

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board – Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, Helen Sides, J. Michael Sullivan, Chair Paul Durand
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 in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 18 Front Street: Nocturne

Ken McTague of Concept Signs was present to discuss the project.

Mr. McTague stated that the proposed carved gold leaf sign is 36-inches-wide x 19-inches-high and will be double-sided and mounted to an existing scroll bracket and will swing, and it is approximately the same size as the previous B.F. Goodstitch sign. Sides, Jaquith and Kennedy were in favor of the sign.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Sides: Motion to approve as submitted. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 7-0.

2. 194 Essex Street: World of Wizardry

Ken McTague of Concept Signs was present to discuss the project.

Mr. McTague stated the proposed sign will be contour cut at 39-inches-wide x 39-inches-high, the signs will be flat panel with the "Professor Spindlewick's" lettering above carved into the sign and the "World of Wizardry" as raised lettering. The center gem will be cast in clear acrylic with a blue-pearl finish with open voids on either side of the gem.

Kennedy suggested the kerning be adjusted between the "E" and the "W," and the "K" and the "apostrophe S." McTague replied that the artwork used was client generated. Kennedy noted that the sign is busy but fits the theme. Sides added that the sign was hard to read but catches the eye. Jaquith agreed with all comments made.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

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Kennedy: Motion to approve as submitted. Seconded by: Jaquith.
Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 7-0

3. 11 Church Street: Roseadela's

Ken McTague of Concept Signs was present to discuss the project.

McTague stated that Roseadela's and Residency Records will split the cost of the sign band at the awning between their spaces, making the sign band a continuous black face.

Sides noted her concern with the different fonts listing the food and drinks offered by the establishment being easier to read than the name of the business. McTague agreed that the brand font is script and difficult to read. Kennedy suggested the modern font could be changed to something more classic to fit the business name.

Miller and Chair Durand suggested that "Roseadela" on the awning be reduced in scale. Sides suggested the business name be the only text added to the awning and the remaining text be added on the glass. McTague replied that they didn't want to leave the 16-foot-long span blank and mostly black. Sullivan suggested adding a rose on each end. Miller suggested the additional text remain since it is a difficult location to find, and a long sign will bring more attention to it. Sides and Kennedy believed the name alone at the awning would be sufficient. Kennedy offered to work with the applicant to refine the sign design.

McTague asked about decal design on the two windows. Kennedy suggested the left window was okay as is and the right window could use a font adjustment and alignment. Sides and Jaquith agreed that the coffee cup on the right window be moved up and given more space.

Jaquith suggested the rose be colored. Chair Durand and Kennedy agreed that the black and white theme should remain.

Perras noted that the tree will block some of the text at certain times of the year. McTague noted that adding another rose to the opposite end would allow the text to shift left and become more visible.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Sides: Motion to approve with Kennedy to finalize all signage modifications. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 7-0

4. 14 New Derby Street: C.C.S. Clean Cut Studio

Gabriel Garcia on behalf of the applicant was present to discuss the project.

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Garcia stated that the sign will have a black aluminum border, white lettering and internally lit with LED lights. Newhall-Smith noted that Santander sign is halo lit and the Flip the Bird sign is internally illuminated, creating a mix of signage on the block. Flip the Bird was warned that their sign might not be approved, but it was approved. Kennedy noted that the font makes the sign difficult to read. Chair Durand noted that the limited amount of illumination also helps their case.

Perras noted his preference for more space below the initials for the name of the business, but he likes it and would recommend approval.

Newhall-Smith stated that past practice has discouraged the use of internally illuminated signage, most likely when box signs were popular that allowed the entire sign to glow. She stated that signage with internal illumination is inconsistent with the signage allowed downtown, but there are other ways to implement illumination. Chair Durand added that they can only recommend approval to the SRA.

Sullivan asked if the black aluminum surface of the sign is baked on or painted which could lead to peeling. Garcia replied that the 3-inch-thick matte black sign will have a matte black factory finish.

Jaquith requested the lettering be centered on the sign. Garcia ensured the Board that the sign would be centered.

