

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
May 5, 2021

A meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 6:00 pm **Zoom Virtual Meeting** Present were: Patti Kelleher, Milo Martinez, Larry Spang, Mark Meche, Vijay Joyce, Erin Schaeffer, Mark Pattison, Rebecca English, Stacey Norkun. Not present: Reed Cutting.

Public Discussion for Historical Commission Design Guidelines Update

Siri Olson, project manager with Easton Architects, NYC, was present to discuss project. Easton is an architectural consulting firm that is working with Salem MA to update historic guidelines notebook. Lisa Easton was also present as Ms. Olson's colleague. A short presentation was unveiled as part of this first public meeting covering the project, process, and goals.

The Salem Historical Commission's Guidelines notebook was first written in 1984 and has been updated to 2010. The notebook governs four historic districts in Salem, MA. The overarching goal is to update notebook to be more accessible, user-friendly, responsive to the types of work happening in Salem, useful to members of the public, city staff agencies, anyone working with historic/old properties in Salem. Guidelines are to be treated as tool and technical resource for treating historical materials and contexts. The project has received a local government grant, and Easton is working with the state (i.e. Massachusetts Historical Commission). The project is currently in phase II of "Content Development," working towards a full draft of guidelines in phase III, "Graphic Design & Full Draft of Guidelines." The target completion date for this project is end of December 2021.

Topics for enhancement and clarifications include: fence repair and replacement; dormers; exterior equipment; sustainability & energy efficiency; treatment of visible secondary facades; alternate materials; architectural styles & historic context

Public comment:

Gabe Ciociola, 11 Winter St, vice president of Salem Common Neighborhood Association. Expressed having little knowledge about historical guidelines, though noted that occasional projects on the Salem Common arise. Mr. Ciociola questioned how much relevance revisions to guidelines will bear on nonresidential structures, features, amenities, etc. in public spaces, such as the arch on the Salem Common. A bandstand also exists in this space, as well as playground and related equipment.

Chair Spang deferred to Ms. Olson who noted that these guidelines are and will be expanded to material and technical information which would be relevant to preservation of any structure, including any pertinent repairing technologies and techniques (such as the repair of things like metals). Chair Spang pointed out that the arch in Salem Common is unique, but stated that such structures are still appropriate and subject to guidelines jurisdiction. Historically appropriate paving was also mentioned as a potential addition to the guidelines.

Carol Carr, 7 River Street. Lauded the guidelines as a resource and advised keeping historic standards high without yielding authority to other entities. Cited recent phenomenon of increased developers proposing changes and ignoring standards. The speaker also expressed concern over projects that disregard preservationist efforts, citing construction on North, Bridge, and Lynde Streets which have changed characters of neighborhoods. Carol also stated the need to be mindful of projects that become intrusive into neighboring properties; as well as unsightly and potentially noisy exterior elements like utility meters, heating and cooling units, and the like.

Chair Spang and Ms. Olson agreed with Carol as to the importance of scale, proportion, and massing of projects. Ms. Olson noted that façade rhythm and streetscape rhythm will be considered features moving forward. Chair Spang cited an application from within the past two years in which drawings of a planned replacement of Federal post-and-beam with more modern timber frame construction demonstrated the need for attention to scale.

Barb, 47 Washington Square North. Spoke to the relative difficulty of the existing guidelines for first-time applicants, citing specific challenges with outdoor renovations. Proposed including a list of properties in the new handbook (such as in appendices) that are subject to historic conditions and guidelines, as well as those which are excluded. Ms. Olson agreed as to the usefulness of such lists, though noted that the guidelines could also be referenced by residents living outside of the districts' boundaries.

Christian Haselgrove, 125 Derby Street. Cited the need for more efforts to publicize the existence of the guidelines, having been unaware of their existence as a homeowner in a historic district of 10 years. Mr. Haselgrove asked whether the guidelines will be regulatory or informative.

Ms. Olson noted that the guidelines will be a tool to guide and parallel the Commission's decisions. Informed by the established guidelines, the Commission's review of and decision on projects will always and ultimately be final from a regulatory perspective. Ms. Kelleher added that all applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis using the guidelines as guidance, not necessarily steadfast rules. Mr. Meche further noted that guidelines will likely quote or make use of existing regulations and should be considered regulatory. Chair Spang differentiated between guidelines like those of the Historical Commission as opposed to building codes.

