

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee: Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 98 Washington Street, Large First Floor Conference Room
DRB Members Present: Chair Paul Durand, Ernest DeMaio, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Helen Sides
DRB Members Absent: Chris Dynia, J. Michael Sullivan
Others Present: Matt Coogan
Recorder: Colleen Brewster

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

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. **203-209 Essex Street (Hotel Salem):** Discussion and vote on proposed changes to signage (sign permit) scheme.

Chair Durand, principal at Winter Street Architects, recused himself.

Annette Popp of Winter Street Architects, was present to represent Hotel Salem and discuss the project.

Popp stated that they previously presented a sign package and are proposing a modification to the signs attached to the glass door. The current signage is three parts; black with white lettering and on one side of the entrance door with vinyl cut lettering adhered to the glass doors. All of the signage is currently on one side of the door and is barely visible. Two signs are proposed to be attached to both sides of the doors and would be opaque signs with a frosted or white background to make it more legible. There are other items in the application package, but the small signs are the only item they are currently seeking approval. Coogan noted that there seemed to be options: one with a white background with dark lettering and the second a clear background with white lettering. Popp replied that their preference isn't clear but only two-tone options are proposed.

DeMaio stated that he is not sure of its effectiveness over time, but it is easier to read and will look elegant. Popp noted that the signs will be mounted at the interior and not exposed to the weather. Kennedy recommended a frosted background with clear lettering, not black lettering, and suggested that they not use white, although clear would be equally legible. The concept is nice, but visibility is needed to identify the rooftop. He suggested they consider adding a 1/8" to 1/4" cut line around the edge of the sign to act as a frame to make it feel more substantial and less like a decal.

Jaquith opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Jaquith closes public comment.

Coogan stated that the applicant submitted an entire package including outdoor seating, lighting and signage, but after meeting with the SRA the applicant decided to postpone and refine their submission on seating and lighting but wanted to move forward with signage with the DRB. They will return to the DRB another time to discuss the elements not discussed tonight. DeMaio noted if the seating footprint encroaches more onto Essex Street than it did previously and asked it would also be tabled and discussed again. Coogan replied yes, the SRA approved the revised seating and didn't heed the recommendation of the DRB. Heat lamps and lighting will also be discussed when the applicant returns. Jaquith requested that the background information also be provided to the Board so they can see how the proposed design has progressed.

Sides: Motion to approve with a frosted background with clear lettering and the suggestion of a cut border at the perimeter.
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes: 4-0.

Chair Durand returned.

- 2. 144 Washington Street (HausWitch Home and Healing):** Discussion and vote on proposed changes to signage (sign permit) scheme.

Cheryl Rafuse, Manager of HausWitch was present to discuss the project.

Refuse stated that they want to keep the entire signage structure but want to swap out the interior portion of the sign with their new logo. Kennedy asked if house image would be white with a black outline. Rafuse replied all black. Kennedy stated that the house outline should be in-filled with black as indicated in the proposed photo.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to approve with a black house in-filled and black lettering.
Seconded by: Durand. Passes 5-0.

North River Canal Corridor Renewal Area Projects Under Review

- 1. 9 South Mason Street:** Review of final construction plans.

Ryan McSheara, architect at Red Barn Architecture was present to discuss the project.

McSheara presented the final elevations for the construction documents and stated that they are going for a permit for 2 of the 4 buildings, the center building and building #3 along Buffum Street. Very few changes have been made since their February, March and April reviews by the DRB and they've included the Boards requested changes.

Coogan stated that this project was last seen and approved by the DRB in March where the plan was refined. Since then a couple additions were made. McSheara noted that they will keep the center of the building intact and they introduced two additions at either end, a panel and glass wall system will be used at the additions and top floor, and at the very last meeting the Board asked them to match the window arrangement of the second floor windows and at the lower level and to adding two windows at the east and west corners of the north and south elevation at the upper level bedrooms. They went back to what the Board had previously approved in the previous year. At the Buffum Street building they are stepping down the buildings at grade as they move away from Buffum Street. They will center the window between trim on certain elevations improving the pediment line. They also have a request from the Owner to split up the two double hung windows to include a gas fireplace between the two windows.

Kennedy asked whether there was a color change. McSheara stated that they've presented a dark and light grey version with the dark on the top and light on the bottom. They discussed switching the colors and presented a lighter blue-grey which will now become the accent color. Kennedy asked about their proposed door color because he saw yellow doors on Building number 3 which won't work and changes the look of the neighborhood. McSheara replied white. Jaquith suggested with the various proposed building colors the doors be kept white. Sides suggested a deeper grey for the doors. DeMaio stated that he wants to see a colored rendering.

Kennedy stated that the detail where the window meets the siding was executed poorly and Everlast siding was used but the installer didn't use the associated trim and used a J-channel and the cut looks very bad and the manufacturer didn't like it either. He spoke with the applicant and changing the window trim would be too much work, but they will make the change everywhere it is supposed to be executed. He wanted to know what the solution going forward would be since there will be two different methods executed. McSheara replied that he would want to see the other work corrected.

Jaquith stated that at the two A-frame dormers with shed dormers in between the intermediate trim were poorly executed. McSheara replied that it is a skinny dormer trying to house 3 windows and they need enough trim to make it look acceptable. Jaquith stated that they shouldn't connect the two gable returns and the horizontal piece of trim between should be set back.

Chair Durand questioned how the applicant has a building permit without DRB approval. Coogan replied that he would investigate it. DeMaio stated that the colors should be presented, reviewed and approved.

