

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board
Date and Time:	Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, Helen Sides,
DRB Members Absent:	J. Michael Sullivan
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

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

Signs

1. **234 Bridge Street - Small Project Review:** Installation of cellular infrastructure on existing decorative light pole. Continued from 2/4/21, Request to continue to April 28, 2021

Jaquith: Motion to continue to the April 28, 2021 regular meeting.

Seconded by: Sides.

Jaquith, Miller, Perras, Sides, Chair Durand were all in favor. Passes 5-0.

2. **1 Derby Street - Small Project Review:** Installation of decorative window decals on second story windows

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

McTague stated that this goes along with the sign that was approved in February. They removed their advertising signs, but they still wanted to decorate their windows. Dims are 8" x 12" to be placed in the center pane of 6 windows. Perras preferred option 1 but was okay with both. Sides, Miller and Jaquith agreed. Chair Durand agreed with alternating the design at each window.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve the decals as proposed with a preference for alternating the design at each window.

Seconded by: Sides.

Jaquith, Miller, Perras, Sides, Chair Durand were all in favor. Passes 5-0.

Newhall-Smith stated that this application will be added to the April SRA agenda for review.

3. **73 Lafayette Street – Schematic Design Review:** Redevelopment of 73 Lafayette Street and 9 Peabody Street through the construction of mixed-use structures for affordable elderly supporting housing, compact residential units, the North Shore Health Center, and additional space for non-profit organization.

Attorney Scott Grover of Tinti & Navins, Mickey Northcutt of Northshore CDC, Jonathan Evans (Principal) and Patricia Gruits (Senior Principal & Managing Director of Mass Design Group), and Margaret Brennan (CEO of North Shore Community Health), were present for the discussion.

Evans stated that this site connects the Point Neighborhood and the Downtown area. Parcels 2, 3 & 5 will be acquired by the design team, Parcel 1 is owned by the City has an easement they want to modify for this new development. Parcel 4 is owned by National Grid and has a ground lease granted to Northshore Bank that they want reassigned to the joint venture. Parcel 7 is vacant lot to become the 9 Peabody Street Development and Parcel 6 is the Peabody Street Park.

Evans stated that three phases are proposed due to financial logistics, 1) construction of the Health Center, 2) construction of the residences on Peabody Street and landscape design to tie the different parcels together, and 3) constructing the residences above Lafayette Street building. They will create an urban street wall and take queues from their neighbors on their 70' proposed height. They are mindful of the open space to provide a break in height and the Peabody Street building has a 55-foot height where 85-feet is the maximum height. Their façade strategy is to break down the scale and create a pattern of windows and the ground level programming will include a large public atrium gallery, urgent care center and residential lobby. The bank will remain in the lower left and they will work to create a meaningful relationship between the existing and new façade with circulation at the rear and carved out porches facing the South River. Both buildings will have a two-story atrium space but the façade at the Health Center will be stepped back at level 6. The waterfront will also have accessible commercial space and covered parking.

Evans stated their desire to maintain the 1914 façade of the Lafayette Street façade and to incorporate fillets, daylight, passive housing, porches and local materials and crafts into the façade and create opportunities for gathering and public art. They will create depth by stepping the façade back so the structure remains grounded but framed and they will make the bank end appear lighter but creating a pathway at grade. The bank drive-thru and third travel lane will remain.

Evans stated that they will simplify the design and construction to create a seamless two-phase construction. Terra cotta will be used at the health center to create recesses to emphasis the depth of the walls and create a reveal zone between the bank and residential corners. Lighting will also highlight the harbor walk entrance.

Evans stated that the two-story atrium at 9 Peabody Street will provide opportunities for art in meaningful recesses as well as at the building's interior. Open stair at front corner and opportunities to provide covering seating and they are taking cues from the punched openings and changes in façade depth along Peabody Street.

