairly flat for accessibility. Our initial thoughts are the adjacent site is good for access because it is relatively level: but challenge will be bringing the whole site together. Naomi spoke of need for “entering” a very different world: may be a threshold to leave behind the modern amenities like the parking lot: bridging topography or two parts of the site, entering the stage set of Pioneer Village. Don’t think you can or should make the two sites the same. Doug and Lisa have discussed the importance of looking at how original settlers would have occupied this site. How did they provide safety for themselves? If flat topography is important, why?

Elizabeth: intention of George Frances Dow’s vision was to represent Essex Street and Washington Street - Salem itself, not a coastal condition. This is what Winthrop is arriving and seeing (and disparaging). Elizabeth also noted that celebrating George Francis Dow’s vision is key to maintaining support for the projects. Lisa noted that the origins of the Pioneer Village put the onus on us to interpret what it meant at the time: how constructed originally, how developed at the time? We need to arrive at “This is what we’ve learned”.

Matt: responding to Plimoth Plantation question from Mike. Plimoth Plantation has a native settlement. A survey indicated that visitors did not understand why interpreters in different areas spoke in different eras. The “oldest” people (Native Americans) spoke in a contemporary language: “my ancestors lived in this way, but this is how I live now”. European settlers spoke as though in the past (most immersive voice). ObjectIDEA was hired not to look at path through the site but to unpack the language confusion: changing the physical navigation of the site was the solution. Process involved benchmarking, interviews. The outcome was a success.

Doug: this is an architecture-led project that relies on a broader team.

Interview ended at 1:57.