Emily Udy, 8 Buffum St, was present on behalf of Historic Salem Inc. Commended the city and Commission for undertaking this project, calling the guidelines a benefit for homeowners in historic districts to understand the process and need for Commission to review process. Ms. Udy expressed interest in any regulations or guidelines concerning future efforts to expand district boundaries and/or add new districts. The following questions were posed: will guidelines create greater ease for homeowners? Or new/increased boundaries? Where and how quickly should specific comments be addressed or delivered? And when will a draft of the guidelines be viewable before final stages?

Ms. Olson noted that written questions and comments could be emailed to Ms. Kelleher and/or Ms. Olson until May 19, 2021. There will be a second public meeting and a chance to submit feedback in the future on a full Public Review Draft of the updated *Guidelines*.

Ms. Olson further informed that a draft would be produced and shared ahead of the second public meeting for the public to review and discuss. Ms. Kelleher noted that the present meeting would be uploaded to [preservingsalem.com](http://preservingsalem.com) for future viewing. Chair Spang advised that if Ms. Udy or others have comments/questions, those would be preferred sooner than later. Chair Spang also noted the possibility of altering the currently scheduled date of early August for the second public meeting, citing past difficulties and/or low attendance turnouts at the end of summer.

Ms. Schaeffer cited the importance of climate change and questioned if a specific section/chapter might be dedicated to sea level rise, citing existing flooding concerns in Derby St. moving forward. Can future districts be developed and/or expanded in answering this issue? Chair Spang noted that flood requirements are sometimes at odds with how historic properties are configured. Ms. Schaeffer noted that relocation, while not ideal, may be something to plan for in the future. Ms. Olson agreed that this will be something to take stock of in the revisions.

Ms. Kelleher read email comments and questions from the following: Lou Sirianni, Botts Ct., "the commission should be mandated to consider materials re: pavement, at-grade changes, visible from public ways." Ms. Kelleher pointed out that the district ordinance is written to exclude such considerations from jurisdiction, thus indicating that making alterations may be outside the current project of revising the handbook. An additional email comment from Peter Pittman noted that the Salem Handbook is a great tool and should be consulted as a document to incorporate and/or reference in the guidelines. These comments can be referenced in the "Shared Folder" on the Historical Commission's website. Additional recommendations from Mr. Pittman were as follows: "When homeowners [and/or] contractors apply for a permit, the applicable sections of the guidelines should be signed and attached to the building permit in addition to the Historical Commission decision [in order to] help prevent misunderstandings, set expectations, and help reinforce requirements. [...] All plumbing and HVAC permits must

be approved by Commission administratively [in order] to prevent or camouflage unsightly vents.” Ms. Olson noted that these comments were mostly about jurisdiction at least as much as procedure, though stated that the guidelines could function as an informational resource with regards to necessary permitting.

Brian Payne was unable to access microphone to pose question/comment. Chair Spang recommended reaching out via email as a follow-up.

#### 7 North Pine Street - continuation

Stephanie Ellis submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install roof and wall vents

#### Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Photographs

Stephanie Ellis and her daughter Ashley were present.

The applicant wishes to install two venting systems – dryer vent on south wall / upper gable on side elevation of building; as well as another vent on the back of the building. Mr. Joyce had previously proposed trying to center dryer vent onto clapboards. The applicant has proposed locating the vents on the roof, which is a mansard style. A turbine and bathroom vent fan have been proposed. Mr. Meche asked what kind of vents currently exist on the roof. Mr. Martinez questioned considering a mushroom style vent over a turbine. Mr. Pattison noted that turbines move air more forcefully. Mr. Joyce noted that turbine vents have been extant for some time (the design was patented in 1910), and would make sense in this installation. Ms. Kelleher noted different measurements between turbine and alternatives, and stated that visibility from the street will be minimal. Mr. Meche asked if these turbines point straight up or at an angle, to which Mr. Pattison stated that turbine vents are made so that they can be straightened out.

Mr. Joyce asked how tall the bathroom fan vent (not the turbine vent) is, specifically vertically. Ms. Ellis was unaware of the measurement but noted that this information can be derived from documentation. Ms. Ellis clarified that the vent will be on the rear side of the house. Chair Spang asked as to the brand of the vents proposed, information which the applicant noted could be obtained. Ms. Ellis asked if there are other historic properties/structures that have these types of venting systems, particularly with regard to how such systems ought to be implemented to and keep consistency? Chair Spang noted that the square style is typical; the challenge is how to make them least detrimental to the appearance.