Ms. Gruits stated that they want people to be able to engage with the water and use a community porch as a public gathering space while integrating as much greenspace as

possible. There is potential to upgrade the Peabody Street park as well and integrate community programming. They are also looking into flood mitigation, heat island reduction, areas of refuge, light and pollution mitigation, carbon sequestration, material reuse, and both marine and terrestrial biodiversity. They see an opportunity for berms, seawalls to act as flood barriers and to use as remediation of the tide gate. They are excited about the opportunity to incorporate waterfront connections and allow people to enjoy the waterfront in a new way.

Newhall-Smith read a list of comment letters received by 4PM on March 24, 2021.

- Richard Egan and Luis Oyanedel, 51 Lafayette St Unit #211, submitted March 4, 2021
- Deborah Perrotti, Derby Lofts, 51 Lafayette, submitted March 4, 2021
- 2 comment letters from Dr. Brian J. Rachmaciej, 51 Lafayette St Unit 302, submitted March 4, 2021
- Jone Sienkiewicz, 51 Lafayette Street, Unit 402, submitted March 4, 2021
- Sophie Soman, 51 Lafayette street unit 306, submitted March 4, 2021
- Laurie Buchanan, 51 Lafayette St Unit 508, submitted March 5, 2021
- James Howarth, 51 Lafayette St., submitted March 5, 2021
- Beth Arnold and Janis Cotter, 51 Lafayette Street Unit 509, submitted March 8, 2021
- Caroline Watson-Felt, President, Historic Salem Inc., submitted March 10, 2021
- James Howarth, 51 Lafayette Street, submitted March 10, 2021
- Derby Lofts Condo Association with 43 signatures, 51 Lafayette Street, submitted March 16, 2021
- Shirley Walker, 51 Lafayette Street, letter to Salem News editor, submitted March 24, 2021

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. Concerned with the DRB's review in concert with the neighborhood. This is a heavily trafficked area with small mom & pop shops that will lose their short-term parking. She raised concerns with the design of Phase 2 since senior residents would need shuttles, ambulances due to the nature of the population, and there is a limited amount of off-street parking that doesn't seem appropriate for 50 senior residents. The Health Center would have urgent care and a pharmacy that will require truck deliveries and would severely impact the flow of traffic. The residences proposed at Lafayette Street should provide residential water views and place the hallway along the intersection. There is also no sufficient snow storage and snow cannot be pushed into the South River. The South River drainage repair wasn't finished and the flood waters from the channel don't flow out as they should, so there is no flood relief. She appreciated the façade being retained, as a historic City they should embrace these structures.

Emily Udy, 8 Buffum Street & HSI, Inc. Reiterated the comments HSI sent to the SRA. Asked the Board to keep in mind how the proposed building at 9 Peabody Street will relate to the neighboring multi-family residences as well as Derby Street. They met with CDC and sees the increase in the celebration of that building and appreciates the reuse of the existing façade. She looks forward to the collaboration and the integration

of the new and old design. The guidelines should be followed to continue existing cornices and add new cornices and the progression of window types, orientation and layouts should be tied more to the neighborhood. The brick of the existing building should inform the new design to celebrate it.

Jone Sienkiewicz, 51 Lafayette Street. Reiterated Ms. Wilbert's comments. The main concern of the Derby Lofts residents is the lack of parking. Thirty parking spaces is not enough for an urgent care center and residents will have visitors and caretakers. She agreed that the corridor should be flipped to provide the residents a harbor view. A parking facility should be part of this design since many people are continuing to work remotely so their vehicles will not be gone during the day. This project will have a major impact on Derby and Lafayette Streets.

Mary Whitney, 356 Essex Street. The presentation's nod to the historic façade but only a small amount will be preserved when they should preserve the entire streetscape, since this is an important corner and streetscape.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Perras stated his concern with parking and retaining of the existing façade. Atty. Grover noted that they heard many of the parking concerns at the March SRA meeting. They understand their desire for a realistic way for employees and patients to park their vehicles, so they are looking into their parking options. Parking solutions will be heavily scrutinized by multiple boards, partially relating to parking solutions. Chair Durand added that facilities of this type require parking and traffic studies. Atty. Grover replied that Nitch Engineering is looking into the specific impacts of this site as well as usage options at the South Harbor garage.

