

## City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

<b>Board or Committee:</b>	<b>Design Review Board – Regular Meeting</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 6:00 pm</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Remote Participation via Zoom</b>
<b>DRB Members Present:</b>	<b>David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, J. Michael Sullivan, Sarah Tarbet</b>
<b>DRB Members Absent:</b>	<b>Chair Paul Durand</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Kate Newhall-Smith</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Colleen Brewster</b>

Acting-Chair Perras calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

### **Signs in the Urban Renewal Area**

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There are no sign applications to review.

### **Projects in the Urban Renewal Area**

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1. **252 Bridge Street and 32-34 Federal Street:** Final Design Review – The Exchange Salem – Part 1: Redevelopment of 252 Bridge Street, the ‘Crescent Lot’ into a six-story mixed use building with approximately 7,325 square feet of commercial space, up to 120 residential units that will be offered at varying levels of affordability, creation of public spaces, and site improvements, continued from 8/10/22.

Ramie Schneider (WinnDevelopment), Steve Prestejohn (Cube3), and Michael Blier (Landscape Architect at Landworks Studio) were present to discuss the project.

Schneider stated that based on feedback heard at the previous meeting they studied details and prepared alternative color options for the Bridge Street elevation. They will return in November with a cohesive plan of the overall building and feedback on the colors.

Prestejohn stated that they last came before the DRB in September. Comments received were to develop the Bridge Street elevation, particularly at the slip ramp, to focus on building materials and colors, to eliminate the faux wood grain, prepare color studies and provide specifications on the storefronts.

Blier stated that they are proposing a continuous public realm linking Bridge Street to the train station below and North Salem above, while providing multiple connection points through the site and to create a sense of place and expanding the ground plane from the upper plaza to the rail yard. A strong planted street edge will frame the entry at the arrival plaza and allow people to move through or linger at the site and provide access to the sloped walkway and stair. A bike rack will be located at the arrival plaza along with planting areas outside of the overhang. At the end of the retail block, the proposed turf has been replaced with soft pave for flexible programmatic space. The lower level will have precast pavers, reclaimed granite monoliths, use native plantings as the primary layer, and upright trees along the street edge. The sloped walkway will create a strong

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pedestrian connection with visual punch, and they are still exploring an art strategy that responds smartly to the history of the site or have the handrail become art.

Kennedy arrived.

Miller noted her concern with traversing down the ramp and the turn to connect to the North Salem connector. She requested an option for the traffic to have a similarly sized wide flow along the sidewalk rather than a traditional width sidewalk, as well as a crosswalk to accommodate both types of pedestrian traffic. Schneider replied that they have considered it and it would require MBTA review and approval.

Miller noted that vehicles pull-up to the side of the slip ramp and use it as a drop-off and asked what would prevent vehicles from continuing to do that, such as reducing the width. Schneider replied that they are studying that with the Planning Board (PB). The pinch point is 20-feet and extending could affect fire code minimums. Miller suggested using the minimum road width and placing tree at the middle/to the left of the slip ramp, which would also provide visual interest.

Miller stated that the plaza drop-off looks as if there is an area to cut through the planting and suggested that a small stair be added to allow people to pass from one area to the other. Blier replied that there are significant topographic differences between the two areas, approximately 2-3-feet.

Miller raised concerns with the wildflower mix, which will produce a lot of ragweed for those with allergies and suggested Sweet Woodruff. Blier agreed to provide a revised plant list.

Miller suggested the tall trees continue along Bridge Street to provide greenery outside the residential unit window above. Blier suggested they might encroach upon the existing retaining wall that they cannot touch. Schneider agreed to study how to accommodate additional trees, soil depth and its correlation to the additional load of the weight of the soil.

Miller asked what color the sloped walk would be. Blier replied that the material and color have yet to be determined.

Tarbet noted that many of these items were discussed at the PB meetings. She too was concerned about the sidewalk width at the pull-off and if the depth could be increased. Blier replied that the connection does slope and move both down and away from the street, creating a cantilevered sidewalk, but they can provide better visuals.

Tarbet asked if there was a similar drop off on the right next to the train station. Blier replied that there is a wall. Acting-Chair Perras noted that the 90-degree turn seemed abrupt and could be eased.

Acting-Chair Perras noted his curiosity about how the building interacts with the retaining wall, and if there was there a gap or some type of engagement.

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Acting-Chair Perras requested clarification of the flooding plan. Prestejohn replied that all important spaces will be placed above the flood plain. When flood waters are present the enclosed condition spaces on the lower level: the fire command center, trash room, fire pump room, and both stair elevator core, will have active flood proofing which consists of walls built on top of a 3-foot-high cast in place concrete curb that are 1-foot above the 10-foot base flood elevation. Anchors will be installed in the slab at all door openings for flood gates during times of flooding. The walls will have insulation, furring, and will be inboard to eliminate damage. Water will be free to move in and out of the garage and the 2 dashed lines on plan indicate the height limits required for Chapter 91.

