

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room
DRB Members Present: Chair Paul Durand, Ernest DeMaio, Glenn Kennedy, Chris Dynia, David Jaquith, J. Michael, Sullivan
DRB Members Absent: Helen Sides
Others Present: Andrew Shapiro
Recorder: Colleen Brewster

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:05PM. Roll call was taken.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. 5 Central Street (Aroma Sanctum): Discussion and vote on proposed a-frame sign

Akuura Kulak of Aroma Sanctum was present to discuss the proposed signage.

Kulak stated that the plastic black A-frame sign shall be placed in the planter area.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve proposed signage.

Seconded by: Sullivan. Passes 5-0.

Kennedy arrives.

2. 143 Washington Street (Oak + Moss): Discussion and vote on proposed window signage

Jamie Metsch and Kate Leavy of Oak + Moss were present to discuss the proposed signage.

Metsch stated that they will start a retail store at 143 Washington Street. They are proposing to apply three vinyl decals on two Front Street windows and another on a Washington Street window. Metsch provided a vinyl swatch in an opaque light grey color. A temporary “coming soon” text will be added underneath the Washington Street decal.

Kennedy suggested that all three decals have “coming soon” added to them

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to approve proposed signage.

Seconded by: Dynia. Passes 6-0.

3. 9-11 Dodge Street, 217-219 Washington Street, and 231-251 Washington Street (Hampton Inn, Mixed-Use Development Project): Discussion and vote on proposed revisions to final design

Attorney Thomas Alexander of Alexander & Femino, Dustin DeNunzio of the DeNunzio Group, LLC is the Manager of Dodge Street, LLC., Ken McClure, Mark Woglom, Manager of Opechee Construction Corporation, and Keith Kelley VP of Opechee Construction Corporation were present to discuss the project.

Atty. Alexander stated that Dodge Street, LLC still owns the property. During the bid process the numbers couldn't be met so the design was re-evaluated and redesigned to be more efficient and economical. The buildings are now one story shorter with 30 fewer residential units and the 113-hotel room count has not changed. The office space has been eliminated but the retail use will remain. The building footprint is approximately the same and the parking has slightly increased.

DeNunzio stated that they are working with RCG but couldn't make the numbers work with an inefficient design. Structural changes were made and they have downsized some elements of the building program with a bigger focus on the hotel and expanding along Washington Street. The retail and residential spaces will remain; however, a final use for the flexible space hasn't been determined. The SRA's comments were included in this current iteration.

Woglum stated that Main Course Hospitality Group had their office review both portions of the project which resulted in a simplified design; the structural system, less site work, constructing both portions at once, and simplified roof lines. The result is an economically viable project with the same materials, orientation, and a similar footprint.

Woglum stated that the access point between buildings has been removed and the hotel now turns the corner at Dodge Street and continues along Washington Street. The primary entry to hotel was at the corner of Dodge Street and Dodge Street Court and the vehicular and main pedestrian entry is now on Dodge Street across from Starbucks. The hotel parking will be valet parking only and all public parking spaces will be on the lower level with overflow valet spaces. The majority of overnight parking will be on the second level of the parking deck and that level has no access to other interior spaces. There is a slight excess in parking so some of the spaces could be leased to tenants. The paving design and patios are similar. The residential site work is similar but the drainage infrastructure was modified and there is no longer a stepped entry.

Woglum stated that additional divisions of the retail space have been included for potential smaller retail spaces as was suggested by the SRA. The hotel dining and other

amenities are on the second floor with a mixture of guestrooms and residential units on both the second and third floors. A repetitive wall structure simplifies the unit design. The live/work units will be left undefined until market demand is determined. The top-level parking deck will be accessed off of Washington Street and it will now have a roof to conceal it. Potential three-bedroom units that were eliminated have been re-incorporated per the SRA's recommendation.

Kelly stated that the project has been redesigned in a way that will get it built. The revised renderings show the same materials applied in a similar fashion, the hotel will have a modern look with a metal panel application and the residential portion a traditional feel with a brick façade. The connector has been simplified to accept the transition between the modern and traditional, and the changes in massing made to work with the grade changes.

Jaquith stated that the old scheme possibly shouldn't have been followed because some features have been lost which has limited the new scheme architecturally. The parking has improved, the best residential portion along Washington Street is the best elevation although it has lost elements, and the Dodge Street Court elevation has improved but still needs work. The connection between the two buildings has been lost but could be worked out.