Chair Durand asked about geotechnical studies. Evans replied that borings have been taken. He added that the additions do not line up with the original building, so they are looking to keep only the original façade. To combat isolation, the residential layouts were designed to create opportunities for the residents to gather and they worked to incorporate communal patios. Chair Durand agreed with the shared view of the water for residences instead of a shared hallway. Evans noted that they are looking into cantilevering and enlarging the communal patios. Perras agreed with only salvaging the original portion of building.

Sides stated that she was impressed with presentation and commends their progress which so far which is exciting. Perras agreed but added that the change in spaces at façade needs to be addressed in terms of how the two masses come together as well as the materiality. Jaquith agreed with Perras and commended their presentation.

Jaquith left the meeting.

Perras suggested more folding occur at the Peabody Street building to help break down the edges of the proposed building and suggested that be brought into the Health Center as well, to make it feel more ribbony. Kennedy agreed with Perras, especially at lower left corner of the Peabody street building and the right side of the Lafayette street or at the residential floors.

Newhall-Smith noted that concerns with land ownership and agreements to move the project forward. Evans replied that the new owner will need to acquire ownership of Parcels 2, 3 & 5 which requires modify the existing access agreements. Parcel 7 they own, and they are currently in discussion regarding Parcel 6. Atty. Grover added that Parcel 4 is owned by National Grid and has a ground lease and easement that they will acquire so the land can be used to provide access, parking, and to change the landscaping, grading, and lighting. Parcel 1 is owned by the City and the bank has an easement to provide drive-thru access. Discussions are ongoing with the City to provide a cantilever of the building over that land and access to the South River. Peabody Park is city owned but they want to engage with the Park and Recreation Commission to improve the park and integrate it into the development site since there are concerns about the park not being activated. Chair Durand stated that connecting from one park to another through use of the existing docks would be a great way to activate the areas although the swimming steps should not be included.

Sides stated that the proposed design does not call for a continued use of the cornice.

Miller noted that parking is something to resolve. More and more travel will depend on pickup/drop off space, and cities are converting parking spaces into drop off spaces. There is potential to make the pickup/dropoff work well on the back, riverside of the building. Parking for staff might be resolved with remote parking and shuttles. Miller would like to see more detail for the pedestrian connections between Derby Street, the river, and Peabody Street. The pedestrian connections are very important.

Perras stated that although there is an increase in mass, they successfully increased the transparency to the water and the aerial imagery depicting the Lafayette/Derby corner shown at the 3/10/21 SRA meeting should be included in all future presentations. Chair Durand requested their anticipated schedule. Northcutt replied that with the New Market Tax Credit program they hope to begin Phase 1 in the first quarter of 2022 or 2023 and anticipate two years of construction. The housing will be 100% affordable and primarily funded by Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. If permitted this year it can be funded next year with a start of construction is 2024 with a 15-month construction, so one may start just as the other is finishing. Chair Durand asked when their landscape improvements would occur. Northcutt replied that they are carried in the budget of Phase I but it could be phased.

Sides stated that she was impressed with the senior housing proposal.

Miller stated that she is having a hard time imagining what the Peabody Street building does and would like to know more about the program, including commercial use and community spaces. If it had housing it would be activated after the workday. The space abutting the park should not be an empty alcove that invites hanging out -- it would be a great space to locate a business or activity that would spill out and take advantage of the park.

Kennedy: Motion to continue to the April 28, 2021 meeting.

Seconded by: Sides.

Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides, Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 5-0.

4. 282 Derby Street – Small Project Review and Sign Review: New windows, plain awnings, and painting for 'All Souls', review of proposed blade and window signs.

