

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board
Date and Time:	Wednesday, August 26, 2020 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, Helen Sides, J. Michael Sullivan
DRB Members Absent:	None
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

Signs

1. Artists' Row (Artist in Residence): Discussion and vote on signage.

Julie Barry, City of Salem - City Planner of Arts and Culture, was present to discuss the project.

Barry stated that in addition to the regular shops and activity Unit #5 will be a new public artist in residence studio and Creative Blocks will be their first public artist that will be paid do projects revolving around wayfinding, etc. They proposed a standard sign that won't need to be changed with each new designer. Lebel Signs in Lynn will craft a hand painted two-sided wooden sign with rounded corners and vinyl lettering. It will be 2-feet high x 3-feet wide to match a neighboring sign, and it will use the same sign armature.

Sides stated that having so much information on the proposed sign, the bright white background against the blue, and the tight lettering at the bottom all make the sign hard to read. Barry suggested eliminating the "established 2019" line but they want recognition and their logo to link it back to the City. Sullivan agreed with eliminating the 'Established' line and changing the spacing. Chair Durand suggested removing the "A program of" text. Kennedy agreed with previous comments and suggested reducing the 'Salem Public Art', using a different type face and enlarging the logos. He suggested making the blue 5-10% darker so it's easier for the color-blind to read and adding black to flatten it since different shapes in the character can make them appear shaky.

Barry agreed to make all the changes discussed.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Steve Kapantais, 23 Wisteria Street. Asked if the same type of sign would be installed.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Miller: Motion to approve with all the changes discussed and a final review by Glenn Kennedy.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

2. 8 Central Street (Salem Historical Tours):

Giovani Alabiso of Salem Historical Tours & Ken McTague of Concept Signs were present to discuss the project.

Kennedy stated that this is an update of the existing sign. It will be the same size, shape, and use the same bracket, they want more visibility and a brighter sign. Having more than 3 types of fonts works well and is appropriate although the ghost image on either side, could add white to highlight them. McTague noted that the images competed with the lettering, so they eliminated them.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Sides: Motion to approve as submitted

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

3. 282R Derby Street (Pentagram): Discussion and vote on signage.

Timothy Reagan of Pentagram and Ken McTague of Concept Signs were present to discuss the project

Newhall-Smith stated that the proposed sign will have a black background with metallic gold lettering. McTague noted that there will be more contrast than it appears on the proposed images.

Kennedy stated that the letter spacing is too great and they read as individual letters, suggested they lower and decrease the pentagram by 5%, increase the font size 5-10% to make the entire word easier to read, move the 'P' to the right, and lower 'Witchcraft & Magick' slightly. Chair Durand preferred the quirky nature of the current sign.

Perras asked if this was a second blade sign. McTague replied yes. Sullivan agreed that the 'P' is too close to the left image and if that spacing is tightened up it would read better.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Newhall-Smith suggested that the anchors be in mortar not the brick. McTague noted that on older building he uses epoxy to counteract the old and loosening structure and he will try to secure the signs to the existing holes.

Jaquith: Motion to approve with the comments by Glenn Kennedy.

Seconded by: Sides.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

4. 318 Derby Street (Sage): Discussion and vote on signage.

Bob Oldsman, representing his daughter, owner of Sage, was present to discuss the project

Oldsman stated that all four signs on that block have identical black metal frames and brackets. They will remove the existing Turtle Alley sign and replace it with a new sign with a white background and black letters. The sign dimensions will be 34 7/8-inches high x 25 1/2-inches wide. The black outline around the sign is the existing metal frame and the lettering will be hand painted.

Miller suggested the lettering be thicker to make it easier to read from a distance and liked that the wording is slightly off-center. Kennedy agreed and suggested the thickness be less than double and to not close in the 'e'. Sullivan stated that the sign is elegant because there are no other connections to the sign.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve with condition about weight of text.

Seconded by: Sides.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. 7-9 Dodge Street – Installation of fencing around parking lot

Andrew Longmire of RCG was present to discuss the project.

Longmire stated their desire to enclose the corner of the lot by installing a perimeter fence at the sidewalk because it is a private lot, while maintaining handicapped access. They would match the color, style and height of the existing fence at 76 Lafayette Street.

Sullivan asked if trees could be included. Longmire replied yes, although none are planned, but the City could plant them. The entire area is currently hardscaped.

Perras noted that the corner opening is large, and the accessible entrance appears to be a vehicular entrance. He suggested they tighten the opening. Longmire replied that in plan they are closer together, but the perspective makes it look skewed. Miller noted matching the urban design will also help the street and suggested they also align the crosswalk with one of the ramp's curb cuts, particularly the one to the Downtown and not the hotel. She also suggested matching the angled fence corner. Jaquith and Longmire agreed.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Miller: Motion to approve with the revision to put the pedestrian opening on Dodge Street and an angle piece at the corner to mimic the condition across the street and create smaller handicapped entrance.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

2. 30 Federal Street: Additional Design Review of proposed plans for consistency with Downtown Renewal Plan Design Standards

Sanir Lutfija and Dan Ricciarelli of Seger Architects, and Mike Becker owner of Salem Waterview Developments, were present to discuss the project.

