

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 1, 2016

A meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 7:00 pm at 120 Washington Street, Salem, MA. Present were Jessica Herbert (Chair), Laurie Bellin, Reed Cutting, Joanne McCrea, Larry Spang and Jane Turiel.

20 Chestnut Street

The Applicants, Shawn and Craig Smith, submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to restore a side entry door to its original squared panel and glazing configuration.

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/16/16
- Photographs

The applicant Craig Smith was in attendance.

Mr. Smith clarified that he will be retaining the existing door and will be restoring its panels to their original square configuration.

Ms. Herbert asked if the glass will be clear or frosted.

Mr. Smith responded that they will be clear glass.

Mr. Spang asked if the door will be painted to match existing color.

Mr. Smith responded that door will be repainted to match existing black color.

Mr. Cutting asked if the door as designed is original.

Ms. Herbert stated that the design is more Victorian and the house is Greek Revival.

Mr. Smith agreed.

There was no public comment from the audience. Ms. Herbert read an email from Nina Cohen and Craig Barrows, Chestnut Street, in support of the application

VOTE: *Mr. Cutting made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Ms. Turiel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.*

Peabody Essex Museum Expansion (PEM)

Robert Monk from PEM, Phillip Johns, PEM project architect, and Stephen Chu of Ennead Architects were present.

Mr. Monk reported that the PEM has presented the current plans with the Design Review Board (DRB) and Historic Salem, Inc. He noted that the PEM is not seeking formal approval of the designs, but instead is just presenting an update. The PEM will be working with the DRB for another couple of months. The PEM has asked the DRB to consider the loading dock design as presented to facilitate the project and will be seeking approval of the loading dock at the DRB's next meeting. The design for the rest of building is expected to be finished by the end of July. The museum expects to seek building permits in October.

Mr. Chu presented the drawings for the new addition. He noted that Ennead's concept was to work with scale of other buildings on the PEM campus, seeking to continue the theme of "houses" as utilized in the previous museum expansion and ensure compatibility with the scale of East India Marine Hall (EIMH). The design goal is to give prominence to the EIMH. The plans call for using the same Chelmsford granite as used for the EIMH, but the architects are still in design development phase and considering different finishes for granite. Mr. Chu stated that the scale of the new building will be lower than the apex of the EIMH roof and somewhat the same height as 173 Essex Street. The façade of the new building bends slightly to match the arc of Essex Street.

Ms. Herbert asked about the height difference between the new building and the EIMH.

Mr. Chu stated that there the new building will be approximately 7' lower than the ridgeline of the EIMH.

Ms. Herbert expressed concern with the square corner of the new addition against the EIMH.

Mr. Chu noted that extensive tree plantings will highlight the EIMH and the architects will be revising the edge of the building further in design development.

Mr. Monk noted that the plans have been revised to retain the EIMH façade as currently exists – the PEM is no longer proposing to replace windows with three doors as originally presented.

Mr. Chu presented preliminary landscape plans for new garden.

Ms. Kelleher asked whether any existing trees or plantings will be saved and reused.

Mr. Monk stated that they are looking at opportunities to save healthy trees but it is too early to tell.

Mr. Chu presented drawings showing preliminary plans to add landscaping to the Charter Street side of the building and to redesign the loading dock. The museum is considering a low hedge with a sliding gate along the property line on Charter Street to provide security and improve visual appearance of Charter Street.

Mr. Spang asked about the green space depicted on drawings.

Mr. Monk stated that it will be lawn.

Mr. Spang expressed concern that lawn will be used inappropriately.

Mr. Monk stated that there are security cameras on the space and on the Witch Memorial.

Ms. McCrea asked whether PEM has made plans to reincorporate the anchor.

Mr. Monk stated that there is not yet a plan for the anchor or the cannon. He noted that the anchor is in deteriorated condition. There will be an interpretive marker showing evolution of museum incorporated into the new design.

Ms. McCrea expressed concern that without the anchor at the front of the EIMH the streetscape is very plain.

Mr. Monk stated that the PEM is considering reusing the Marine Arts Building for a restaurant.

Mr. Monk presented photographs of the windows and staircase at 173 Essex Street, which were discussed by the SHC at the last meeting.

The Commission discussed the original fenestration of the elevation.