Mr. Pattison asked for clarification as to the location of the proposed turbine vent. Ms. Ellis responded that it will be installed on rear roof to vent attic space. Mr. Pattison stated that he has seen them installed frequently and performing superbly (including in the attic space application). Mr. Martinez asked if there is already a vent in the attic. Ms. Ellis affirmed that there are existing fans, but the current setup is not offering ideal and/or efficient ventilation. Mr. Pattison attested having been in the house and noted that another vent exists in the home. Chair Spang expressed curiosity as to whether any party walls separated units in the attic, to which Mr. Pattison noted that minor partitions exist. Mr. Martinez inquired as to where the existing bathroom fan is currently venting to. Ms. Ellis noted that the bathroom fan vents into the attic, followed by tubing to the side of the house. Mr. Martinez sought to ensure any existing vents to be replaced will be patched appropriately, and also questioned where the dryer vents to. Ms. Ellis stated that washer/dryer had been venting into metal tubing which ultimately went to the roof. Existing venting locations on roof are unknown by applicant.

Chair Spang asked the Commission if enough information existed to make an approval. Mr. Martinez expressed desire to see model numbers to ensure knowledge of what items will be installed, existing items, etc. Mr. Joyce corroborated the need for such specifications in terms of precedent. Ms. Ellis requested specific follow-up instructions as to what information is needed as well as what photographs of existing conditions are desired. Chair Spang conveyed interest in seeing a vent that can be hid/blend into clapboards (a Hide-A-Vent Solution was showcased). Mr. Pattison clarified

that the Hide-a-Vent model showed application on shingles rather than clapboards, though Mr. Meche said that different varieties are available. The Commission would like to see the size of those particular roof vents; models numbers of proposed vents; height above the roof plane; determine what will happen to old vents when new vents are placed; and look at Hide-a-Vents as alternatives.

No public comment.

**VOTE:** Mr. Meche moved to continue the application to the next scheduled meeting on May 19, 2021. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

#### 140 Derby Street – continuation

Patrick Shea submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new paint colors

#### Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Photographs

Patrick Shea was present.

Mr. Shea noted that all paint colors listed were brought together with the façade: Monterey White, Downpour Blue, and Vermillion (all Benjamin Moore). Mr. Meche is working with the applicant and Steve Livermore (architect), and noted a consensus that the elevation drawing has progressed and is close to being in an approvable state. Mr. Meche conveyed applicant's desire to isolate storefront area from the existing application, particularly so as to move forward with interior approved work. Mr. Shea applied for building permit in January; initially the building department was okay with moving forward under the understanding that applicant would be working with the Historic Commission. Because the online portal is linked with Historic Commission and other departments that need to sign off, builders cannot move forward without Historical Commission sign-off. As a result of continued discussion of façade, the project has been delayed beyond expectations.

New architectural drawings were acquired and exhibited during the meeting showing elevations. Mr. Meche noted that he and Ms. Norkun had approved of the project, but the building department needs to now make the next determination. Ms. Kelleher corroborated what Mr. Shea has said about the city's new online permitting system, and noted that the project has not been signed off on yet because detailed were not finalized. Mr. Meche asked for clarification as to what "sign off" means for members of the Historical Commission, to which Ms. Kelleher clarified that approval requires a checkbox. Mr. Meche asked for clarification if the Commission could move the project forward with the exception of the façade. Ms. Schaeffer expressed approval that Mr. Shea move forward, noting further that members' normal courses of action in clearing projects to move forward ought to be sufficient. The Commission generally agreed that this project should be permitted to begin rough-ins, allowing trade and building permits to be cleared, with an understanding that discussions and work still need to take place regarding the exterior, façade, openings, and the like. Mr. Shea has agreed to not work in the façade areas until the Commission reaches consensus.

**VOTE:** Mr. Meche made a motion to allow Ms. Kelleher to sign off on building permit application with the understanding that Mr. Shea restrict construction work to areas other than the storefront. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Mr. Shea asked for some assurance as to a particular date that builders can pull permits, and Ms. Kelleher confirmed having signed off on the building permit.

Ms. Norkun requested details as to how each paint color will be applied, especially given that additional trim work and molding remains to be determined. Mr. Martinez noted that a fourth color will potentially be needed to help break up the bottom portion of the façade (which would all be Monterey White). Mr. Shea asked for clarification as to what is being pitched about paint colors: is he meant to ask which paint colors are appropriate or where the paint colors can be appropriately placed? Chair Spang affirmed that both color and placement were pertinent for the Commission to review. Mr. Joyce advised Mr. Shea to paint swatches that the Commission can look at in the real world in order to expedite reviewing the matter of paint colors. Mr. Meche established clarification as to which components will be which color (door = red; body = blue; how much trim and accent will be other colors remains to be seen). Mr. Joyce expressed concern as to whether the Monterey White would be too bright and not rich enough at eye level. Ms. Norkun agreed that sizeable areas of white may look out of place.

**VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to continue the review of proposed paint colors to the next meeting on May 19, 2021. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.**

Mr. Shea stated that he had applied to the storefront façade program, though was notified by the planning department that there is no money left in the fund.

#### 310 Lafayette Street - continuation

Kenneth and Monica Leisey submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace windows (after the fact)

##### Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Photographs

Ms. Kelleher reported that the applicant requested another continuation. If the continuation is approved, Ms. Kelleher proposed establishing a deadline given that extensions have already been given concerning this violation. Mr. Martinez asked for clarification on timeline moving forward.

**VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to continue the application to the next scheduled meeting on May 19, 2021, stipulating that applicant have window modifications ready for viewing on a site visit by May 29. Ms. English seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.**

#### 159 Derby Street—continuation

Paul Nathan submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new accessible ramp

##### Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Photographs

Ms. Kelleher reported that the applicant, Salem Arts Association requested a continuation since design drawings for the ramp were not yet ready.

**VOTE: Ms. Norkun made a motion to continue the application to the next scheduled meeting on May 19, 2021. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.**

11 Orne Square

Pamela Coffin submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace shed.

## Documents &amp; Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Photographs

Ms. Coffin noted that an existing shed will be replaced with a larger one to be placed against chain link fence in backyard as much in corner as possible. Notes that telephone pole and tree prevent placement quite far back. The new shed is 10x14 rather than the existing 6x8. No color has been selected as of yet.

Chair Spang questioned need for building permits or zoning issues. Ms. Coffin attested that the proposed size is under requirements for building permits and free of zoning restrictions. Mr. Meche questioned what the shed will sit on, advising that it must be level. Chair Spang requested looking at a model number. Ms. Coffin noted that the shed is being acquired through Eastern Shed, specifically the Chateau model (and a cupola will be put on it). The applicant later clarified that the Aspen model, not the Chateau, was had been ordered. Mr. Pattison asked for clarification as to the size of this shed being cleared with the city of Salem. Mr. Meche cited section 3.2.4 from the Zoning Ordinance to note that, if the shed is in excess of 120 sq ft, a variance will need to be procured, over which the Commission does not have jurisdiction.

Chair Spang inquired as to whether other sheds look more historically appropriate in terms of size, proportions, windows, window types, etc. Chair Spang also questioned the materials to be used on the proposed shed. Mr. Pattison noted that windows are typically vinyl and trim boards are PVC (fascia, corner boards, etc.). Ms. Kelleher notes that a chateau-style shed was previously approved for 6 S Pine St (without windows and placed further back into the lot) in 2019. Mr. Meche noted that a shed of 10x12 in size, for instance, would be needed to avoid needing the variance with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Chair Spang noted that the Chateau model through Eastern Shed is modern-looking, and identified the need to simplify a historic utility structure with natural materials, e.g. no windows (as was done with 6 S Pine). If windows are to be used, they should be consistent with existing structures. If a cupola is to be used, it should look appropriate to a historic building. Mr. Martinez noted that the 6 S Pine shed was a utility structure, all-cedar shed and siding; and may have had a plank or slab door. The panel door on the Chateau model looks more like an interior door. Mr. Joyce noted that 2 over 2 instead of 4 over 4 windows would be preferred; and the are wider than they are tall. Windowless would solve these issues. Ms. Norkun proposed going with the Aspen model through the Eastern Shed website, such as the extended gable, and making use of more customizable options in approaching historical appropriateness. Chair Spang recommends more utilitarian in look, such as barndoor rather than vinyl door such as one might see in a house; reaffirming the need to look more consistent with historical qualities of Orne Square. Mr. Joyce proposed contacting Eastern Shed to inquire as to windows without grills. The Commission also suggested a crossbuck door and approved of the Aspen's extended overhang gable. Mr. Pattison asked as to the materials used, to which the applicant noted that pine tongue and groove was specified on the Eastern Shed site. Mr. Martinez also requested a site plan with existing shed and proposed shed locations. Commission noted that if the shed were turned away from Orne Sq/a public-facing way, there would be no issue here other than only materials.

The Commission requested a written explanation of the purchased shed's specifications, trim, windows, materials, roof shingles, etc. Applicant noted that the shingles will be 3-tab. Mr. Pattison asked for confirmation as to whether a site plan will be needed; Chair Spang affirmed the need. Applicant expressed openness as to paint color, potentially painting the same color as the existing shed, which Commission members were agreeable to. Mr. Meche asked about any Orne Square condominium requirements on paint color, to which applicant noted that colors do not pertain to sheds.

