

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
March 1, 2017

A meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 7:00 pm at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Jessica Herbert (Chair), Laurie Bellin, David Hart, Susan Keenan, Joanne McCrea, Larry Spang and Jane Turiel.

13 Warren Street

Ryan Guilmartin submitted an application for a Certificate of Hardship to rebuild chimney above roofline.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application:
- Photographs
- Paint color samples

Patti reported that the applicant has requested to continue the hearing to the Commission's next meeting. He is having difficulty finding a carpenter willing to rebuild the chimney as it is considered too small of a job.

VOTE: *Ms. Bellin made a motion to continue the hearing. Ms. Turiel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.*

287-291 Lafayette Essex Street

Renewal Ventures LLC submitted an application for a Certificate of Hardship for approval of a rooftop HVAC unit.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: January 30, 2017
- Photographs

The applicant David Pabich was present. John Seger of Seger Architects was also present.

Ms. Bellin recused herself.

Mr. Pabich read a letter he wrote to the Commission on January 21, 2017 explaining the history of the project.

Ms. Herbert asked if Mr. Pabich if he had researched whether a smaller unit could be used.

Mr. Pabich replied that his consultant stated that the unit installed was the smallest unit possible.

Ms. Herbert asked Mr. Seger whether adding a new addition on the roof to screen the unit had been considered.

Mr. Seger replied that he has not considered using a faux roof or addition to screen.

Mr. Pabich questioned whether this type of addition would be able to screen units from all vantage points.

Ms. Herbert asked Mr. Pabich and Mr. Seger whether they had considered locating the unit in the basement or elsewhere on lot.

Mr. Pabich responded that the basement is in use and locating the unit on the lot raised concerns about noise impacts on abutters.

Ms. Kelleher presented an aerial view of the roof that indicates a significant amount of ductwork existing on the building's roof.

Mr. Pabich discussed the need to raise the unit an extra height above roofline and the introduction of sound attenuators which also increased the overall height of the unit.

Ms. Herbert questioned whether the building requires such a large system.

Mr. Seger responded that the mechanical engineer stated that building required a 45 ton unit.

Mr. Hart stated that a Mitsubishi unit may have been smaller.

Mr. Seger questioned whether this type of unit could be used based on the number of classrooms in the building.

Mr. Spang asked about requirements for reinforcing the roof to allow the installation of screens.

Mr. Pabich stated that reinforcements would require significant removal of interior features to access the roof structure.

Ms. Keenan asked for clarification on the green colored unit shown in the photograph.

Mr. Seger replied that it is a transformer.

Mr. Seger presented mocked-up photographs showing the unit painted gray to match the color of the roof.

Ms. Herbert opened the public comment.

Teasie Goggin, 300 Lafayette Street, questioned why the applicant did not know how large, obtrusive and loud the unit would be when it was to be installed. She questioned whether the Commission wanted to approve something that essentially added another floor to the building.

Polly Wilbert, President of the South Salem Neighborhood Association and member of the Salem State Neighborhood Advisory Committee, stated that she has been in contact with the applicant over the past year. She stated that she was told that work was complete but only one screen was added to one side. She reported that she had sent a letter to the Historical Commission reporting the unit. Ms. Wilbert reported that she has consulted with other historic district where less intrusive units have been used. She stated her belief that this unit was not well designed for the building and recommended that the Commission consider seeking a peer review of the unit since the unit has major impacts on the abutting property owners. She also questioned why the building inspector allowed a permit for the unit.

Emily Udy of Historic Salem, Inc. asked the Commission to work with the applicant to mitigate the view of the unit from Lafayette Street. She noted that the square shapes of the unit present the most visually jarring appearance and questioned if there was a design solution that could limit this visual impact

Sandy Power, of the SSHA and a resident of Loring Avenue, presented an image of the rear of the building. She questioned how the unit was allowed in the historic district. She read her written statement into the record.

Mr. Hart asked for clarification on the Commission's jurisdiction of review.

Ms. Kelleher stated that Commission has review of changes visible from Lafayette Street.

Ms. Herbert stated that she was not aware whether the building inspector had issued a building permit.

Nancy Neville, 37 Ocean Avenue, spoke about the major impact of the unit on her rear yard.

William P. Attarich, 303 Lafayette Street, stated that he did not believe the unit impacted the historic nature of the historic district. He also stated that he did not feel that the unit is noisy and did not wish the applicant incur additional costs to replace the unit.

Ms. Herbert asked for a vote to close the public hearing.

