

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, June 28, 2017 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room
Members Present:	Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Helen Sides, Glenn Kennedy, and, Ernest DeMaio
Members Absent:	J. Michael Sullivan and Christopher Dynia
Others Present:	Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner
Recorder:	Andrew Shapiro

Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. **203-209 Essex Street (Hotel Salem):** Discussion and vote on proposed café permit (outdoor seating area), signage, and lighting.

Paul Durand recused himself from hearing and discussing this item. He left the room.

The submission under review included a cover sheet, and plan set showing signage, outdoor seating, specs/samples, and drawings/renderings. Annette Popp of Winter Street Architects and Rich Cooper of Lark Hotels were present to discuss the project.

Popp moved through a presentation as she discussed the proposal. She noted the schedule that the hotel is on and what type of permitting it had received. She noted that the project would not be seeking MA Historic Tax Credits because the roof deck addition made the project ineligible for such credits.

Popp showed an old picture of the building and explained that certain design elements were incorporated into the signage and other features of the façade that would reference what had once been on the building. Popp showed the previously approved rendering versus the one with updates that would be discussed this evening.

Three forms of signage are being proposed. The first is a sign above the entrance to the hotel that would have two foot brushed stainless steel typeface over curved steel bars. That sign is 29 square feet.

Sign number two is the blade sign. It has been reduced from 5'x'5 to 4.5'x4.5 in order to get the total amount of proposed signage to less than 60 square feet, which makes the proposal compliant with the City's ordinance. It will be housed in a custom made bracket with light fixtures above it.

A third sign will be vinyl affixed to glass next to the entrance. It will resemble the blade sign and show the hotel and food service offerings.

Popp moved onto exterior lighting showing the proposed fixtures to be used, which have both up and down lights. They are 14 inches tall and three inches wide. Downlights are

shown for egress doors and string lights would line the alleyway. Locations of lights were shown.

Popp then showed the proposed outdoor seating plan. She noted that there are 35 seats. A five foot aisle would be left to walk by the seating area. Pictures of the furniture and material samples were presented. The side entry would allow for wait staff to come in and out of the building. The chairs would be stackable and are a blue color to match branding. Other furniture is black. Popp pointed out that a/c units would be mounted above the seating area in the alley. It was the only feasible location due to the roof being too far to run the conduit. The units should be fairly quiet. Seating would stretch into the alley.

Popp showed lighting fixtures that would be mounted on the rear of the building, replacing existing fixtures. She noted that neighbors had expressed concerns about that area being well lit.

Popp explained that the hotel would like to utilize the area on the upper side of the building that currently houses the ghost sign, to mount a temporary banner sign that would signify the grand opening of the hotel and food service establishments.

Sides commented that everything looks great and was happy to see that the banner would only be temporary.

Shapiro noted that he had conferred with the Planning Director regarding the banner. He explained that there is no mechanism in the sign ordinance that would allow approval of a temporary sign as shown. Temporary signs are typically not permitted, and are confined to only small signs to be posted in windows (advertising sales, specials, etc.) for a maximum of 14 days. The department will not support this aspect of the proposal.

Sides asked how the sign would be mounted and how long it would remain.

Cooper responded that it was only for the grand opening and would probably remain for a month or so. He said that it would be mounted in a frame from the roof. The ghost sign would not be harmed.

DeMaio expressed positivity regarding the overall proposal. One concern expressed was the up and down lighting shown on the rear of the building. He asked that only downlights be used in this location so as to limit the amount of ambient light in the area that could be problematic for neighbors in surrounding buildings.

Cooper said that he would not mind making that change.

DeMaio also expressed a concern about how the outdoor seating area projects into the pedestrian way. He noted that given the amount of people who walk down Essex Street during certain times of the year, and that people tend to walk on the building side of the street (rather than down the middle), he suggests removal of the two sets of tables and chairs that project into the street.

Kennedy understands the concern regarding the outdoor seating area expressed by DeMaio.

Jaquith said that he does not have a problem with the breakup of the linear border of the seating area.

