

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board – Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, September 28, 2022 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Marc Perras, J. Michael Sullivan, Sarah Tarbet
DRB Members Absent:	Catherine Miller
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

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

Signs in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 196 Essex Street: Flying Monkey

Gabe Manukyan (Owner) was present to discuss the project.

Manukyan stated that a 23-inches wide x 24-inches high blade sign is proposed with matching vinyl decal both on and above the windows. He considered adhering vinyl lettering directly onto the granite surface. Perras questioned allowing temp vinyl signs. Newhall-Smith noted that the PEM does it to promote events. She noted that this should not be considered temporary sign but questioned being comfortable with it being up over the winter. Manukyan replied that it may be applied for 1-year at the most, however, the blade and window signs would be permanent. A sign is needed now for the current season, but the theme of the signs would change next year. Newhall-Smith asked if the blade sign bracket was existing. Manukyan replied yes.

Kennedy raised concerns with adhesive being stuck on the granite which could change the surface and/or leave an outline of the lettering overtime. Manukyan suggested temporary vinyl signs. Perras stated that he had no issue with the use of a vinyl sign for 1-year and suggested compressing and centering the text above the window. Manukyan suggested centering the text between the door and window. Jaquith suggested the vinyl text remain spaces out for readability. Kennedy replied that either centering option would work but the lettering should be reduced in scale and suggested keeping the Aerial Bold text but to hyphen “goth-ish”. Chair Durand suggested adding dots or squares to the temporary “Flying Monkey” signs. Tarbet raised concern with the spacing/kerning of the lettering. Manukyan replied that text was meant to look jumbled and is based on the blade sign. Kennedy noted that the spacing is better understood on the blade sign than the vinyl sign. Manukyan agreed to match the kerning. Kennedy also suggested increasing the contrast between the lettering on all the signage for consistency but that it not be made a condition and to adjust the kerning in “shop” to match “flying monkey”.

Tarbet stated that she is not a fan of vinyl sign even if it is temporary and suggested that the mounting for a flat sign be applied even temporarily. Jaquith suggested incorporating a limit on the use of the temporary sign. Manukyan stated that if the sign begins to deteriorate, he will remove it. Sullivan suggested that a vinyl sign would make

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it look very temporary and he too is not comfortable with vinyl being applied to the granite. Manukyan replied that some vinyl looks as if it is painted on, and it is not a banner style sign it would be applied to the granite surface and the joints of the granite would show through the sign. Perras noted that the PEM has applied similar vinyl signs to brick and granite walls, and they did look good.

Chair Durand opened public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Jaquith: Motion to approve with the following comments: to center the lettering over either the window or the window and door, reduce the scale of the lettering, to hyphenate “goth-ish”, add dots or squares to the temporary “Flying Monkey” signs, applicant to work with Glenn Kennedy on matching the kerning used on all signs for consistency. Seconded by: Sullivan.

Roll Call: Jacquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, Tarbet and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 7-0.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 140 Washington Street: Small Project Review – Roof replacement

Andrew Brockaway (architect) and Debbie Tucker (Salem Housing Authority) was present to discuss the project.

Tucker stated that they went before the SRA to replace the roof due to lack of insulation and the parapet roof needing to be raised.

Brockaway stated that the Washington Street elevation has an aluminum coping that will be replaced, the parapet is along Washington street only and a gravel fascia at the remaining perimeter. The existing structure has a built-up roof with a gravel stop and 1-inch of insulation that is saturated and in need of replacement. They will leave the deck but must meet current energy code by adding 5-½-inches of insulation, increasing the height of the front parapet by 5-inches, and a new gravel stop at the perimeter. The existing roof is very close to the current roof edge at two locations and raising the parapet height will ensure the parapet is higher than the insulation. They would also add a coping extender that would extend no lower than the existing and cover any additional brick.

Perras noted that the details look sound and suggested the blocking be stepped back so the new fascia is set into the roof maintaining the existing reveal visible from the street. Jacquith requested the new coping finish color. Brockaway replied white to match existing with a new modified bituminous white roof. Perras suggested that while the coping had discolored and now appear to be grey, the new coping should be grey because white would draw too much attention. Chair Durand, Jacquith, and Sullivan agreed adding that it would respond better to the granite sills at the windows.