No public comment.

**VOTE:** Mr. Martinez made a motion to continue to next meeting on May 19, 2021. Ms. English seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

### 55 Warren Street

Kelly Ran and Ryan Meador submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install AC system.

### Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 5/5/21
- Slideshow

Kelly Ran and Ryan Meador sought permission to install two AC condenser units at southwest corner of lot, far from property line along Dalton Pkwy, approximately 85 ft back from fence. Applicants presented proposal to hide from view. The units would be 33 inches tall at most, shorter than the height of back windows. Duct work and hoses would run inside the house; and only condensers and shutoff switches would be visible outside (perhaps some hoses as well). Ms. Ran and Mr. Meador showed existing conditions and mockups. Disconnect boxes would also be installed on the outside of the house for accessibility.

To conceal the units, applicants proposed rhododendrons which would grow more than tall enough to screen. Specimens could be procured from local nurseries, and applicants presented a mockup drawing of the rhododendron option. Condensers would be foot away from wall of house, two feet away from each other.

Chair Spang stated that the Commission has not typically used landscaping to hide condensers, but more often lattice / fencing. Ms. English added that based on distance and fence in the back, bushes would be less obvious than a fence would be. The Commission approved the fence on Dalton Pkwy years ago. Mr. Joyce reiterated Chair Spang's earlier position that greenery should not be considered a screen. However, given the distance from the streets/walkways, the condensers are rather difficult to see. The Commission generally cast unanimous preference for rhododendrons rather than a makeshift fence which would be more conspicuous.

No public comment.

**VOTE:** Mr. Joyce made a motion to approve application as presented with the rhododendron plantings as a screen. Ms. English seconded motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Other Business

### Meeting Minutes

Three sets of minutes to approve: January 6, 2021; February 3, 2021; and April 7, 2021. Ms. English noted that some January 6 minutes had missing pieces which Ms. Kelleher noted would be remedied.

**VOTE:** Ms. English made a motion to approve the January 6, 2021, February 3, 2021, and April 7, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Meche seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang, were in favor and the motion so carried.

### 123 Federal St

Ms. Kelleher noted that 123 Federal St has been sold to an individual; and the former owner is in the process of moving to the West Coast. Writing on behalf of Paige Dunsmore, an email correspondence showed that new owner will not be able to update the plans for the fence in advance of the deadline given (which was the end of May 2021).

Consequently, the new owner has requested an extension to June 1, noting that on May 13 Boston Fence will be assessing the fence plans and estimating the final completion time. Mr. Martinez asked if anyone has been deputized to approve the fence plans. Ms. Kelleher noted that the certificate given stipulated extremely specific plans which must match work that is performed on-site. Chair Spang noted the need for specific drawings based on various conversations that were had. Ms. Schaeffer asked what course(s) of action are available to the Commission against person who would not alter fence. Chair Spang noted that previous owner is in violation; and without indication as to work being done, the Commission would need to issue a certified letter, beginnings of legal action, and ultimately a lien against the homeowner. Mr. Martinez pointed out that since a new owner has shown good-faith effort to work with the Commission to resolve the issue, courtesy should be extended in this case, to which Ms. English agreed.

**VOTE: Mr. Martinez motions to extend deadline to June 1. Mr. Meche moves to second. Roll Call: Martinez, Meche, English, Joyce, Norkun, Pattison, Schaeffer, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.**

#### Additional Public Commentary on Historical Commission Design Guidelines

Darleen Melis, Chair of Salem Tree Commission, following up on public comment from earlier item regarding revisions to Historical Commission guidelines. Ms. Melis requested diplomacy concerning existing trees, mature canopy, deciduous trees which provide shade in the summer and disappear in the winter. Reiterating these facts to the public and speaking on behalf of trees would be much appreciated. Ms. Melis noted the seriousness of loss of tree canopy in Salem. Ms. Schaeffer added that MHC has some jurisdiction over heritage trees, perhaps work this in to the planned climate/climate mitigation chapter.

#### 384 Essex Street

Mr. Pattison asked about what Boston Fence is doing for the corner Flint St, to which Ms. Kelleher noted that they are on the agenda for the following meeting.

#### Adjournment

**VOTE: Mr. Joyce made a motion to adjourn. Ms. English seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion so carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:39PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Graham  
Historical Commission Clerk