Ms. Wilbur requested the Commission not close the hearing to allow the discussion to be continued at the next meeting.

Ms. Herbert stated that the Commission will reopen the hearing at the next meeting

VOTE: Mr. Hart made a motion to close the public hearing. Ms. Turiel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Mr. Spang asked if there was another location to place the unit. He noted that if the application had been presented to the Commission prior to construction, the Commission would have looked at other locations. He asked if the only two options were the roof or ground and if the ground location would be difficult to serve interior space. He noted that the unit was probably located in the spot where it needed to be. He asked for confirmation that unit could not be smaller due to interior space requirements and asked if the roof was reinforced for the existing unit.

Mr. Pabich stated that roof reinforcement was done but was only reinforced at the exact location of the unit and not where a screen could be located. He reported that the framing members run opposite of where a screen could be located. He presented a photograph of the visual screens at the rear of the building.

Mr. Seger responded that he would look at alternatives, including looking at expanding gable.

Ms. Turiel asked about the height of the unit.

Mr. Pabich replied that it was approximately 10 feet above the roof

Ms. McCrea asked if the unit supplied both heat and cooling.

Mr. Pabich replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Hart asked about air flow into the unit.

Mr. Pabich indicated on the photograph where intake and exit flows occur and discussed how that may impact screening location. He reported that the HVAC system is a Trane unit.

Ms. Powers asked for clarification on the discussion of screening and why screening could be used on one location and not another.

Ms. Herbert asked if it was possible to add a balustrade along perimeter of the roof to provide screening.

Mr. Seger stated that could be considered for an option.

Ms. Herbert read into the record a letter of support from the owner of 301 Lafayette Street.

Mr. Spang asked if the inside of building was occupied.

Mr. Pabich replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Spang asked for an engineering analysis on adding a screen for the unit to determine roof reinforcement needs.

Ms. Herbert asked whether it would be worth requesting the unit be painted now to see if it would be sufficient.

Ms. Turiel stated that she believed screening would be a better option than painting.

Mr. Pabich replied that any part of unit extending above a screen would be painted but didn't feel it was appropriate to paint now while considering screen. He also questioned what colors would be the most appropriate. Indicated on drawing how screening might screen lower part of unit and not upper portion.

Mr. Spang asked for the height of clerestory.

Mr. Seger replied that approximately 5 ½ - 6' above the main roofline.

Mr. Spang stated that a screen would need to be significantly higher at approximately 8' to 10' high.

Ms. Kelleher asked if it might be possible to construct a screen that appears more like an architectural feature than a unit screen.

The Commission agreed that a site visit is necessary.

Ms. Herbert discussed the changing nature of utilities and mechanical systems, which are increasing in size. She noted the difficulty faced by the Historical Commission to balance modern needs with historic integrity.

Ms. Wilbert again requested the Commission seek an HVAC peer review. She questioned whether the unit design was driven by cost.

Ms. Herbert stated that Commission will conduct site visit and then will determine whether a peer review is necessary.

VOTE: Ms. McCrea made a motion to continue the hearing to the March 15th meeting. Ms. Turiel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Commission discussed scheduling a site visit on Saturday, March 4th at 11 am. Mr. Spang to visit site on own.

Nancy Neville offered to allow the Commission to review the unit from her back yard.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she would speak with the Building Inspector to determine whether a building permit was issued for the unit.

Request for Comment under Section 106 – MassDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Upgrades

MassDOT and the City of Salem requested comments on proposed upgrades to Summer Street, North Street, Norman Street and Washington Street in the downtown.

Documents & Exhibits

- 25% drawings dated

Ms. Kelleher presented the drawings for pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the downtown.

The Commission agreed to defer their comments until the bike committee has reviewed the plans. The Commission also agreed to request examples of other similar projects done by the project engineer, Toole and to review plans at 50% and 75% completion.

Letter of Support – FY2017 Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund - Women’s Friend Society

Ms. Kelleher presented the request for a letter of support and noted that Mr. Hart had suggested a minor change to letter which has been incorporated.

VOTE: Ms. Bellin made a motion to approve the support letter with changes noted. Ms. Turiel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Other Business

Historical Commission Member Reappointments

Ms. Herbert reported on the recent City Council meeting where Councillors discussed the reappointment of several Historical Commission members. She recommended that Commission members review the City Council SATV tape to hear the discussion.

VOTE: Ms. Bellin made a motion to close the meeting. Ms. McCrea seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Kelleher
Community Development Planner