Jennifer Tran, Andrew Bablo of Steeze Designs and Patrick Schultz were present to discuss the project.

Schultz stated that he wants to paint the faux brick so that it matches the red in the logo. Four double-hung windows are proposed with 18-inch-deep awnings on either side of the blade sign. Chair Durand noted his concern with how the tops of the awnings engage the buildings. Schultz replied that there are three rows of windows and the awning will only cover the middle row. The awnings will be low profile to prohibit smoking under them. The brick will be painted to match the sign and the blade sign will be centered over the entry door. Both sides of sign will be neon and the word 'lounge' will be painted. The storefront is 25-feet-long, and the proposed windows are essential for ventilation.

Sides requested a cohesive proposed front elevation, renderings, as well as information about the operation of the proposed windows since they will change the depth of the façade. Newhall-Smith stated that she reviewed the sign regulations and neon signs are allowed for restaurants. Chair Durand believed the proposed sign will be successful and agreed with the request for a final rendering incorporating all of the proposed items. Perras requested that the applicant consider painting the wall behind the sign black to create a clean look. Schultz agreed with Perras. Kennedy suggested making the top and bottom areas black so the sign will stand out.

Schultz noted that Weaver Glass will provide the new window with the same bronze frame, they will provide window details, as well as color options for the sign bracket.

Kennedy informed the Board and the public that he met with Schultz, Tran and Architect Dan Ricciarelli to discuss the sign.

Miller stated that the depth of the sign seemed wide. Kennedy replied that the thickness is required for the interior neon element as well as the weight of the sign and mounting it is also a concern. Chair Durand suggested raising the sign up a couple inches to clear the doorway opening below.

Newhall-Smith noted that the proposed vinyl decal for the entry door will be reduced to conform to the signage requirement.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Sides: Motion to continue the entire application to a special meeting on March 31, 2021 at 6PM.

Seconded by: Perras.

Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 5-0.

New / Old Business

Meeting Minutes:

February 24, 2021

Miller: Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 24, 2021.

Seconded by: Perras.

Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 5-0.

Staff Updates:

Sides stated that the project with the gambrel roof on Lynde Street has a new owners and changes were made that were not approved by the DRB so there may have been a stop of work order for the property. The larger problem is with single-family homes being within the SRA being designation as historic and she has worked to include these streets within historic district. She suggested that the City Council approve an ordinance for housing over a certain age. Kennedy questions whether the DRB or SHC can review these properties. Sides noted that egregious mistakes of zoning and a lack of oversight with historic fabric that should be protected. Miller suggested the SRA refer these projects to the Historic Commission.

Newhall-Smith stated that there was no stop work order was issued and the new developer has agreed to revert to the SRA-approved plan. The owner would like to modify the rear façade's window/dormer layout to allow for a new interior wall to divide the unit.

Kennedy stated that Turner's Restaurant met with the Building, Fire, Electric Departments as well as the Tree Warden and everyone agrees so far. A tree hearing is scheduled soon so the applicant should come before the DRB within the next two months.

Newhall-Smith stated that the SRA approved abutters notifications on major projects that add height or floor area to a property within 150-feet, as well as applications for outdoor seating, and the applicant will be required to complete the notifications.

Miller suggested asking the Assessor to include notices about sold structures being his protected zones. A deed cannot be changed because a historic zone could be changed over time, but they could be instrumental in letting homeowners know of required review for changes to their property by City boards.

Sides suggested a joint meeting between the SRA and DRB for the Lafayette and Derby Street projects so the DRB knows what the SRA wants them to focus on. Chair Durand stated that many will have the same concerns, but their timeline is aggressive given the review that will be required, as well as the funding required to meet their goals. Newhall-Smith added that it would be good to have a joint meeting prior to the final design review and after the applicant has gone before the other Boards and Commissions.

Adjournment

Sides: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Perras.

Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sides and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 5-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:30PM.

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