Sides asked if the thickness of the sign when seen from the side would also be black. Garcia replied yes and noted that that space will be needed to place LED lights at the back side of the sign so the letters can glow.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Sides: Motion to approve with the centering of the lettering, added spacing between the initials and text below. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 7-0

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

Please note that the project at 301 Essex Street will not be discussed this evening. The project will likely be on the Salem Redevelopment Authority's April 13, 2022, meeting agenda.

1. 0 Derby Square: Final Design Review – Renovation and historic restoration of Old Town Hall

Julie Barry, City of Salem Senior Planner for Arts and Culture, and Don Mills of Mills Whitaker Architects were present to discuss the project.

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Barry stated that they are exploring a restoration and renovation to Old Town Hall. Mills stated that the drawings have been revised after meeting with the Salem Historical Commission and the Disabilities Commission. The exterior work will consist of in-kind repairs to the masonry. The primary entrance has been the Essex Street entrance since a major renovation in 1933. New manhole covers will be installed and aligned with the current paving pattern, to access the new ground source heat pump system so there is no exterior equipment since there is no site to use. The doors that swing out over the Essex Street landing don't meet wheelchair clearances, so they are proposing to extend the landing 18-inches, add two granite bollards with short handrails. The existing sloped walkway would also be widened and re-sloped, and a battery-controlled push button would be added to the door furthest away from the sloped walk to open.

Mills stated that an accessible ramp is proposed along the west façade, since the access regulations require every public entrance to be accessible, and they are opposed to making any changes to the south façade facing Front Street. The Disabilities Commission preferred having a second means of egress for everyone. When the building was originally constructed, the outer two South facing stairs led only to the second floor. The right-side stair still provides second floor access while the left side stairs has become an elevator shaft, and the central doors access the first floor. Between three stairs were two doors that access the basement only that have since been removed.

Mills stated that the proposed ramp would be longer than 30-feet so an intermediate landing, in addition to the landing at the first floor would be required. Along the west faced, the second window bay from the south would become a door with the transom to remain and would enter the south foyer. A person entering the Essex Street entrance needing to use the elevator would need to travel through the first-floor gallery space and possibly disrupt an event. After an event on the second-floor guests could be directed to the elevator lobby. The ramp railings would match the Essex Street entry railings, although dual handrails and a guardrail would be required. Several boiler vents through existing cellar sashes on the west elevation will be removed, along with the existing boiler. Creating a monumental stair along the south façade with a ramp that extends from that façade would not be ideal and the price to do so would outweigh the benefits gained.

Barry added that the new ramp was removed from the Salem Historical Commission review but was added in again after the Disabilities Commission preferred the inclusion of a secondary accessible egress. The Salem Historical Commission also strongly felt that the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) should be consulted. Mills noted that when they submit their application to Massachusetts Access Board (MAB) it must be accompanied by an ADA consultation form so they can determine if what is being proposed would have any adverse effect on the building. MAB will not grant a variance until they've heard from MHC. Barry added that cost is also a factor.

Jaquith stated that the proposed ramp takes a lot away from the building. Sullivan added that it's a good solution to an access problem and recommended that the push button be install on the granite bollard rather than the building, so that it is not placed directly on the historic façade.

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Sides questioned the requirement for multiple handicapped access because in her experience it's only been required at the main entrance and the building hasn't functioned as a two-meeting space and people don't enter the building on the south façade. Barry replied that code requires all entrances be ADA accessible, even those that historically haven't been used as entrances, but they could remove the exterior hardware and make them exits and the only accessible entrance would be the existing one facing Essex Street. The Disabilities Commission felt strongly that a new ramp be added for life safety reasons. The use of the building is being redefined and will be described at a community forum on March 29, 2022. The goal is to repurpose the building and create a true arts and community center for downtown Salem. The renovation will include making the basement accessible with new restrooms, a community meeting room, workshop, classroom, and storage. The first floor may have a long-term shared tenant agreement for a small coffee or pastry stop, and the second-floor rotating theater companies. Sound baffling would be added between the floors, life safety systems, fire suppression, etc. Mills noted that the capacity will also be increased from 250 to 800 persons maximum with the structural upgrades proposed.

Sides liked the ideas but not the interior changes because the building should undergo as little change as possible and noted that it will be very difficult to eliminate the noise on the second floor. It's essential that MHC is involved in this review. Jaquith and Perras agreed. Perras noted that the addition of an exterior ramp changes the character of the building very quickly and will require very careful details and infilling of basement windows.

