

**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>Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 6:00pm</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Third Floor Conference Room, 120 Washington Street</b>
<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Glenn Kennedy, Ernest DeMaio, David Jaquith, Christopher Dynia, Helen Sides, and J. Michael Sullivan</b>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	<b>Paul Durand</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Andrew Shapiro</b>

Helen Sides calls the meeting to order.

**Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review**

**1. 28 Norman Street (E Market):** Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage

The submission under review included a sign permit application, designs, a material sample, and photos of the proposed signage. Sign designer Mehmet Sahin of Falcon Graphics was present on behalf of E Market.

Sahin explained that the applicant seeks to install two 30” by 180” aluminum backed signs on either side of the building. He noted that the primary letters spelling “E” and “Market” would be a raised PVC material that he then passed around for the Board to inspect. The signs would have yellow, blue, red, and black throughout them. They would be affixed to the surface of the building using “L Brackets.”

Shapiro explained that there are two frontages for this property; one on Norman Street and one on Crombie Street. The Norman Street has an existing sign band where the 7-Eleven signage once was. The other façade contains brick and the 7-Eleven signage on that side once partially covered a vent that is there.

Shapiro confirmed that the signage, as proposed, is in compliance with the City’s sign ordinance.

Sides asked whether this business has other locations, and if so, whether the proposed signage was used at the other locations.

Sahin said that the store owner does have another location and that these were the same signs that were used.

Sullivan remarked that it is unfortunate that the proposed sign as shown on Crombie Street covers the vent. It would be nice if the sign could be above or below the vent. The vent is a nice feature of that elevation.

Shapiro noted that the Crombie Street elevation provides less frontage; therefore a sign reduced in size in order to avoid encroaching upon the vent could very well be appropriate.

Dynia asked whether the signs require the extra text shown along the sides.

Sahin responded by noting that the applicant had requested that these words be used, but that certain text could be removed.

Kennedy remarked that the sign is very busy and that no signs in the area contain that much text. Extra text could be moved onto an awning or in window space. If the words "E Market" are emphasized, with perhaps one border, then the sign becomes simpler and more elegant. "Open 24 Hr" can stay on the sign. I would recommend that the side elements be removed and that the bars at the top and bottom be reduced or eliminated. The top and bottom bars do not help readability. The 7-Eleven letters were simple three dimensional letters on the façade and were much more readable.

Shapiro asked Kennedy whether he would be willing to review any recommended revisions provided by the applicant, and to approve them prior to advancing the application to the Salem Redevelopment Authority.

Kennedy agreed that he could review the revisions.

DeMaio asked whether additional signage would eventually be added to the windows or elsewhere.

Sahin responded by noting that no other signage is currently proposed, but that he would explore the idea of moving some of the text from the currently proposed signage to the windows.

DeMaio then noted that he agrees with others that the sign contains too much information and that the excess text would be better positioned if it were on windows. He also expressed concern about the apparent starkness of the sign; in particular using primary colors against a stark white background. He said that this could be a loud sign for this neighborhood and building.

Kennedy said that he would prefer to see raised letters on the existing sign band, which could reduce some of the starkness.

Sahin noted that he could use raised letters and light the sign with gooseneck lighting.

Kennedy: Motion to recommend approval conditional upon the following (final review to be conducted by Glenn Kennedy):

- Making the sign on the Norman Street side just dimensional letters with only “E Market” and “Open 24 Hr” using the color from the sign band in the background.
- Adjusting the sign on the Crombie Street side so that it no longer interferes with the vent, which may require reducing its size – can be dimensional letters or have a backer / it should not have additional words – only “E Market” and “Open 24 Hr”
- Remove the Red Stripes from all signage
- Other words such as “Fresh food,” “Lottery,” “Keno”, etc. should be placed on windows, preferably toward the bottom of each window.

Seconded by: Jaquith, Passes 6-0.

**2. 99 Washington Street:** Discussion and vote on proposed roof deck (small project review)

The submission under review includes a full set of plans, drawings, and photos. Dan Ricciarelli of Segar Architects, Lisa Steinberg, and Kelly Wohlford were present to represent the project.