Kennedy questioned the use of “the” as part of the name of the hotel. Cooper noted that the hotel is branded that way. Kennedy also asked about the potential of using a marquis sign as previously shown. Cooper said that it was simply too big to implement.

Kennedy: Motion to recommend approval of the proposed café permit (outdoor seating area), signage, and lighting at 203-209 Essex Street (Hotel Salem), conditional upon the following:

1. That the four-top and two-top tables of the proposed outdoor seating area be eliminated so as to “square off” the seating area.
2. That any and all building lighting on the rear elevation of the building is down lighting.
3. If the temporary sign is to be approved, that it remain on the building for no longer than ninety days after opening.

Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

2. **120 Washington Street (Peabody Block LLC c/o RCG LLC):** Discussion and vote on proposed replacement of windows, new roof deck, trash enclosure, and entryway improvements.

Paul Durand returned to the meeting.

The submission under review includes a cover letter and plan set with photos and specifications showing proposed improvements. Andrew Zimmermann and David Steinbergh of RCG LLC were present to discuss the proposal.

Zimmermann explained that this project was being brought forth due to a by-right conversion of office space within the building to rental residential. The project received sign plan review approval from the Planning Board. The project is mostly interior in nature, but the elements being discussed this evening are exterior.

Zimmermann began by running through existing uses in the building, noting first that the first floor retail uses would remain. The area on the right side of the building (north side) on the second floor will be vacated by the City and remain office. The area to the left on the same floor is currently private offices and will remain that way. Floors three and floor will go from being City offices to 14 residential units (7 two beds, 5 one beds, and 2 three beds).

A roof deck is proposed for the interior corner of the building overlooking Lappin Park.

With respect to parking, Zimmermann noted that there are at grade spaces and basement spaces. One space will be lost due to a proposed installation of a dumpster enclosure. There will be 21 total spaces, which exceeds the required 19 spaces.

Zimmermann explained that new condenser units would be placed at least 15 feet back from the roofline for the new residential units. They will not be visible from the street.

Showing the new proposed trash area, Zimmermann noted that an eight foot high white stained wood fence with gate would surround a dumpster and compactor. The current trash capacity will be doubled.

Moving onto the proposed deck, Zimmermann explained that there would be a full screen six foot high wood fence in between it and adjacent residential units. The deck itself is 720 square feet and would be bordered with a white railing that will be designed to match the appearance of what is shown for the existing railing on the Barton Square elevation of the building. The horizontal deck surface would be an Azek "Arbor Series" product. Zimmermann explained that there would be wall mounted downlights with minimum foot candles in the deck area. The Planning Board recommended looking at having string lights on the deck, and a proposed specification for those are shown.

In terms of windows, Zimmermann noted that four new windows would be punched in the rear of the building. They would have arched tops to resemble window openings that had been there in the past. Windows will be replaced on floors two through four. The windows will be a Harvey Tribute Series white vinyl with aluminum reinforced sashes, double glazed. Grid configurations would match existing conditions.

Zimmermann explained that there is a material transition from concrete to tile at the entrance of the building. Their intent would be to replace the tile with concrete meant to be a seamless transition from the sidewalk. The rail would be refinished.

Durand asked whether the parking in the basement was existing and how it is ventilated. Zimmermann noted that it currently exists and that it is wall vented.

Jaquith remarked that there should be a more prominent opening to the deck that worked better with the interior of the building, like a French door. The railing should be more of a balustrade railing that would provide more privacy. He asked whether the windows had a good exterior muntin.

Zimmermann responded noting that the window would have a 5/8" putty glazed muntin. They are applied to the exterior, and there are interior ones as well with a spacer in between.

Jaquith noted that the entryway should be defined from the existing concrete sidewalk, but the entryway can be concrete.

Sides questioned whether the trash enclosure should be white. It might draw too much attention to itself. A dark brown stain could work better and draw less attention. Detail needs to be provided as to where exactly the railing sits. As shown, it looks like it is right along the roof line. How high does the deck come up?

Zimmermann responded that the deck is approximately 12 inches off of the roof surface, and the guard rail is 42 inches high after that. Sides noted that she would like to see detail on this and agrees with Jacquith that the rails seem inadequate in profile.