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Chair Durand opened public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Perras: Motion to approve as submitted with the upper fascia to be stepped back to create a reveal, to adjust for drainage, and install grey coping. Seconded by: Jaquith. Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, Tarbet, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

2. **252 Bridge Street and 32-34 Federal Street:** Final Design Review – The Exchange Salem – Part 1: Redevelopment of 252 Bridge Street, the 'Crescent Lot' into a six-story mixed use building with approximately 7,325 square feet of commercial space, up to 120 residential units that will be offered at varying levels of affordability, creation of public spaces, and site improvements, continued from 8/10/22.

Ramie Schneider (WinnDevelopment), Steve Prestejohn (Cube3), and Michael Blier (Landworks Studio) were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Schneider stated that they went before the SRA on September 14, 2022, and the Planning Board on September 15, 2022, and received good feedback from both. They are working on the crescent lot which needs to be permit ready. They went before the Historical Commission in August seeking a letter of support that is required with the historic tax credit submission. They are searching for resources for the new program and are meeting with potential operators on possible uses for the courthouses as well as preforming other behind-the-scenes work. They've heard comments about the buildability of the curved façade and that is the focus of this presentation.

Blier stated that they are thinking about landscape as a continuous movement through the site and the pedestrian connections between the downtown and north Salem, and it's the buildings figure and topography that creates the connections through the site. The major public space on the north, the connection at Bridge Street, and to the lower level are activated by the pedestrian connections at the grand stair and by cyclists at the sloped pathway. The vibrancy of the grand stair and promenade leave nothing is isolated. History is guiding the future and they are using the language of the railyard and movement of the railway system by utilizing the left-over granite slabs as benches or in the planting zones, to tell a bigger story and create an important pedestrian space in Salem. The reclaimed stone will brand and anchor the site, lighting will be integrated for safe pedestrian passage and to highlight the sloped pathway. They will utilize planting materials that are flood tolerant, with permeable paved areas, a charge area, and snow areas. Expressions of public art will also be integrated to reinforce the flow of the building, in simple yet meaningful ways.

Prestejohn stated that they previously heard concerns with material color, texture, and the constructability of the building. The curved façade reads as a pebble smoothed by the flow of the river, with dynamic curves that wraps over one another. They submitted a

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physical materials board to the Ms. Newhall-Smith at the Planning Department and are proposing predominantly Hardie panel with a wood-look cedar mill material in two wood tones. The lower level will have a natural stone-look also in two-tones of grey and a dark Night Grey at the upper level that allows the wood-look material to stand out in the foreground while the upper-level color to recede into the background.

Prestejohn presented a plan view of the exterior wall section, with 2x6 curved stud wall segments, girts to pick up the radius of the curve, and vertical furring strips to attach the Hardie panels too. The panels will be field bent in 8-foot length to maximize their flexibility and 15-inches-high and will be spaced equally between the windowsills and heads. The black PVC window frames are triple pane and non-flanged, with a break metal surround. The passive house building will have 4-inch metal reveals at floor lines that could match the window frame color and coping at the top of the parapet. Schneider added that a window sample will be provided to the Planning Department as well.

Chair Durand stated that only two colors were proposed but there seem to be more. Prestejohn suggested the rendering provided additional color variation. Kennedy noted that he preferred the horizontality of the material and paneling in the rendering. Prestejohn noted that the horizontal joints are proposed at 1/4-inch but could be smaller.

Perras asked why the stair still narrows at the lower park level. Blier replied to ease the entrance at the fire pump and service door below and alleviate the notched area below. Prestejohn noted that the stair width would widen as someone goes up the stair. Perras stated that the landscape plan is tremendous and the lighting at ground plane and soffit is critical. He noted that a letter received spoke mostly about pedestrian safety, they should continue to make it a point of emphasis. He is still leery of curving a cement board panel on the building due to his prior experience. He reviewed the sample board and is struggling with making a cement panel look like wood and noted that he sees as solid color terra cotta material being more successful. The two-color variation is important but doesn't believe it will ever look like wood and he is having difficulty processing the building holistically. Schneider replied that they didn't have time to address the Bridge Street façade concern which they will continue to review, however, the curved side is critically important. Chair Durand was also troubled by the wood-look that doesn't look like a quality material and noted that he also sees this as a two-toned terra cotta façade. Sullivan agreed with Perras on the texture on a non-wood material, suggested eliminating the grained look, and questioned whether the rendering showed a joint greater than 1/4-inch. Prestejohn replied that they will have a small Z-channel for drainage. Sullivan asked if the panels at grade would have the same portions as the upper panels. Prestejohn replied that the lower panels will be a larger size and suggested eliminating the wood grain material. Kennedy requested examples of the wood grain look on other projects. Tarbet stated that she was in favor of the design concept, the urban size on Bridge Street, and the more natural side facing the water, but it's anticlimactic to have faux wood-look and she suggested a material that would weather and read as more natural. Jaquith agreed with Perras.