Acting-Chair Perras noted that the reused granite is good but has been placed in snow zones and asked if they will be flush. Blier replied that the granite will be used for seating and will not clutter the snow removal process. Miller suggested the granite near all walking paths be seat wall height, so they aren't tripping hazards. Blier replied that they don't know how many of them will be used but they will vary them through the site.

### Bridge Street Architecture

Prestejohn stated that they developed 2 design options.

Option 1: Provides consistent building language, the east façade is largely unchanged, the skin stretches around the end of the building, depth and shadow lines are provided, and there is consistency through layering and movement. The street and river façades would use the same design strategies with warmer colors linking both sides. Schneider noted that the wood grain material has been eliminated.

Option 2: Provides a more dynamic and contextual referential, using the protruding bays of the Probate Court building for guidance. The proposed bays now have a slight angle directing their view towards North Street. They provided a color balance and a ratio of warm color against the background color that changes as you move along the building façade. The colored panels would be smooth with no faux wood grain finish. Rather than the previously proposed mix of colors, the comments suggested a consideration for terra cotta colors. Three alternate Hardi Panel colors options were proposed, 1) Terrain, 2) Baked Clay, and 3) Elegant Red. Wythe Windows are proposed in the Stuyvesant model, typically 36-inches-wide, with the lower 18-inches-high being operable with a 5-foot-high fixed window above, in varying sizes. The Kawneer 451 windows and doors are proposed at street level, with a 4-1/2-inch-deep mullion profile and a centered window to create shadow lines, in an anodized aluminum finish with a Low-E glazing.

Prestejohn presented three supplemental images showing the warm fields in an urban expression and to better understand the sidewalk experience at the top of the slope along Bridge Street. Relocating spaces out of the flood plain meant placing them along the first floor but they did so by continuing the rhythm of the storefront along the streetscape, and the over-framed angled bays above.

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Sullivan asked if the building meets the overpass or if there is some relief because there appears to be a valley. Prestejohn replied that the face of the building is between 5-8-feet beyond the face of the retaining wall. Miller requested all proposed barriers between the street and the building be shown in future plans.

Sullivan asked why the two-tone color option changed. Prestejohn replied they were explorations of the terra cotta material which is more consistent in color tone. Kennedy noted that that thought the slight randomness of the warm tone pattern provided interest and suggested maintaining the striping rather than a solid tone which lacks interest, such as alternating panels from light to dark. Sullivan agreed, and preferred option 2 which provide dimensional variation, because the façade is losing some of its pizzazz. Miller noted that she doesn't see the two-tone as wood-like and old buildings can have unmatched pieces of material that aren't all one color, like with granite or limestone, because the random two-tone is more interesting. Acting-Chair Perras raised his previous concern regarding blending/mixing color to expresses the linearity and noted his preference for random alternating of colors rather than a row-by-row color change. He agreed with the newly proposed colors, noted the loss of the dynamic feel and needing a blend to make the façade look less massive. His preference was for option 1 and for the narrow end facing the bridge that's all grey to have a warm material wrap it to provide additional depth. Sullivan noted his preference for option 1, which was more dynamic, and splaying the three bays. Miller noted her preference for option 1 with an end that balances with the water side. She suggested both ends be wrapped with warm materials and more edges that extend away from the building or to use the same colors in different forms. Acting-Chair Perras noted that the Washington Street edge wraps around warmth and speaks as urban. Tarbet noted her preference for option 2 and the difference between the wayfinding success of retail being different and cascading material which reads as a different/public use. She disagreed about the varying materials and color trying to mimic a natural material and the subtle difference with an unnatural material, that won't be successful. Using the actual material would be a better option, like at the family court building with the playfulness of limestone and texture. She noted that the standout of the bays was also too stark, and the difference should be more subtle. Jaquith noted his preference for option 1 and the ideas of the bays, but he doesn't feel it works well, and that the design was losing some of its rigidity.

Acting-Chair Perras agreed with base being a different color, that should wrap and tuck under the overhang Tarbet liked how the material continues to the base. Schneider stated that the design team liked the bay on Bridge Street, but they needed to incorporate the light grey at the base and with the strong grey corner but didn't want the light grey starting too close to North Street bridge. Prestejohn stated that they need to study where to stop/continue the light grey. Acting-Chair Perras stated that he would not like to see the light grey turn the corner and bisect the base, it should start further down Bridge Street.

### Color Options

Acting-Chair Perras stated that he is not in favor of the red. Tarbet preferred the dark red. Kennedy suggested a blending of light or dark colors with very subtle striping. Tarbet questioned whether the panel size was too large for the proposed method of

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installation. Presetjohn stated that they will provide additional color options. Jaquith noted his preference for option 1 but wanted more diversity in the design, while understanding the light grey would continue towards North Street. Kennedy raised concerns regarding where the light grey would stop. Miller noted her preference for a 2-tone option, for the Bridge Street facade to be more urban, and questioned the areas where dark grey would be used. Sullivan reiterated his preference for option 1 and agreed with all comments made. Tarbet noted her preference for option 1 with a light grey base or option 2 with less contrast at the bays. Acting-Chair Perras noted his preference for option 1 and to increase the over framing of tectonics with color variation. Miller suggested the bays be placed on option 1. Schneider suggested obtaining off-schedule feedback from the DRB prior to the next regular meeting. Newhall-Smith replied that the Board could send their comments to her individually and she could forward them to the design team.