Newhall-Smith stated that the applicant went to SRA two weeks ago for a final vote and changed the internal layout to allow the required four parking spaces. The SRA reviewed the Urban Renewal Plan and found discrepancies. The proposal should adhere to the Plan, but when it doesn't, there needs to be alternatives and explanations for the alternatives. The SRA asked the DRB to review the proposal for compliance with the Plan.

Ricciarelli stated that they've revised the uses, there will be retail at the ground floor, they moved two office to the second floor of addition, the residential starts at third floor and a townhome has been placed in third floor addition. The second and third floors of the existing building will be commercial. There will be no exterior changes to the building.

Planning Questions

Materiality: Ricciarelli stated that the flat roof will be membrane but it's not visible and the visible roofs will be asphalt which matches the criteria. Chair Durand, Sullivan, and Jaquith agreed. Miller noted that the material should match the residential structure not the courthouses as stated in one of the abutters letters. Chair Durand noted that there are many options to choose from and this is a good fit. Kennedy agreed.

Pattern of Windows: Ricciarelli stated that in terms of the number of windows, the spandrel infill panel is being used as a nod to the picture framing. Inset panels are meant to do the same, and there will be no grids on the glass to match the existing building. The stair tower reads as a vertical glass element bifurcating the addition from the original building, so there is a mix of window sizes. Chair Durand stated that the existing building has a historic look, but the addition should be differentiated. At the North, they did a good job of achieving a similar window pattern which picks up the neighboring window pattern and the design plays off all neighboring window elements. Miller agreed and noted that the spandrel panels have significant similarities while showing the varieties. Sullivan agreed. Sides added that the addition should have some abstraction which it does, it was very well done, it's distinctive and shouldn't be a historic looking building. Chair Durand noted that the proposed has a sophisticated rhythm that

doesn't detract from the neighboring buildings at this end of Washington Street. Perras agreed but added that the windows could use work. There are one too many types and not enough of a rhythm to support the inclusion of the slender windows. He noted that the use of curtain wall elements does break up the massing which makes sense, but not at the second and third floors because it doesn't match up with the old façade. The use of spandrel glass is nice. Ricciarelli replied that they will review the smaller windows and align them.

Chair Durand stated that he likes the windows and makes them more interesting, it's not a static building and that movement is needed to change the theme of the building. Window patterns shouldn't mimic the neighboring building, but they should show the evolution. Kennedy noted that the Washington Street elevation has one too many thicknesses in window weights, ground floor is thin, elevator shaft is slightly thicker, and addition windows are even heavier. Ricciarelli replied that they will review the window transition into the residential areas above, however; the windows do define the changes in depth of the façade and the associated shadow. Kennedy encouraged the use of more shadowing.

Jaquith asked if the solar panels on the South roof will remain. Becker replied yes and they are looking into adding automated panels on the flat roof. Jacquith requested that they be shown in elevation.

Façade: Ricciarelli stated that it's on the drawings and in writing. Chair Durand replied that the façade conforms to the standards.

Signage: Ricciarelli stated that a lintel band is proposed above the storefront glass along Washington Street. Stand-alone letters can be mounted above to indicate the building entry sign along Washington Street. Blade signs could be added on Federal and Washington Streets, but they don't want to over sign the building, but lintel signs are hard to read when walking at the sidewalk. Chair Durand replied that signage locations are informative only until someone applies for signage. Sides added that blade signs are preferred along Federal Street, but the North-West corner will be visible from both ends. Ricciarelli noted that signs would be on North façade only, and no blade signs were proposed.

Landscape: Ricciarelli stated that minimal landscape is proposed and there will be no shielding of parking under building and the fourth space is beyond the addition, however; they will be shielded by a low wall under the addition. They can't shield the shared driveway. Chair Durand stated that they should have an edge, but the neighboring condominiums didn't want it and there has always been a view of parking lot and building only. The courtyard landscaping is good. Ricciarelli noted that the landscaping will be softened, the brick wall, the hardscape will be pavers, and there will be an areaway for the basement. Miller requested a list of proposed plantings. Ricciarelli replied that they will return with a landscape plan. Chair Durand stated that the design complies so far with minor comments.

Site Concerns – Trash location: Ricciarelli replied that the trash will be kept in the basement. Its removal will be under contract and the pick-up frequency could change as needed.

Snow Storage: Ricciarelli stated that there are minimal locations for storage so the snow will most likely be removed but it won't impact their current snow removal. Miller stated that the notation has the retail tenant being responsible for snow removal and encouraged a commitment by the owner, so they don't end up with sidewalks that aren't passible. Becker replied that Washington Street is cleared by the City of Salem.

Lighting: Ricciarelli stated that sharp cut off sconces will be placed at the entrance only for egress safety since there is adequate lighting elsewhere on site and sidewalk. There will be light spillage from the tenant retail spaces through the storefronts. Kennedy suggested additional lighting be thought out, so it didn't look like an afterthought. Ricciarelli noted the proposed up-lighting at the trees. Becker noted the plaza lighting at landscaping or along the seating wall to the North.