DeMaio stated that although there are some similarities the efficiency changes are significant and the current proposed design has significant design changes that went through months of review. The current proposal is only at the start of its own redesign process and resembles a Schematic Design review with many layers of design missing. Buildings are very two-dimensional, they lack variety, richness, detail, scale changes, shadow, and texture that the Board has worked hard to include. This is a significant location worthy of more by the people who build here and too many steps backwards have been taken. The Board will work with you to achieve efficiency but also make it appropriate for downtown Salem.

Dynia stated that he agrees with the comments so far. He stated that the residential and retail are the more successful portions, but the blue corner of the hotel has been over-simplified and needs to find its way back to where it was.

Kennedy stated that he agrees with most of the comments so far but a couple meetings should result in significant improvements. The last design clearly defines the three spaces and using different colors isn't enough to separate its monolithic massing but varying the size of elements could help. The residential vs. modern changes help define those areas; however, the Washington Street hotel corner needs more defining with shadows, etc. The facades beyond the blue corner and along Dodge Street Court façade could work but are less of a concern.

Sullivan stated that multiple meetings revised the old design and the current is less developed. The changes created a different kind of structural problem and this current iteration will need a couple meetings to review. The hotel needs to explain why they want their entrance in the middle of Dodge Street. If the hotel wants to carry on the design esthetic of another building the Board will need to respond to that detail.

Kennedy noted that the blue portion of the hotel seems more like an appendage than a structure that could stand on its own now that it has been shortened. Jacquith added that

the blue towards the opposite side of Washington Street is now meaningless. Woglum agreed and noted that the hotel was adamant about not having the entrance along Dodge Street Court because it resembles a back alley.

Kennedy stated that the first-floor finish is not very inviting as a restaurant space. Jaquith added that it is very visible since it extends past the front of the neighboring building. Kennedy noted that it is a very important corner and some small changes to the modern portion will make it more powerful. The similarity of the window is economical but the previous change in windows worked well to differentiate between buildings. Woglum replied that the window design will be identical. Jaquith noted that the window spacing is off.

Jaquith stated that the second floor of the yellow portion resembles office space and doesn't read as residential. Dustin replied that it was live/work and it was accessed from the rear. Woglum replied that more glass makes the retail more prominent and the second floor of that is meant to be a more modern unit with more glass and similar to what's below. Jaquith added that window coverings will be needed inside that space.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

William LeGault, 2 Orne Street, states that he is concerned with the parking design as a former city councilor that voted to give over the 38 public parking spaces. The current public parking plan is not in the spirit of the agreement as it limits its accessibility and should be accessed from Washington Street, not Dodge Street Court. People objected to giving up the spaces but it was fought for. Dustin replied that it would be better since they are covered and accessible. LeGault replied that they are now more difficult to get to.

Emily Udy, 8 Buffum Street & Historic Salem, Inc. Connector piece on upper Washington Street was originally a very creative space that now no longer fits the area. The blue corner is highly visible and they would expect a higher design in downtown Salem because it is so highly visible and it has the opportunity to be that. The current design is a plain box that will become quickly dated. Washington Street elevation now has a lower ceiling height and the corner with the blue loses out with such a low ceiling. All of the windows are now the same now holes in a façade, they were varied before. There is more façade material and less glazing and she preferred more glazing. The residential façade and hotel entry along Dodge Street is successful but details were lost.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand stated that the flattening of the previous design was about the scale and the building fitting into downtown Salem, and the changes are now to the detriment of the character of the city. The flattening out of the same materials makes it more suburban. It needs to be in scale and in character with the City. The residential aspect is more successful but that first floor's undetermined use with residential stoops is uncomfortable and details have been lost. The flattening of the facades is not a solution to a complex city with significant historical architecture and roots. The Board was trying to articulate a modern building that was sensitive to the scale, materials, etc. This design needs some work and rethinking. The changes don't work and this is a major development that will draw a lot of comments.

DeMaio noted that the previous design took a similar window type but treated it differently and those changes gave it some variety. The current windows all have the same treatment. Some spaces will need a bit more because of where they are located.

Sullivan noted that the passage way to the parking lot is now hotel and it could read differently to show the division in the hotel and residential spaces.

Jaquith: Motion to continue to the November 29, 2017 meeting.
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 6-0.

Old/New Business

Minutes

The minutes from the September 27, 2017 regular meeting were reviewed.

Kennedy: Motion to approve the minutes and strike his comment.
Seconded by: DeMaio. Passes 6-0.

Adjournment

Kennedy: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: DeMaio. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:20PM.

Approved by the Design Review Board on November 29, 2017.

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