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Perras stated that he is pleased with the overall design, concerned about what the proposed soffit material, loved the horizontality and reveals at the floor lines, and suggested the columns be aligned with the outside wall since it is the same material. Prestejohn replied that they would explore other color variations if no wood grain were successful but could maintain the color combination if it was still amenable. Sullivan replied that the current 5 proposed colors would be appropriate. Jaquith noted that the wood grain would not be visible from a distance, he likes the flowing look of the north façade, and the plan keeps improving. Perras stated that he is in favor of a brick/masonry feel for this building.

Newhall-Smith stated that the materials board was helpful, she was not in favor of the yellowish wood colors that she does not feel compliment the grey and is too much of a contrast. She questioned the shape of the columns and the look of a building on stilts and noted her preference for square/thicker columns clad in granite to tie in with the lower façade material. She noted that the Artic White soffit color may not wear well at the pedestrian level, suggested that would be a good place to incorporate a brick look that ties in with Salem, and suggested a curve mock-up be constructed. Schneider replied that mock-ups are expensive, but they could create one closer to construction. Newhall-Smith reiterated the request for photos of the curved material.

Chair Durand opened public comment.

Newhall-Smith stated that three comment letters were received prior to the meeting.

1. Philip Johns and Edith Bross Johns, 6 Southwick Street. Dated September 27, 2022.
2. Filipe Zamborlini, 62 Perkins Street, #3. Dated September 28, 2022.
3. Historic Salem, Inc. (HSI). Dated September 28, 2022.

Emily Udy, Historic Salem, Inc. Their comments aren't being addressed tonight, but they have questions they'd like to see answered by the design team regarding the Bridge Street façade. The Night Gray Hardi panel looks much darker in person than in the rendering, the rendering color should be darkened so the two colors match.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Tarbet noted that the Bridge Street facade is gray on gray and asked if a color board for what occurs below the soffit has not been created. Prestejohn replied that the gray field was the same as the upper story, the bays were a distinct tone.

Perras noted his concern with the columns and suggested the perimeter could be "of the façade" and those underneath the building could match the granite base. He noted that he was in favor of the shark fin style columns. Prestejohn replied that not all of the columns have the same treatment and the secondary columns do match the street level so they fade away.

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Perras requested the next steps for the review of this project. Newhall-Smith replied that the design team will return to the DRB in October to review the Bridge Street elevation, when they should provide a specification sheet for the windows and door system, landscape plan, and more details. Whether or that that it the only meeting needed, will depend upon their feedback, but this project shouldn't be rushed, and the timeline is to be determined.

Perras: Motion to continue to October 26, 2022 and to provide elevations of the Bridge Street façade, landscape plan, and more details. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, Tarbet, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

3. **231 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Remove six windows, replace three with new windows and restore and reinstall three at Rockafellas.

Newhall-Smith stated that the contractor was not able to obtain the detailed drawings and measurements on the removed and proposed windows in time for this meeting. Chair Durand added that the new windows didn't match the existing windows at all, and the applicant could use some help their presentation. Newhall-Smith noted that she would connect the applicant with Patti Kelleher, Preservation Planner, to provide additional feedback.

Jaquith: Motion to continue to the October 26, 2022 regular meeting. Seconded by: Tarbet.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, Tarbet, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

Projects Outside the Urban Renewal Area

There are no projects outside the Urban Renewal area to review.

New / Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. July 27, 2022

Perras: Motion to approve. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Tarbet abstained due to her not being a Board member at the time of that meeting. Passes 5-0.

- b. August 22, 2022

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand were in favor. Tarbet abstained due to her not being a Board member at the time of that meeting. Passes 5-0.

2. Staff Updates, if any:

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Newhall-Smith stated that the 2023 meeting calendar has been provided and the Board can remain remote until March 2023.

Adjournment

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Jacquith, Kennedy, Perras, Sullivan, Tarbet, and Chair Durand were in favor. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:30PM.

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