### **Public Comment:**

Newhall-Smith stated that she received HSI comments from last month's meeting as well as additional comments.

Emily Udy, HSI & 8 Buffum Street. Provided some earlier notes, preferred option 2, and noted that seeing the rendering helped to understand the detailing of the materials. She was enamored by the over-framing in either scenario but hoped the design would meet the traditional details rendered but in a contemporary way. She asked if something could be added to the grey to create depth or along the top to call out the tripartite elevation of the earlier version with its windows of differing sizes that created visual interest along the North Street façade, while the new options now have regularized window patterns. She appreciated the board comments but felt an urgency regarding the understanding the slope of the sidewalk along Bridge Street and raised concern with the plaza not fully intersecting with the sidewalk and cantilevering with handrails bring proposed that will surround the plaza and impact the perception of openness. She asked why the sidewalk could not cantilever everywhere rather than in one spot and if the building could approach the retaining wall since the perception has been that they would touch. She suggested the existing slip ramp guardrail, which is in poor shape, be thoroughly addressed by the DRB and replaced.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Tarbet asked if the handrail would be located at the perimeter of the plaza. Blier replied that the change in grade is challenging for accessibility; they will need some edge railing when a person crosses over. The existing railing on top of the wall is not great and is 5-eight-feet away from the face of the building. They will create as wide of an opening as possible to the plaza. Tarbet noted that the meeting the sidewalk at a level area is critical and the front guardrail and opening only at two locations should look more open. Blier replied that the condition would be studied.

Acting-Chair Perras agreed with Emily Udy's comments regarding window variation and being drawn to use of over-framing to link multiple windows creating an intermediate

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scale, making it more human. He has no concern with the use of grey along Bridge Street if the armatures were more dynamic.

Miller noted that because the project has changed so much, the Board put a lot of energy into revisiting elements rather than focusing on regular items like window mullions and railings.

**VOTE:** Miller: Motion to continue to the November 16<sup>th</sup> with input provided to the design team. Seconded by: Jaquith.

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

2. **231 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Remove six windows, replace three with new windows and restore and reinstall three at Rockafella's.

Juliana Silva from MS Masonry and Stone Services was present to discuss the project.

Silva stated that no windows changed on Essex Street and the bay window would change another time. Along the Washington Street façade, two one-over-one windows on the right-side bay were removed, the window opening in-filled with plywood and the bay window on the first floor of Essex Street are being repaired. All second-floor windows along Washington Street that are circled in red will be replaced with wood windows.

Acting-Chair Perras asked if the new vinyl windows would be replaced with wood windows in their original one-over-one or two-over-two configurations. Silva replied yes. Acting-Chair Perras asked if the owner reviewed the Planning Department letter. Newhall-Smith was unaware. Acting-Chair Perras asked if the glass would be insulated and if the muntins will be applied to the exterior to maintain the look of the original windows. Miller noted that replacement window mullions tend to be thicker and suggested the sash and jamb dimensions of the new windows match the dimensions of the existing windows above and do not look thicker. Sullivan agreed and requested a window head, jamb, and mullion comparison diagram with to ensure the dimensions match, along with any other window details. Jaquith agreed with seeking to match the likeness between the upper-level windows and the replacement windows.

Silva noted her difficulty with finding all wood window manufacturers. Jaquith agreed to provide additional manufacturers. Miller suggested the applicant measure the third-floor window dimensions to provide a close match on the second floor. Acting-Chair Perras requested a dimensioned drawing/elevation of the final window arrangement to match the original.

Public Comment:

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Jaquith: Motion to continue to November 16, 2022. Seconded by: Kennedy.

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

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## Projects Outside the Urban Renewal Area

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There are no projects outside the Urban Renewal area to review.

## New / Old Business

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1. Approval of Minutes:
  - a. September 28, 2022

**VOTE:** Kennedy: Motion to approve the September 28, 2022. Seconded by: Tarbet.  
Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Sullivan, Tarbet, Perras were in favor. Miller abstained due to her absence. Passes 5-0.

2. Staff Updates, if any:

Newhall-Smith stated that the Real Pirates owners will remove temporary signage in November.

Acting-Chair Perras noted that Notch Brewery also installed a temporary sign on a neighboring building without permission. Newhall-Smith to investigate the matter.

Newhall-Smith stated that the Board needs to determine elections nominees since Helen Sides who has left the Board was a Vice-Chair.

Kennedy stated that he may not be available next meeting

Miller stated that Rockafella's needs assistance with the application process and providing the necessary information for their review, preferably an architect.

## Adjournment

Tarbet: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Tarbet.

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

The meeting is adjourned at 7:45PM.

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