Ricciarelli pointed out that the building sits at the corner of the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall and Washington Street. The applicants own a condominium situated directly underneath a portion of the roof, upon which they would like to build out a roof deck. It's a membrane roof with a lot of HVAC equipment currently scattered around it.

Ricciarelli showed some photos of the building from different vantage points. He noted that there was an 18 inch parapet at the top of the building around the roof.

Ricciarelli then showed a plan for the roof deck area, noting that the applicants would like to build a stair case up to the roof from their unit. A photo showed an example of the type of walk out roof door that could be used. Parquet decking would be used for the roof deck itself, which would sit atop a pedestal system. Individual squares of decking could be pulled up to insert trees or other forms of landscaping.

The deck would sit below the parapet and would not be seen from the street. It would be set 16 feet back from end of the building furthest from Washington Street, which means that it would require someone to be a considerable distance down Essex Street in order to see any part of the roof deck area. A cable rail system will border most of the deck, and be fairly transparent. A screen will be installed on the back of the deck area and will contain a green wall with plantings.

Ricciarelli continued by noting that on the side closest to Washington Street, a feature wall would be installed with a recirculating water element. It would be made of a slate

like material, rising about six feet high, and set back about four feet from the parapet. Trees and other plantings may be planted along and around the deck to provide additional screening.

Sullivan asked what would actually be visible from Lapping Park.

Ricciarelli said that probably only the screen wall would be visible; probably the top edge of the water element.

DeMaio asked whether any lights would be installed.

Ricciarelli said that none are currently shown but that perhaps some low bollards would be appropriate. The feature wall may also get some up lighting.

Jaquith commented that he would move the feature wall in a little bit more.

Steinberg commented that she would be fine with moving the feature wall back some.

Sullivan noted that he is somewhat concerned that only some of the features would be seen from the ground level, and that it may look strange seeing such a small piece of the larger picture.

DeMaio commented that looking from Lapping Park and/or Barton Square, it would be important from those vantage points not to see too much of what is going on the roof, therefore it would make sense to keep things relatively low.

Sullivan said that it would be good to see an analysis of what one might see from Lapping Park.

Kennedy noted that it would be good to see what it might look like with more greenery brought to the forefront.

Sullivan: Motion to continue.

Seconded by: Jacquith, Passes 6-0.

**3. 161 Essex Street / East India Square (Peabody Essex Museum):** Discussion of proposed museum expansion (schematic design review)

The submission under review includes a cover letter and full set of plans with drawings, elevations, sections, photos, and renderings. Bob Monk, Director of Facilities for the Peabody Essex Museum, Richard Olcott of Ennead Architects

Olcott began by showing a site plan, noting various paths of pedestrian and vehicular circulation. He pointed out that the museum's expansion would take place where the garden is currently situated, just west of East India Marine Hall. A new garden will be

developed behind the commercial buildings that the museum owns directly next to the current garden. Improvements will be made along Charter Street, including a new loading area and various screening elements.

Olcott noted that the new structure will be about 33,600 square feet.

DeMaio asked whether the existing commercial buildings next to the current garden will figure into the plans for expansion.

Olcott responded by noting that at the time they will remain as is, but that perhaps the museum will look to utilize some or all of the building space in the future for office space, or gallery space.

Sullivan asked for more clarity on what would be happening on the Charter Street side of the buildings.

Olcott noted that the boiler plant building has already been demolished and that there is now more room to better accommodate a loading/unloading area. Eventually, the mechanical elements on that side of the campus will also be screened.

Olcott continued with the presentation, showing the configuration of the site. He noted that the proposed new building would be three stories of gallery space, surrounded by circulation space and an atrium. The side wall of East India Marine Hall will be restored and will be visible from within and through the new proposed building.

Olcott showed floor plans, noting that the first and second floors will line up the exact same way. The building itself will sit at the same height as the buildings that surround it on either side. Street trees will most likely need to be removed during construction, but they will be replaced. The idea will be to have more trees lined up continuously along the front of the buildings. One story extensions at the back of the commercial buildings on Essex Street will have to be demolished in order to make room for the planned new garden area.