Perras suggested the Essex Street entrance be regraded to eliminate the need for a ramps and step. Kennedy and Sides agreed. Perras also suggested sign holder be added to the scope of work to keep future signage from being adhered to the building.

Jaquith left the meeting.

Chair Durand stated that this is one of the most historic and identifiable buildings in Salem. This ramp is a drastic change, but it will serve this purpose well and allow multiple floors of the building to be used as once. It also solves the safety concerns.

Miller requested the proposed Essex façade ramp slope. Mills replied 1:20 or under 5% and it's the cross-slope of the landing at the door that is most problematic. Miller supports a slope at the Essex Street entrance, bollards to install an automatic door opener, maintain the granite step and surround the area in brick for drainage.

Miller requested the new west façade ramp either be extended so it fits symmetrically along the west façade or a continuous 5% slope, so it doesn't look like a generic ADA ramp. She recommended a continuous low-level wall at the outer edge to conceal the new ramp, that dies into the grade. Mills agreed. Barry noted her concern with potentially concealing people behind a low wall and ability to eliminate debris. Miller replied that the wall wouldn't be high. Miller suggested exploring if the ramp could be added to the east façade where there is a more modern building adjacent to it and potentially more space. Mills replied that the elevator and curb cut already existing on the west façade and it would be costly to relocate them. Barry added that the west façade has more pedestrian traffic. Chair Durand agreed with preserving the historical integrity on the west façade. Sullivan agreed. Barry noted that all options will be priced.

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Public Comment:

Emily Udy, HSI. Thanked the Board for their thoughtful discussion, she attended the SHC meeting where options were presented, and the inclusion of the ramp was not the desired option. She appreciated Miller's suggestion of designing the ramp into the site given the urban landscape of Derby Square. HSI will monitor the continued review of the project.

AJ Reis, 5 Short Street, Melrose, MA. Thinks this is a great idea despite the building being historic because the building needs the proposed updates. The walkway will attract a lot of people.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Perras noted that adjusting the elevation facing Essex Street would be simple design since the grade continues to rise in that direction, and eliminate the need for a sloped ramps, railings, and guardrails at the ramp where the grade height is less than 30-inches. Mills noted that he didn't want the accessible entrance to be at the rear of the building and there wouldn't be any visibility concerns at the ramp wall because the slope would continue to rise behind it.

Sides: Motion to continue. Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

2. **5 Summer Street:** Final Design Review – Installation of 104 solar panels on roof

A.J. Reis of Future Energy Solar and Richard Pabich (owner) were present to discuss the project.

Reis stated that panels are proposed at the front and rear roof and the inverter would be located to the rear, rather than at the south elevation as shown on the plan, and to run an EMT conduit across the flat roof to the high roof.

Chair Durand asked how close to the edge would the panels be placed. Reis replied corner to corner or 1-foot away from the edges. Sullivan noted the comments made by SHC and HSI that suggested that the front panels would be highly visible. Kennedy suggested using setbacks on all sides so the edges of the panels aren't visible. The Board requested a minimum 1-foot setback. Reis stated that the existing snow guard at the edge of the roof will mean an automatic front setback of 1-foot or more.

Sides noted that this roof is very visible from Essex Street, she's in favor of adding them but they need to be done in a logical and orderly way, as any other architectural element would and not squeezing them on in any direction to make them fit. Sullivan suggested the bottom edge of the dormers be used as the front setback. Reis asked to install them as high up toward the ridge as possible. The Board requested a 1-foot setback from the sides of the dormers too. Reis replied that that dimension would be sufficient for maintenance purposes.

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Miller requested that all solar panels face the same direction rather than turning them sideways to make them fit on the roof. Chair Durand agreed.

The Board requested the applicant return with a dimensioned plan of the proposed layout. Sides questioned the large exterior equipment that gets placed on exterior walls and how best to conceal them, whether conduits will be going up to the walls, and if the conduits can be painted. The Board requested photos of those conditions for reference. Pavich noted that the only people the equipment would be visible to is the occupants in the building behind the property.

