

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board – Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, Leann Leftwich, Catherine Miller, Elizabeth Murray, Marc Perras, Sarah Tarbet
DRB Members Absent:	David Jaquith
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

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

Leftwich stated that she has been a freelance graphic designer since 1999, focusing on work for higher education and museums. Chair Durand welcomed Leftwich, noting that the Board is glad to have her expertise. The Board introduced themselves to Leftwich.

Signs in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 1 Derby Square: Salem Plant Witch.

Ken McTague of Concept Signs was present to discuss the project.

McTague presented a revised design and noted his difficulty placing the sign on the façade. It was suggested to use a second bracket to mount the second sign below an existing Acorn Tattoo sign, but the business owner found it confusing, so they decided to locate a flat sign on the wall below the blade sign. Given the division of the interior space into two and the need for additional tenant identity, despite an existing marquee sign for the entire building on the other side of the arched opening and suggested placing the new sign at the same height as the existing marquee. Murray noted that close color story between Acorn Tattoo and The Salem Plant Witch. The board discussed a potential change in the color scheme. McTague suggested reversing the color scheme and agreed to speak to the business owner.

Chair Durand requested clearances around the sign. McTague replied that placement to the left of the arch would be significantly smaller due to the existing downspout, but he would need to measure it to confirm to keep the sign outside of the soldier course at the arched opening, noting that the if it were a blade sign it would be larger. Murray noted the need to also clear the downspout bracket. Tarbet suggested that if the sign were not mainly green, the blade signs could be stacked. McTague agreed, suggesting it be placed higher for clearance purposes and noted that the owner preferred a blade sign for visibility from Essex Street. Miller suggested that a wall sign would be 16-18- inches wide at the most.

Perras suggested the two business owners discuss agreeing to switch their signs and believed a blade sign was the best option. Newhall-Smith noted that only 8-feet of clearance is required below the blade sign.

Public Comment:

Patrick Tierney, owner of Acorn Tattoo. Stated that the wall sign would make more sense, suggested that since the new tenant is renting the old Mason space that her sign

should be on the opposite side of the arch. He noted the similarity between the brackets and the sign color and suggested that switching the signs would be confusing. He suggested placing her sign below her window and noted that the two other businesses in the building may also want signage. Perras presented a Google image of the building facade, noting the limited visibility for the new tenant's sign. Tierney stated that he didn't want his sign up too high where people can't see it.

Murray asked if placing the sign on the opposite side had been discussed with the business owner. McTague replied no.

Perras suggested seeing multiple options since there are other businesses, and to determine if the owner is willing to change their sign color.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Murray asked if Tierney preferred this sign to be on the opposite side. Tierney replied yes, and with different branding color.

Miller suggested all business owners in the building discuss potential sign placement with their landlord. McTague suggested the building owner eliminate the marquee to create more space for signage, where 2 or 3 wall more signs could be placed.

Tarbet asked if there was precedent for small storefronts with multiple buildings. Miller noted that the old City Hall Annex tenants were allowed to have multiple blade signs.

VOTE: Miller: Motion to continue to the next regular meeting on February 28, 2024.

Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Leftwich, Miller, Murray, Perras, Tarbet, and Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

2. 285 Derby Street: Lulu's Bakery (Projecting Sign)

Ken McTague of Concept Signs was present to discuss the project.

McTague stated that there is existing belt signage, and they are proposing a blade sign to be mounted on the pylon to the left of their door. The 34-inch-wide x 34-inch-high sign would have carved lettering, a 3D raised flower, and would be mounted on a black rigid bracket using 2 cleats. He noted the existing pirate sign at the corner of the building.

Miller suggested matching the mounting height. McTague noted that Real Pirates used a different type of bracket, it was mounted as high up as possible, so he can match the tops of the sign. He noted that the Real Pirates sign is 3-foot-wide x 4-foot-high.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

The board discussed the use of different brackets, noting that Real Pirates used a scroll bracket. The board agreed with the use of a side bracket to mount the proposed sign and to center it to the Real Pirates sign.

VOTE: Miller: Motion to approve centered with the height of the signs using the side bracket. Seconded by: Murray.

Roll Call: Leftwich, Miller, Murray, Perras, Tarbet, and Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

3. 260 Essex Street: Wicked Good Books and Silly Bunny Toys

Mike Gibson and Denise Kent were present to discuss the project.

