

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board
Date and Time:	Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	98 Washington Street, First Floor Conference Room
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Helen Sides, J. Michael Sullivan
DRB Members Absent:	Christopher Dynia
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith, Tom Daniel
Recorder:	Kate Newhall-Smith

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

Signs Under Review

1. 3 Central Street: Modern Millie: Discussion and vote on proposed projecting sign.

Christine Robidoux was present to discuss the proposed sign.

Ms. Robidoux confirmed that the proposed sign is the same size as the existing sign. She is seeking to rebrand the store and clean up the signage. She will be using the existing bracket.

Members express their support of the proposed sign as designed.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to recommend approval as presented.
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 6-0.

2. 120 Washington Street: Workbar: Discussion and vote on proposed projecting sign

Adam Knauer, SRP Sign Corporation, was present to discuss the proposed sign.

Kennedy discusses the internal illumination and the size of the proposed sign in relation to the existing projecting signs for businesses along the same stretch of Washington Street. He states that it seems as though it will be larger, but in reality is likely similar in size. He states that the proposed location is odd since the business is an upper-story one; he acknowledges the lack of options for a projecting sign on this building given the recessed entryway. There is a concern with the illumination and feeding the power to the sign in its proposed location.

Sides asks for more details regarding the space inside the structure that is occupied by Workbar. Mr. Knauer replies that it is on the second story, along with Auto Desk, another commercial enterprise.

Sullivan asks how they would handle a request from Auto Desk should they like a projecting sign. The Workbar sign dominates the entry, leaving no room for another commercial use to install a sign.

Durand states that the proposed location is not physically related to where the business is located in the building. Board members agree. He states that the sign alludes to retail space on the ground floor, which is not the case for this business.

Miller suggests putting signage on the glass doors to the building, which would allow Auto Desk to also have a sign and have some street presence.

Sides believes there needs to be a directory-style sign on the side wall of the recessed entryway; this would allow multiple tenants to have signage in one cohesive design.

Mr. Knauer states that visibility for the business is an issue. Durand responds that there are upper level commercial tenants and offices throughout the downtown and they are not entitled to a sign at the street level. If they were allowed, then the street scape would be cluttered with signage. Mr. Knauer states that the business is looking to draw in foot traffic.

Daniel responds stating that the business uses a membership model. Pedestrians will not be coming in off of the street to use the Workbar facilities.

Sides states that members will only need to find the business once and then they will know how to get there. She suggests speaking with the building owner and creating signage to address the needs of Workbar, Auto Desk, and the residential tenants.

Durand questions compliance with the sign ordinance and whether upper story businesses are allowed to have projecting signage at the street level.

Kennedy acknowledges the proposed internal illumination and how well it was handled. Though a sign on the wall or the glass doors, rather than the projecting sign. Though he believes that the existing façade treatment may not be conducive for attractive wall signage. The owner of the building may need to be involved to facilitate an upgrade to the wall treatment with new signage.

Mr. Knauer asks the Board if an internally-illuminated directory sign, if the lighting was handled similarly to the proposed projecting sign, would be acceptable. Kennedy responds that he would be amenable but would need to see the renderings before making a decision.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Sides: Motion to continue proposal to a future meeting.
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 6-0.

3. **300 Derby Street: Casa Tequila:** Discussion and vote on proposed awning and façade signage.

Attorney Chad Colarusso of Colarusso Law Group and business owner Gilberto Reyes are present to discuss the proposal.

Attorney Colarusso describes sign proposal and confirms that the proposed signs match those on the owner's original restaurant location in Seabrook, NH, therefore creating brand continuity.

Sullivan questions the proposed location of the façade sign and its relationship to the covered porch structure that the owner hopes to construct at a later date. He asks if the sign will be centered on the building as it stands today or if it will be centered over the proposed porch. The applicant confirms that it will be centered over the porch, so until the porch is constructed the sign will be slightly off-center on the building.

Sides states that the DRB should be reviewing this proposal as a package of improvements – signage, porch, etc. Mr. Reyes responds that he is able to open without the porch being constructed, but he needs a sign.

Durand states that the internally-illuminated sign will not be looked favorably upon by neighbors.

Sides states that the sign is difficult to read and crowded with text and graphics.