Sides asked whether the new building would have its own entrance.

Olcott said that there will be an entrance to the new building and that it would primarily cater to school groups and other larger groups visiting the museum. A ramp would accommodate ADA accessibility because the building is set a few feet above grade.

Sides questioned whether a restaurant was still being contemplated for the area being discussed because at one time there had been a plan to have a restaurant there.

Olcott said no.

Sides asked whether there would be public access to the garden or if it could only be accessed by museum goers.

Olcott noted that there would be no public access to the garden and that it would only be accessible through the museum.

DeMaio asked whether any schemes had been studied to have the stair go from level 2 to 3 in the atrium, as it does in the Sofdie building.

Olcott explained that the stair is present in the atrium going from level 1 to 2, but goes along the front from 2 to 3 because the skylight comes up to just under the eve of East India Marine Hall; the stair went any higher it would rise above that eve.

DeMaio noted that he was thinking of opportunities for visibility of the square when entering and leaving the building.

Olcott noted that they had thought a lot about those opportunities.

Kennedy expressed a concern that there is currently a lot of “dead space” between the East India building and the current entrance to the museum. He then noted that the new building has the potential to add to that environment if it does not connect well to the sidewalk.

Olcott agreed that the existing building is very solid and long, and that they would seek to avoid the same thing. The new building has a glass exposure and the idea would be to allow the public to see inside and for those inside to be able to easily look out onto the square.

Monk clarified that the adjacent commercial buildings would remain retail on the first floor.

Sullivan said that he feels that the ramp gets in the way and disrupts an otherwise elegant façade. He encouraged the applicant to explore other ways to accomplish ADA accessibility. He then questioned what the square portion of the elevation shown would be.

Olcott responded that it would be stone that would match the East India building, but that it would have a considerable amount of glass to let in light. These design details are still being fleshed out. On the issue of the ramp, ideas have been explored, including the use of a wall in front of it. It's important to the museum that flat floor gallery space be preserved, which is why they tried to avoid having the building begin at grade with a ramp inside.

Olcott explained that the fence and the anchor in front of the East India Building would be removed to feature the building's prominence.

Dynia asked if there was enough room to adjust the grade in front of the building.

Olcott said that there was not.

Sullivan asked about the use of the basement to house mechanical equipment.

Monk noted that a new mechanical penthouse was constructed recently to accommodate some of the mechanical needs. The current building houses collections in its basement. The museum is searching for a site to construct a collection stewardship center that would house this collection and allow for the use of the basement for mechanicals in that space.

Sides asked about the addition of a security building.

Monk explained that security offices are now at 26 Charter Street. He added that in the future, the former Marine Arts Gallery could potentially host a high end restaurant, but there were no firm plans for that.

Jaquith said that the façade needs some work. The ramp is unfortunate. He would like to see the grade change take place inside or rethought on the outside. The ramp takes away from the architecture. There is a clash of vertical versus horizontal on the façade, which affects its relationship with the street in a somewhat similar fashion as the Dodge Building does.

Olcott expressed appreciation for Jacquith remarks and noted that his firm tends to work from the inside out, and therefore, hadn't yet fully fleshed out the façade. He expressed that there was no interest in making the new building a large blank mass like the Dodge Building.

Kennedy suggested that perhaps the glass façade could be brought forward to encapsulate the ramp.

Olcott noted that that was considered but that they are trying to be careful about not extending beyond the East India building's façade, so it's a challenge.

DeMaio remarked that a lot of what the applicant was hearing was about how the building relates to the street, and that is an important take away from this meeting.

Jaquith: Motion to continue the item.

Seconded by: Kennedy, Passes 6-0.

## **Minutes**

Approval of the minutes from the November 17, 2015 regular meeting.

Sides: Motion to approve.  
Seconded by: Kennedy, Passes 6-0.

***Adjournment***

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn,  
Seconded by DeMaio. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:18 pm.