Gibson stated that they will replace the Silly Bunny sign, use the same hardware, and will use the Wicked Good Books sign with the bunny hanging below. The new Wicked Good Books blade sign will be hand-painted, double-sided, and 30-inches square. The oval Silly Bunny Toys blade sign will hang below it at 16-inches-high x 26-inches-wide. The first window sign will be 75-inches-long overall, with 6-inch-high text x 71-inch-long text. The Silly Bunny Toys window sign will be 75-inches-long overall, with 7.5-inch-high text x 60-inch-long text.

Miller asked if there was a rule about using two blade signs on one building. Newhall-Smith replied that there is nothing in the regulations about numerous hanging signs. Kent noted that Koons has this same setup, and they will move the existing Bunny sign to the interior and hang it from the ceiling.

Miller suggested swapping the words “Toys” and “Bunny” on the window sign making it easier to read. Leftwich agreed, noting that the proposed signage and colors are good, as well as the pairing of fonts, and hand painting the sign is a great idea. Gibson replied that swapping the words will be an easy change and they want their signage to match others on the street. Kent added that they felt it would be confusing to have both logos and the bookstore is more well-known than the toy store.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Miller: Motion to approve, window sign to say in order “Silly Bunny Toys”.

Seconded by: Tarbet.

Roll Call: Leftwich, Miller, Murray, Perras, Tarbet, and Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

There are no projects to review.

Projects Outside the Urban Renewal Area

There are no projects to review.

New / Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. December 20, 2024

VOTE: Tarbet: Motion to approve the December 20, 2024, meeting minutes. Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Leftwich – abstained due to not being a board member at that time, Miller, Murray, Perras, Tarbet, and Durand. Passes 5-0.

2. Staff Updates, if any:
 - a. Window Murals, Draft Guidance:

Newhall-Smith stated that she worked with Julie Barry on Salem Main Street's Salem So Sweet and felt this was a good time to include window mural guidance. Newhall-Smith noted that 3 months would be the temporary allowable timeframe. Perras and Chair Durand agreed. Miller noted that some business owners do this seasonally and asked if window murals should not include the business name. Newhall-Smith replied yes. Miller questioned Gulu's window murals including their animal although their logo is their name and sign. Newhall-Smith did not know, but she will include something about this type of use in the sign manual. The Board agreed to use this wording for Salem So Sweet.

Perras asked if the window mural guidelines would be retroactive. Newhall-Smith replied that it's a guideline not a regulation, so businesses that have use window murals long-term would need to be approached, but it is not enforceable at this time. When this new language is in the sign manual and its adoption is recommended by the SRA, it will become more concrete.

- b. SRA Sign Manual Update Project

Newhall-Smith stated that she put out a call for three volunteers to review the signage manual dating back to 1973. The sub-committee will need to meet to discuss it before returning it to the Board for review. Leftwich, Chair Durand, and Murray agreed to participate.

- c. Newhall-Smith noted that Perras provided her with photos of installed banner signs that require DRB review, and she will request that the businesses apply for sign permits.
 - d. Newhall-Smith stated that outdoor dining review is coming, and applications went live last week to the restaurants and so far, Settler applied and Adriatic requested an abutter notification list. 25-30 restaurants did outdoor dining, and while the SRA is not charging an application fee, the City does have a fee structure for use

of public space and jersey barriers. If a high volume of applications occurs there could be a special meeting to review them. Miller believed that umbrellas with logos aren't as much of an issue. Newhall-Smith replied that the SRA prefers plain umbrellas. Perras asked if outdoor dining takes on code issues like bathrooms and capacity. Newhall-Smith replied that this is not an ordinance, it's a policy, and the Licensing Board issues the permit; expanding the capacity and by how much is a trigger reviewed by a Building Inspector, with plumbing and fire, through the new application process.

- e. Tarbet believed the pizza slice blade sign at Garcon on New Derby Street was not what the DRB approved, noting that it is white and round not a pizza slice, although it does suit their branding. Miller agreed and believed the wall sign in the sign band was also not what was approved.

Adjournment

Perras: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Miller.

Roll Call: Leftwich, Miller, Murray, Perras, Tarbet, and Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:15PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-203