

**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 September 23, 2015 at 6:00pm</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Third Floor Conference Room, 120 Washington Street</b>
<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Helen Sides, Ernest DeMaio, David Jaquith, J. Michael Sullivan, and Glenn Kennedy</b>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	<b>Paul Durand</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Jennifer Pennell</b>

Helen Sides calls the meeting to order.

**Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review**

- 1. 144 Washington Street (Hauswitch Home and Healing):** Discussion of proposed A-frame sign.

The submission under review before the DRB includes a proposal, drawings, and photos. Erica Feldmann was present on behalf of Hauswitch Home and Healing.

Shapiro noted that Feldmann had been before the Board previously to have building signage for her shop approved. He explained that the proposed signage complies with the City's ordinance for portable signs.

DeMaio commented that he has concerns regarding the location of the proposed sign. Street furniture, bike parking, and trees are currently located on the opposite side of the street. People tend to walk along the face of the building to avoid these items. DeMaio questioned if the board would want signage located on the opposite side. Currently pedestrian foot traffic travels through the area, which should be encouraged, especially for those with accessibility needs. DeMaio commented the he would recommend shifting the proposed signage over to align with the other side of the walkway (curb side).

Shapiro commented that shifting the sign over to the other side of the sidewalk would align the sign with the other a-frame signs on the block.

Feldmann noted that she would be amenable to moving the sign over per the DRB's comments.

Jaquith: Motion to approve signage with the recommendation of aligning the signage closer to the curb.

Seconded by: DeMaio, Passes 6-0.

**2. 320 Derby Street (Edward Jones):** Discussion of proposed installation of signage.

The submission under review before the DRB includes a proposal, drawings, and photos. Brian Brinkers was present on behalf of Edward Jones.

Brinkers noted that existing signage located in the windows would be removed. The existing blade sign bracket is consistent with the surrounding stores and is existing. Brinkers noted that the proposal is simply to replace the actual sign not the bracket. The proposed signage would fill up the entire bracket.

Jaquith asked whether the logo and typeface was part of the corporate standard signage.

Brinkers responded noting that it is.

Jaquith noted that he has no problems with the proposed signage.

Sides asked about window coverage.

Shapiro explained that the City's sign ordinance calls for no more than 30% of the window to be covered with signage, and that the City's Commercial Design Guidelines and Downtown Renewal Plan call for that number to be reduced to 20% for properties within the Urban Renewal Area. It is not entirely clear if this project exceeds that proposed maximum, but the Board has deference to request a revision to how signage appears in the windows.

DeMaio asked how website addresses are usually treated with respect to signage.

Shapiro explained that there is no clear guidance in the Downtown Renewal Plan or sign ordinance, but that generally speaking, the Board and City have approved website addresses on secondary signs – not primary or prominent signs.

Sides noted that she feels the signage looks good; that it looks understated.

Sullivan questioned if the disclaimer is required by law to be placed on the window.

Brinkers said that he did not know for sure.

Jaquith: Motion to approve as presented.  
Seconded by: DeMaio, Passes 6-0.

**3. 209 Essex Street (Hotel Salem):** Discussion of proposed façade/building improvements (small project review), outdoor seating area, and signage.

The submission under review before the DRB includes a proposal, drawings, elevations, and a presentation. Mark Meche was present on behalf of Winter Street Architects.

Also present were Rich Cooper and Shawn Shea of Lark Hotels.

Cooper passed out brochures about the company to the Board members. He explained that the company started in 2012 with four hotels. The company is a New England based boutique hotel group, focused on design, amenities, and authentic service. The hotel in Salem will be 44 rooms. There will be more affordable rooms, as well as luxury and mid-tier priced rooms.

Meche began to show a presentation and noted that the proposed building renovation is located in the B5 district. Exterior improvements are the focus for today. The outdoor café permit and signage review will be reviewed at a later date. Meche noted that the hotel is currently planned to open in October 2016.

Meche explained that the building is a total of four stories, with three stories fronting Essex Street. There is a walkout basement located on the Derby Square side. The main lobby will be on Essex Street.

Meche noted that entry to the building would be moved to the center of the front façade with two flanking doors and a revolving door. The café, which would be located in the lobby toward the front of the building, would have operable doors for connections to outside. Two story loft style units would be located on the first floor.

Meche commented that the floor below the ground floor lobby would have a bar, seating areas, and a bowling alley. The second and third floor would contain a total of 10 micro rooms, which are a king size bed wide. A rooftop terrace would have also have a bar and lounge and will not be seen from the street.