Kennedy noted feeling as though the screen shown for the deck can be stained a dark color, and not be white.

Sides said that the railing should be pulled back from the edge and to perhaps even not be white so as to be less visible. Also, it would be nice to have the rear elevation cleaned up. Right now there are several PVC pipes showing.

Durand opened public comment.

Steve Immerman of Federal Street expressed that he strongly concurs with the Board's conclusion that the railing style is inappropriate. He raised the issue of lighting in the deck area.

Durand, Sides, and Jaquith noted that they feel the string lights are not appropriate and encouraged the applicant not to seek that path.

Durand: Motion to recommend approval of the proposed replacement of windows, new roof deck, trash enclosure, and entryway improvements at 120 Washington Street conditional upon the following:

1. That the applicant returns to the DRB for review and approval of detailed final drawings of the proposed deck area (deck, railing, and lighting).
2. That dark stain is used for the trash enclosure; not white.
3. That the front entry area be made to look different than the existing sidewalk area (i.e. concrete as presented may be used, but for instance, it should stamped in a different direction than the existing sidewalk).

Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

3. **65 Washington Street "Salem District Court" (Diamond Sinacori, LLC and Urban Spaces, LLC):** Discussion and vote on schematic design review for proposed development project.

The submission under review included a revised set of plans with elevations, floor plans, and renderings. The applicant showed a PowerPoint presentation. Merrill Diamond and Greg Winter of Diamond Sinacori LLC, Jeff Hirsch of Urban Spaces, LLC, Betsy Merry of Merry Fox, and Steve Tise and Giulia Sauer of Tise Design Associates were present to discuss the project.

Diamond noted that this is the second appearance of this project before the DRB. The project will seek state funding through the Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP). Prior to seeking local support at the City Council, they are looking for an endorsement of the design by the DRB and SRA. He then turned it over to Steve Tise of Tise Design Associates.

Tise took the Board through a presentation of the revised design. The program includes 61 dwelling units (down from 62), 10 of which are three bedroom units (up from three). The front entranceway now has a recessed second floor area that better announces the entrance to the building and reduced the unit count by one. The amount of blank wall running down Washington Street from the Federal Street corner has been reduced, the lobby has been reconfigured, corners of the building have been redesigned to be more distinctive, and the rear inner courtyard has been enhanced.

Tise noted that the existing foundation of the building is being used so as to minimize excavation and the need to deal with dirty soils. That puts pressure on distribution of parking. There will be a total of 88 parking spaces on site; some of them will be unconventional. 61 of those spaces (1-1 ratio) will be conventional spaces (some will be compact), with additional tandem spaces and parking lifts to provide additional parking. There will be room for thirty wall mounted units of bicycle storage.

Tise showed the ground floor plan, noting where retail will be located (Washington Street and turning the corner at Church Street). The lobby elevation needs to be 24 inches above grade. Handicap access arrives at two points (one on Church, one on Washington), which are recessed; they conceal the ramps with rails and planters. The recesses have been made as shallow as possible so as to still be code compliant.

Tise then showed the proposed parking layout, noting the curb cut on Federal Street, and landscape strip along Federal Street. They will maintain landscaping there even though it is owned by the City. There are areas demarcated for public art along the wall on Federal Street, which should improve the appearance of that façade. The lower level of parking is where there are tandem spaces.

Tise showed a section of the building and noted that it is 69'4" high, just shy of the 70' height limit. There is an amenity space on the second floor that opens to a terrace.

Tise noted again that the blank wall spaces along Washington Street (toward the Federal Street corner) has been foreshortened and that a brass plaque announcing the name of the building is being contemplated for that area. The basic materials of the building primarily include brick, a prefinished aluminum siding material called "longboard" for the bays (with another version of that material acting as an accent next to the windows), a cast stone veneer for the base of the building, and a granite veneer from the floor level to the sidewalk.

Tise showed the Federal Street base elevations, noting again the locations where public art can be installed. There are recessed panels along the street level that could house installations, and the corner could also present an opportunity.