Sides asked if permission and approval was given to install multiple pieces of new equipment on Summer Street behind the iron fence. Newhall-Smith replied that the applicant received an electrical permit to install the units, and this occurred prior to the SRA and DRB being added to the chain of notification for electrical permits. Sides suggested the units be screened with a dark mesh inside the iron fence, because the glow of the lights and the bright white units detracts from the beauty of the building. Pabich replied that new black continuous fencing behind the old iron fence is in progress that will be installed next week. It will be slightly higher than the iron fence to help conceal the tall units.

Public Comment:

Tim Obert, 170 Federal Street, speaking on behalf of HSI. HSI submitted a letter which noted that this building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the downtown renewal plan calls for the use of historical commission guidelines. The new guidelines are being finalized and include a section on solar panels for the roof, which should be referred to when it comes to design decisions. The front solar panels will be highly visible from the street, which is concerning, and they would prefer no panels be applied to the front roof slope if possible and that alternative technologies such as solar shingles be considered. If large panels are to be installed, they should reduce the quantity and keep them 1-foot away from the perimeter, including the ridge line. They applaud the Inn's effort to reduce their carbon footprint and reliance on fossil fuels but maintaining the historic character of the property is important. Chair Durand agreed.

Reis noted that solar shingles would be triple the price.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Sullivan: Motion to continue. Seconded by: Miller.

Roll Call: Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

3. **15 Summer Street:** Final Design Review – Installation of 38 solar panels on roof

A.J. Reis of Future Energy Solar and Richard Pabich (owner) were present to discuss the project.

Reis stated that panels are proposed at the top slope of the front and rear roof where they will be minimally visible and will have a low profile with a front skirt. Chair Durand asked if the solar panels would be angled or flat. Reis replied flat to the roof.

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Sullivan agreed with the comments made by SHC and HSI suggesting the panels only be applied to the high roof where they are not visible from the street. He requested a dimensioned plan of the solar panel layout. Reis requested a 5-inch setback at the front of the upper roof and 1-foot at the sides. Perras suggested the 1-foot setback be maintained on all sides so the thickness of the panels isn't visible from the street.

The Board requested the applicant return with a dimensioned plan of the proposed layout. Sullivan requested the location of the inverter on the revised plan. Pavich replied that the equipment will be placed in the basement.

Public Comment:

Tim Obert, 170 Federal Street, speaking on behalf of HSI. HSI submitted a letter which noted that this building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the downtown renewal plan calls for the use of historical commission guidelines. The new guidelines are being finalized and include a section on solar panels for the roof, which should be referred to when it comes to design decisions. The solar panels are being proposed on the high roof only, as they suggested, so they are comfortable with the proposed design.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Sullivan: Motion to continue. Seconded by: Miller.

Roll Call: Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

New / Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. February 23, 2022

The review of the minutes was continued to the following meeting.

2. Staff Updates, if any:

285 Derby Street – Pirate Museum

Miller stated that murals were installed at the new pirate museum at 285 Derby Street without DRB review even though the applicant was supposed to return to the DRB for review and approval. Newhall-Smith replied that the applicant had their art reviewed by the Public Art Commission and they had place holder images on their renderings. Chair Durand noted that the applicant mentioned murals to be placed on the wall and that's why they requested numerous light fixtures along side the building. Newhall-Smith stated that it's a question of jurisdiction which she will clarify. Miller stated that their doorway was not centered in the bay as depicted in the rendering, which may relate to the structure of the building. She also noted that a ramp was proposed to access the harborwalk but it was not added. Newhall-Smith replied that the ramp was peer reviewed with the landscape architect for the Charlotte Forten Park, but the applicant decided that they weren't able to move forward with the ramp at this time. Newhall-Smith states that it will currently remain a flat

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sidewalk, as it was reviewed and approved and affirms that the applicant was not obligated to install it.

Brix

Perras noted the e-mail he sent indicating that the use of two green paint colors on the façade was either a mistake or intentional and the way to resolve it is to ensure that all large projects provide a materials board with proposed colors. Chair Durand replied that while he was surprised by the final colors that weren't what he remembered because it may not have been presented very clearly, the final color combination has grown on him and isn't that bad. Kennedy added that he didn't believe the design was represented as being different colors.

Adjournment

Kennedy: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Sides.

Roll Call: Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Sullivan, Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:00PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City
Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-203