

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board – Special Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, J. Michael Sullivan
DRB Members Absent:	Glenn Kennedy, Helen Sides
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

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

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **32-50 Federal Street and 252 Bridge Street:** Schematic Design Review – Restoration of historic courthouses and development of mixed-use structure, *continued from 8/5/21*

Adam Giordano, Adam Stein, and Ramie Schneider of Winn Development, and Steve Prestejohn of Cube 3, were present to discuss the project.

Giordano thanked the DRB for scheduling a special meeting and noted that they met with HSI on Monday. Prestejohn stated that their discussion was productive; they spoke of three key points: accent color at balcony regarding saturation level and hue, the façade at Bridge and Washington Streets, and improving the pedestrian experience and streetscape along Bridge Street. They will think about those points as they continue to progress the design.

Perras asked that they speak to the HSI comments as they review the plans. Prestejohn stated that regarding the accent color, HSI felt it the red was too saturated. At the Washington and Bridge Street façades they discussed a balance of material, window pattern, fenestration, façade pattern, and larger window openings, but they came to no conclusion yet. At the streetscape there were concerns with what happens to the building at the slip ramp. They are committed to activating that streetscape and the sidewalk though they do not have control of the land. Giordano noted that HSI was concerned that the sidewalk would shrink with the tree plantings, but it will not.

Prestejohn stated that with the warmer wood tone, they are being more selective with the metal horizontal banding around the wood look paneling, removing dark and busy panels, and will use a maroon accent color. Perras suggested using the same wood look for the accent panel. Prestejohn replied that they would prefer the use a pop of color but are open to what that color could be. Chair Durand noted his preference for color, stating that it provides visual interest rather than more wood and that the team should provide mock-ups of the materials so the board can see the true colors of them. Sullivan added that the accent panel is a nice piece of the vocabulary that creates pockets of color, which is a good design technique. Prestejohn agreed that it brings attention to the reveals and will be useful as a design motif.

Sullivan noted his shared concerns regarding the Bridge Street sidewalk and suspected that the trees shown in the rendering may not be feasible due to limited soil. He

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suspected that most people would use the new ramp and stair that goes through the crescent lot site. Chair Durand agreed that the monumental stair and shared ramp will orient pedestrians away from the vehicles, which is the preferred route.

Miller asked if the project would return for a Design Development review. Chair Durand replied that the applicant will return with a Final Design Review application filing that should include a mock-up of the materials. He would like to see the project, post Final Design Approval, at 45% Construction Documents and 70% Construction Documents to review the details. If there are conflicting items during construction, solutions can be presented to the Board and the details can be worked out.

Perras noted his concern with the Bridge Street elevation at the slip ramp end of the building where wood-like panels slope down and pinch; it seems awkward. He asks if that space is functional or if it's a decorative feature.

Jaquith arrived at the meeting.

Chair Paul Durand opened public comment.

Newhall-Smith acknowledges the comment letters submitted to the DRB in advance of this meeting:

- HSI, September 29, 2021
- Anne Sterling, 29 Orchard Street, September 29, 2021
- Clarifications on the Municipal Harbor Planning area from Seth Lattrell (City Harbor Planner), September 29, 2021

Emily Udy, HSI & 8 Buffum Street. Appreciate the efforts of the Winn design team and the DRB holding a special meeting. Met with the Winn team on Monday and express concern with the proposed materials that the DRB is satisfied with. Also had concerns with the streetscape at Bridge and Washington. As a resident of north Salem she believes that people will continue to walk along the lower path that is sheltered and hidden from the street, and she would still choose to walk along the busy streetscape where it would feel safer. They will continue to address design issues as the project progresses.

Lev McClain, 22 Albion Street. Concerned with how the Bridge Street façade knits into the downtown. He walked the site and noticed that in contrast to the judicial center, this design differs because there is a lack of symmetry, a lack of standard window openings size and placement, as well as the placement of porches at odd intervals. It feels more modern and towering than what it surrounds, and it could be updated and coherent. The building feels out of place in this area.

Emily Udy, speaking on behalf of Barbara Cleary for HSI. Emphasized the conversation about the Washington and Bridge Street facades about the balcony color and window pattern being disorganized, and she encouraged a more ordered elevation.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

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Miller stated that the pedestrian experience is important to the DRB and Planning Board; a landscape architect should be engaged at this point in the process. The trees on Bridge Street will need structural soil to grow. Trees could also be added as pedestrians approach the lower MBTA level. A landscape architect will also be able to enhance the landing at the monumental stair and creating connections to the surrounding sidewalks, the path to North Salem, and the path under the overpass, which are important urban connections. Sullivan urged them to pay a lot of attention to the pedestrian path connection to North Salem is important since many will use it rather than going over the bridge.

Perras stated that regarding the fenestration concerns and lack of regularity, if the elements in the lower street level and upper level were regulated, it would make the building feel even larger. Breaking up the façade helps scale the building down and the window pattern is driven from that. The differently scaled residential units is driving the window pattern.

Jaquith noted that the concept is strong, the façade has regularity, and the architects should continue progressing the design. It's a great building for the entrance corridor coming from North Salem.

Chair Paul Durand closed public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve Schematic Design with design concerns to be addressed, and the project will return to the DRB during Design Development and Construction Document phases. Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Jacquith, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 5-0.

New / Old Business

Brix: Perras asked if there was any follow up to his questions regarding the steel elements painted Forrest Green when he remembers approving black. Newhall-Smith replied that she contacted the representative who said that green was the final color, but she will do more research.

Bit Bar: Miller stated that the renovation is looking good. The Board agreed.

Cataldo Ambulance Site: Perras asked if the applicant needed to return to the Planning Board. Newhall-Smith replied that she will follow-up with her colleague. Chair Durand stated that the DRB should focus on the connection to the south at the river when the applicant returns for Phase II. Miller note that the Planning Board mandated that additional trees along the North Street sidewalk will be paid for by Cataldo; these trees will be a substantial addition to the site. Chair Durand noted that the walk along the slip ramp up to Route 114 is unpleasant and at times difficult, but the crescent lot project will allow people to avoid walking that route. Miller agreed. Newhall-Smith stated that the city put in a Mass Works grant application to improve the design of the walkway around the end of the river at the MBTA site and they would hear back in October to see if they received an award.

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Councillor Riccardi stated that many of the residents in North Salem agree that the lower walking path needs to be upgraded, but the route over the slip ramp to Route 114 needs to be safe as well.

Adjournment

Miller: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 5-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:45PM.

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