Sullivan suggests bringing the wall sign down to a more pedestrian scale – smaller and lower on the building.

Kennedy states that this type of box, internally-illuminated sign that will project a lot of light is not consistent with the city's design standards and guidelines.

Attorney Colarusso asks if the location of the wall sign is problematic for the Board. Members respond with the notion that if the sign is off-center on the building until the porch is constructed, then it is an issue, as is the size of the sign and the internal illumination as proposed. Attorney Colarusso responds that the building presents some issues regarding visibility for a business given its location recessed from Derby Street.

Kennedy suggests putting up a temporary banner until signage can be redesigned and incorporated with the proposed porch for one overall project review by the DRB. Daniel advises against temporary signs since once they are installed they are likely to not come down, thereby creating difficulties with enforcement.

Durand reviews the sign area calculations and finds that the multiplier the applicant used was incorrect. Rather than multiplying the building frontage by 2 for the maximum allowed sign area, the frontage may only be multiplied by 1. Therefore the maximum size of the sign may be 49 square feet. Kennedy responds that he believes 49 square feet may be small for the large façade.

Kennedy states that he would like to see the awning redesigned to be more visually-appealing; Durand concurs. Attorney Colarusso responds that the proposed awning is simple/plain so as to not disrupt abutters. He also confirms that the proposed awning is tan and will use the existing framework though the fabric will be new.

Members agree that they would like the applicant to review the sign proposal and also flesh out plans for the covered porch and come back to the DRB with a fully-designed project so they are able to review all of the elements together.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to continue proposal to a future meeting.
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 6-0.

Urban Renewal Projects Under Review

1. **Washington and Dodge Street: Hampton Inn/Mixed-Use Development:** Discussion and vote on proposed materials and color modifications

Andrew Queen, Architect, Director of Design, Opechee Construction Company was present to review the proposed modifications to the exterior façade.

Mr. Queen reviews the proposed changes: trim color from bronze to black for the window frames, balcony rails, and the trim and coping; and brick from Old Port Blend Narrow Flash Range to Old Port Red Range. The reason for the change is due to different manufacturers of the trim pieces have differing interpretations of what the color bronze is. In looking at the option of painting after market, the upkeep associated with this is not worthwhile. All manufacturers have the same notion of what black is, therefore there will not be varying colors on the building. The change in the masonry is proposed since the original spec has brown edging, which coordinated with the bronze trim, but now does not coordinate with the black trim.

Jaquith appreciates the new masonry choice, stating that it looks more Victorian in appearance, and approves of the black trim. He notes that the interstitial spaces between the windows on the 'transition' portions of the structure have appeared to have increased in height from what was originally proposed and approved. Mr. Queen responds that due to the spatial needs for mechanicals and wiring between the floors, the height of the horizontal flashing on the windows in the commercial space was increased. Mr. Queen states that he can work on this and reduce the horizontal flashing so that it is consistent with the original approval.

Kennedy is concerned with this change in the size of the window openings. Jacquith does not approve of modifying the windows in this way.

Sides expresses approval for the change in brick color and believes the proposed color will be less 'busy' than the original with the brown edging. Jacquith concurs.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to recommend approval of the proposed façade material and color modifications subject to the applicant reducing the portrayed 'horizontal floorplate window trim' on the commercial/transition portions of the structure to match the configuration as originally approved.

Seconded by: Sides. Passes 6-0

Discussion of DRB Process

Daniel discusses Planning Department efforts to increase efficiency for applicants, board members, and staff. He reviews the new memo format and how staff will communicate internally regarding projects so that board members are aware of the status and what other permitting boards are discussing and their concerns with various project elements.

He also reviews the two roles for the DRB – advisory to the SRA and advisory to the Planning Board. He reviews the various documents and standards to be applied to each type of project.

Board members ask about obtaining Salem.com email addresses. Newhall-Smith will follow-up on this with IT.

Old/New Business

1. **Approval of 2019 DRB Schedule:** Kennedy states that he will likely be absent for the June meeting.

Jaquith: Motion to approve 2019 DRB meeting schedule.

Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 6-0

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Sides: Motion to approve the minutes of November 28, 2018.

Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 6-0

Adjournment

Sides: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Jaquith. 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 2-2033.