Shapiro noted that there have been meetings held between the City and developer to discuss public art opportunities in this area. The City's Public Art Planner is engaged in this process, as is Steve Immerman of Montserratt College of Art, and an art consultant that the developer has hired. The ultimate installation may not be fleshed out before the DRB needs to make a recommendation on the schematic design of this project.

Tise then showed the amenity spaces and the courtyard area on level two of the building. There will be balconies for the interior units facing the courtyard, and some shallow balconies for top floor units above the bays that face out onto Washington Street.

Tise noted the proposed projecting cornice at the top of the building that would be up lit with LED lighting. There are a couple of potential flag pole scenarios that could be considered. One with one flag pole – an American flag. Another with two flag poles with nautical pennants, representing the number six and five.

Durand discouraged the flags due to the issue in having to maintain them. Jaquith agreed. Sides noted that she doesn't mind the single flag.

Diamond noted liking the two flag configuration because of its celebratory nature and that it announces the entrance to the building well.

Durand expressed concern with the ground floor elevation needing rise two feet; that can be detrimental to retail. That said, the retail being on the corner of Church and Washington with a lot of glass most likely works. Durand also expressed not liking the ground floor material; it looks too solid. He also wavered as to whether he liked the dental work on the cornice.

Jaquith agreed with Durand about the dental work. He suggested smoothing it out. In regards to the "65" sign, he said that it should be dropped down and lined with the top of the base of the building.

Durand said that he does not mind where the "65" is.

Sides said that perhaps there needs to be more connection between the base material and what is happening above; maybe there is currently too much contrast. She likes that the base is heavy. Perhaps the color needs to be adjusted.

Diamond said that they would take a look at the color of the banding between the base and the rest of the building. It could end up acting as a sign band for the retail.

DeMaio noted that he agrees with much of what has been said so far. He said that earlier versions of the design trended more contemporary, whereas the more recent versions are more classical. The building seems to be struggling between the two. There are lingering contemporary pieces and the identity of the building is not quite there yet. Eroding the corners and the use of glass gives the building a contemporary feeling, but the way the building is rendered indicates that it's being pulled in different directions. The smoother cornice that was previously shown was a fresher approach than the current cornice with dental work.

DeMaio continued by noting that it is unfortunate that the building does not have more of a relationship with the street. The retail being elevated is a factor. The ramp for the retail limits the amount of retail that goes down Church Street, which is a loss. Having a display window does not replicate good retail. There should be more effort given to making the corner as transparent as possible. That corner is extremely important.

Tise pointed out that it's not the ramp that is displacing the retail on Church Street; it's the parking.

DeMaio said that the recessed ramp to the left of the entrance to the building on Washington Street could be a less than hospitable place, given the screening of it with planters. People could duck into there. Perhaps it should be more visually open. Having the building move in a more contemporary direction would not be a bad thing.

Kennedy agreed that seeing the building trend more contemporary would be good. He likes the dental work on the cornice as it is; perhaps it could be heavier.

Durand cautioned that the future public art proposal needs to be thought out carefully. It could make or break the building. He then opened public comment.

Anya Wilczynski of Historic Salem Inc. commended the DRB. She said that public art needs to be handled carefully at the corner of Federal and Washington Street. At the moment, Federal Street seems like dead space. It should be thought out further. Some Board Members felt that the colors as currently shown are a bit too dramatic.

Morris Schopf of Cambridge Street emphasized the importance of the location of this building and how exposed it is. The "baseball cap" of the building could be heavier, because it's making reference to a big copper and wood cornice. This building has sophisticated neighbors in that they are beautifully detailed in granite and brick. They are not exotic, but they are beautifully done. There seems to be a layer of detail that is currently missing from this building. If money is being saved by not redoing the foundation of the building, then money can now be spent on the detailing of the building.

Durand: Motion to continue to a future date.
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes from the June 28, 2017 regular meeting.

Durand: Motion to approve the minutes.
Seconded by: Sides, Passes 5-0.

Adjournment

Kennedy: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Jaquith, Passes 5-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:31 PM

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City
Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.