Site Concerns for Parking: Ricciarelli stated that the parking is functional, conforms to zoning parking lot requirements, did a maneuvering study was completed. Chair Durand suggested adding a bollard to protect the exposed and vulnerable corner of addition or to chamfer the corner.

HVAC Equipment: Ricciarelli stated that they will hang small condensers in the garage wall. The unit above will have them on their individual screened decks, or they may all be placed in the garage space. Becker added that they would be mounted 10-feet above grade, so vehicles don't back into them.

Other Mechanicals: Ricciarelli stated that the retail use is unknown, but they will provide a vertical chase if they require a hood for a potential kitchen. Becker added that it would be concealed by the elevator tower.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Steve Kapantais, 23 Wisteria Street. Each board has their own area of expertise, but he asked them to define the role of the DRB. Chair Durand explained that the DRB is an advisory board to the SRA and reviews sign proposals and development projects.

Jane Stauffer, 1 Washington Street. Sent a letter to the DRB dated August 26, 2020 and she is concerned with parking and noted that a fan for a restaurant would be seen from their fourth-floor windows. Chair Durand replied that the applicant reviewed the worst case where a vehicle would back up towards their building and noted that a rooftop fan for a restaurant that they would see from their fourth-floor windows. She also asked that abutters letters are read and given serious consideration since the parking lot is their buffer. Chair Durand noted that the proposed landscaping was rejected. Stauffer replied that this was a well-designed area, and they will lose their greenery and trees.

Steve Pelletier, 1 Washington Street. The parking lot has a lot shrubbery that will be removed because of this building. They also have snow storage areas and only removed it when it was very heavy, and that cost was shared between the buildings. The City doesn't always remove snow from the sidewalk, the condominiums collectively paid for the snow removal between Washington & Federal Streets. The design team switched around the floor plan to eliminate an additional parking space and made the addition 50 square-feet smaller than the existing building because they don't count the "unusable space" in the basement that will not be used for trash storage. The addition appears to be much larger than the original building and doesn't match. The parking

radius plan is missing and should be done by the City not by someone the Owner paid and provided a potentially biased result.

Becker stated that the plaza tenant would do snow removal at their outdoor area and not the sidewalks.

Anne Laaff, 20 Federal Street. Discussions seems to ignore residence comments and concerns, Pam Broderick's letter wasn't read by all DRB members and it states the opinion of the neighboring residents. Chair Durand replied that he read all letters, the concerns were addressed by the applicant, and they are satisfied with the answers given by the applicant. The DRB doesn't agree with all of the concerns of the abutters. Sullivan added that the DRB has reviewed this project at least six times and it's greatly improved.

Becker noted that they've redesigned, withdrew, and reapplied this project to address their concerns. Sides stated that the DRB has done their job and many concerns aren't within their purview and the developer has the right to construct this project. They've heard the concerns, but they disagree and feel the projects meets the criteria and design guidelines. They have to consider more than what the abutters have to say. Kennedy added that they've heard and addressed many comments, but the owner has the right to build the building. Jaquith noted that the parking meets the design standards even though it's not the best.

Steve Pelletier, 1 Washington Street. Requested that the applicant provide the engineering report to prove to people that they can get their cars out of the parking lot. He suggested that Becker pay for their inconvenient when people can't park in their spaces. Many feel the building is large for this location and the courtyard is too small, the area looks congested and visually appears larger than the original building. The design changes have been minuscule to skirt the parking regulations. Chair Durand replied that the applicant found a loophole to make it work, the civil engineer is professional and wouldn't falsify documents. The parking lot is tight but doable. Kennedy noted that by regulation you have 2-feet over the curb and they've only used 1-foot.

No one else wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve that the proposed flat building roof compliant meets design standards.

Seconded by: Sullivan.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Miller: Motion to approve the windows respond to existing structure meets design standards.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Sullivan: Motion to approve that the façade projections meets design standards.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Miller: Motion to approve that the conceptual signage meets compliance alternative standards and official signage package will return at a later date.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Sides: Motion to approve the conceptual landscape use, orientation and configuration.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Miller: Motion to approve the landscape proposed since the standards aren't applicable.

Seconded by: Sides.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Sides: Motion to approve that they've met the other site concern considerations.

Seconded by: Jaquith.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Old/New Business

Minutes

The minutes of the June 11, 2020 special meeting were reviewed.

Miller: Motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2020 special meeting.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

The minutes of the June 24, 2020 meeting were reviewed.

Miller: Motion to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2020 meeting.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Staff Updates

Newhall-Smith stated that a website for the Courthouse projects and interview schedule is on the SRA's website.

Kennedy stated that he's been involved with Zoning board elsewhere in Salem and out of state and this board is very helpful. Chair Durand praised Newhall-Smith on her organizing of this review process.

Adjournment

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Sides. Passes 7-0.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 7-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:45PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.