Meche noted that the building was built around 1890. The project is an adaptive reuse. Almost gut renovation on the interior. All masonry will be repaired and cleaned; the front is mainly sandstone and blond brick. A new aluminum glass storefront system with, new column cladding would be installed on the ground level of the front façade. GFRC or some other type of cast stone would be used for the column cladding. A new marquee would be installed above the lobby entrance and would extend out about five or six feet.

The south elevation facing derby square will have a balcony area for a room.

Meche showed an example of furniture and umbrellas that might be an inspiration for the rooftop deck. Four units across Essex Street in another building may be able to look onto the roofdeck. The roofdeck will have a central bar area, awning, general seating, umbrellas, planters, and storage. A stainless steel cable rail will be used along the perimeter of the seating area. A copper shingle is being contemplated for use on the exterior of the small building on the top of the roof.

Sides questioned if the design would have a red brick with lighting for the café and signage.

Meche commented that four masonry openings would need to be enlarged to match the others. A new structure for the rooftop lounge and mechanical screen would be needed. Awning and planters would be placed on the rooftop terrace and copper shingles would be used but not visible from street.

Jaquith noted that he knows the building well from having worked with previous owners and said that the design is a vast improvement.

Sides commented that the design looks terrific. Sides questioned how people would be getting to the hotel.

Cooper noted that the city garage is across the street. A number of spaces would be reserved for guests.

Sides noted that access to the hotel is key. This would be a good business advocate for vehicular access to the pedestrian mall. This would bring nightlife and extend the season for the pedestrian mall. Valet parking could drop off guests at the front of the hotel.

Dynia asked whether the rooftop restaurant and other dining/bar amenities could be accessed by the public.

Shea commented that they would be open for public access.

DeMaio commented that the design is a great improvement for the area. The pick-up/drop-off problem creates the need for having things located at the ground plane. We will want to know how this will be treated. The hotel should create a reserved area for carts or bags, and would hopefully be contained within the hotel.

Meche noted that bike rack parking and tweaking the bollards would be a possibility in regards to how the immediate outdoor area would be treated. Three trees may need to be replanted. One is robust and the other two are dead.

Cooper noted that Lark created a locker area within one of their other properties for bags, and the system worked out quite well. They may attempt to create the same system for this hotel.

DeMaio noted that the Holyoke Court side of the building could benefit from some elevated activity and that it has always been uninviting. The building's ground floor at this elevation could become more transparent, creating a nice streetscape. The café could activate this alleyway. DeMaio noted that the corner is very visible walking down Essex Street.

Sides commented that something could be done on the surface of the brick that would provide more of a light surface. Sides noted that she would be hesitant to destroy the fabric of the building, as it could be costly. A signage or an awning could be put on the facade.

DeMaio noted that guests would probably wonder why there is no visual access to Essex Street on the terrace. If there were a way that hotel patrons or guests could visually get a glimpse of Essex Street it would be an amenity. DeMaio noted his concern about noise related to the Essex Condominiums.

Meche noted that the storefront system along the Essex Street elevation will be very transparent and that there will be an opportunity to wrap outdoor seating around the corner.

Sullivan noted that consistency should be carried around the corner.

Meche noted that the existing storefront used to be set back with the columns and had a sign banner. This location was dropped about 6" down. The canopy was located at this point. Meche noted that he anticipates a bit more signage.

Sides questions if windows are operable on the sides.

Meche noted that all the existing windows located on the buildings sides are operable. The front façade would keep the existing operable windows.

Sullivan noted that he recommends thinking about carving out a place to drop people off near the café.

Kennedy noted that he is least excited about the hotel's name. All other Lark hotels have something creative about their titles. Kennedy commented that the branding is very important. Branding and signage could be lower on the glass and not along the spandrel.

Shea noted that they could give consideration to altering the name.

Sullivan: Motion to approve exterior improvements and to bring back additions, outdoor seating, lighting, and signage components.  
Seconded by: Kennedy, Passes 6-0.

## **Minutes**

Approval of the minutes from the July 22, 2015 regular meeting.

Kennedy: Motion to continue.  
Seconded by: Jaquith, Passes 6-0.

Approval of the minutes from the August 26, 2015 regular meeting.

Kennedy: Motion to continue.  
Seconded by: Jaquith, Passes 6-0.

***Adjournment***

Kennedy: Motion to adjourn, seconded by Jaquith. Passes 6-0.  
Meeting is adjourned at 7:30 pm.