Mr. Chu stated that the window in the stairwell is not original.

Mr. Spang expressed concern that the museum is turning its back on Charter Street. Concerned about streetscape – removal of boiler was a positive. Further landscaping could help to improve. Would PEM consider incorporating objects or sculpture to enliven the space and add more energy like at the façade and east side. Is there a way to allow patrons to move in and out of museum to outside spaces to activate exterior.

Ms. Bellin asked if any entrances will be added.

Mr. Monk stated that one entry will be added for group tours only.

Mr. Spang asked if truck delivery angle could be reconsidered to allow more greenspace.

Mr. Monk responded that museum has considered many different opportunities but space limitations exist.

Mr. Spang asked if earlier plans showed façade with mostly glass.

Mr. Chu responded that earlier plans did not show any articulation of wall detail.

Ms. Bellin asked what window on façade illuminated.

Mr. Chu stated that space will illuminate staircase, not art.

Ms. Bellin expressed concern that new addition would read as a big blank wall.

Mr. Spang recommended consideration of interplay between exterior and interior like at the Whitney Museum.

Mr. Chu responded that approach was to focus on one large window that would be more impactful than many small windows.

Ms. Turiel agreed with Ms. Bellin's opinion.

Mr. Cutting expressed his opinion that design is appropriate.

Ms. McCrea stated her support of a single window but expressed concern that wall is blank.

Ms. Herbert asked about use of space on first floor.

Mr. Chu stated that it will be an interior circulation ramp.

Ms. Herbert asked if there will be a physical model.

Mr. Chu replied in the affirmative.

Hannah Diozzi, a guide at the museum, expressed her excited with the project.

Mr. Monk stated that the PEM expects to return to the Commission at the end of June to present revised drawings. The PEM will also present revised drawings to the Design Review Board, Historic Salem Inc and the Planning Board.

After the discussion ended, James Warren, 17 Central Street, spoke to the Commission about the potential impacts of the PEM expansion, particularly related to pedestrian activity or lack thereof along the stretch of the pedestrian mall near the museum.

Ms. Herbert recommended that the Commission send a letter to PEM reiterating comments made during meeting, including a suggestion that PEM explore the possibility of rethinking the Dodge Wing.

The Commission agreed and recommended that the letter also be sent to the DRB and HSI.

Mr. Spang recommended that the letter focus particular attention on the Charter Street streetscape.

Historical Commission Work Plan FY 2017

Ms. Kelleher asked the Commission to consider their priorities for the upcoming fiscal year in order to provide guidance to staff on activities to undertake in addition to historic district administration.

Mr. Cutting asked Ms. Kelleher about her priorities.

Ms. Kelleher responded that the creation of a new preservation website, building upon the recently formed Preservation Partners coalition, and realtor education were among the activities that she believed should be prioritized.

Ms. Turiel suggested that a packet with historic district maps and Commission guidelines could be designed to education local realtors.

Mr. Cutting suggested that the Commission consider the legislation that established the Derby Street historic district. Recent applications for the district highlighted the Commission's lack of jurisdiction over portions of Derby Street properties not visible from Derby Street.

Ms. Turiel recommended two priorities – strengthening the demolition delay ordinance and changing what is within purview of the SHC for visibility from a public way. She asked what would be required in order to make these changes.

Ms. Kelleher answered that both would require amendments that would need review and approval from the City Council.

Mr. Spang recommended that the Commission look at window and roofing materials in the historic districts. He suggested that a photographic guide of recommended materials and examples of their use be created, which could be given to applicants. This guide could also be posted on the Commission's website.

Ms. Herbert suggested that the guide include examples and explanations of specific projects where special circumstances existed that resulted in the approval of materials that are not typically approved in the historic districts.

Ms. Herbert recommended hosting workshops where roof and window vendors could exhibit their products. She suggested a Saturday morning workshop.

Ms. Kelleher agreed and suggested the Commission work with local preservation partners on the effort.

The Commission suggested that PEM be asked to host the event.

Ms. Herbert suggested assigning responsibility for reviewing Certificate of Non-Applicability requests to specific board members on a rotating basis.

Ms. Kelleher responded that she will develop schedule and circulate to the Commission.

VOTE: Mr. Spang made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Kelleher
Community Development Planner