Durand: Motion to continue, to investigate their permit concerns with Building Inspector, for the applicant to provide color rendering, a detail of the revision at gable roof, and photos of what currently exists.

Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 5-0.

- 2. 16, 18, and 20R Franklin Street (Ferris Junkyard):** Discussion on design changes to proposed five building, 42-unit residential development.

Ryan McSheara, architect at Red Barn Architecture, Attorney Kristin Kolik of Serafini,

Darling & Correnti, LLP, and Frank Wardley, architect at Pitman and Wardley Associates were present to discuss the project.

McShera presented revised packets including proposed colors, plan revisions, a landscape plan, and civil drawings. Planting are proposed around the edges of buildings, the drive aisle, exterior common space such as at the pergola, planting beds at the front entrance, the streetscape and trees throughout. There have been no changes to the schematic footprint previously presented. The route of incoming electrical and sprinkler connections on site are also shown.

Elevations: McShera stated that the proposal will be a mix of composite materials possibly in the Boral family using both a ship lap and nickel gap profile, horizontally and vertically. The mid-rise buildings will be a lighter color with vertical siding at stair towers and horizontal at the main body of the building and living spaces. At the interaction between the grade and parking area there will be a concrete foundation, openings for ventilation at parking level and MDO or Azek board with trim. They may use a mesh screening in the openings. A curtain wall has been added at gym area and the living spaces will use 4-panel sliding glass door units with stainless handrails at the balconies.

Townhouses: McShera stated that the same Boral siding will be used horizontally with a 4" clapboard reveal. At the cornice they proposed a flat detail at the eave and Board comments lead them to more standard condition with eave trim that wraps down the building. They also added roofs over the entryways and storage sheds at the end of the buildings.

McShera stated that the mid-rise entryway also has a curtain wall with a roof to accentuate the entry and there have been no other changes to those buildings since the previously presented documents.

Chair Durand asked if the existing trees are to remain. McShera replied that the dense row of trees from front to back between the park and their site will remain. Kennedy noted that there is visibility at the fence below level of the tree line but the trees themselves are dense. Chair Durand asked if the four parking spaces on the street in front of the townhouses were associated with this project. McShera replied that those space are not part of their property or included in their parking count.

Sides stated that the elevations are better in the line drawings than in color; however, the elevations are choppy with different colors and materials and the windows aren't aligned, but the gable ends bother her the most. At the townhouses the dark lines at the different materials is wrong and the body should be closer to the trim color, there is too much of a contrast. They are using recognizable forms but there is no balance and the elements are skewed. She asked if the windows could be moved to create a vertical alignment. Jaquith asked if the smaller windows at the lower level of the mid-rise building could be left as openings instead. McShera replied no, they are windows to a private garage and cannot be left open. Sides asked about the Second-Floor setback at the townhouses. McShera replied that they are stepping back the massing 1-foot to give relief to the streetscape and that only happens at the street façade. Sides replied that she understands the roof sloping away but the 1-foot distance is not enough to look like a true relief.

Jaquith stated that the banding and color are off and suggested that they not divide the building up too much.

Jaquith asked if they had a landscape architect. McShera replied yes, Laura Rutledge, and the Planning Board was happy with the landscape plan. Jaquith stated that he is concerned with paths in the open space at the entrance need to be determined with some logic. McShera replied that the entryway is being treated as a node.

Jaquith stated that the foundation plan looks like a row of arborvitaes. The gym windows don't work well with the building, they may not need as many, and their placement could work with the openings of the garage below and residential windows above. There is too much breaking up of the elevation.

Jaquith asked if there are handicapped units. McShera replied yes.

DeMaio noted that the color, windows and railings in the packet handed out today are all different from what they've received their packets over the weekend. He stated that the DRB should insist that new materials not be introduced after the submission due date. It is unfair to expect the Board to have to review them on the spot at the meeting. Color being added to drawings would be okay if the plans haven't changed. Applicants must adhere to the drawing deadline and if a deadline can't be met it should be continued to the next meeting. He added that the node hasn't become more of a place where the project and neighborhood come together. The new shed and equipment rooms at the sides of the townhouse buildings feel like the backs or blank sides and where people don't want to be. The greenspace has become throwaway space which is a lost opportunity and a disservice to the neighborhood and some pieces do interact with the neighborhood. He agreed with much of the previous concerns of the colors, graphics, etc.

Jaquith asked where the HVAC units will be located. McShera replied on the roof of townhouse and there will be a 5-foot high pop up at other buildings with screening.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Victoria Ricciardiello, 5 Foster Street. Stated that they need the help of the DRB for project going into the NRCC. This development needs to be consistent with the other homes of the neighborhood and it currently is not consistent to the height, design, styles, or its character. It is higher and the grouping of large buildings resemble factories. It doesn't look like other new developments and there is nothing in the neighborhood that is 5-stories high. Neighbors on the other side of North Street put up resistance to the 4-story structure because their neighborhood doesn't even have triple-deckers. It seems as though because 4 stories has been previously approved developers are now seeking 5 stories. Other projects have more style and character. The North River apartments are 4 floors but the Boston Street side has only 3. The buildings at 9 South Mason Street are on back streets and aren't easily seen while these proposed buildings will be highly visible to the downtown, along the NRCC, and from their houses. These buildings are too tall, don't fit the neighborhood character, and the others all have top floors that are more attractive. The NRCC 50-foot max building height should have stopped at the end of the canal on Commercial Street.

Anne Shirling, 29 Orchard Street. Submitted photos of the neighborhood and stated that many of the neighbors want the new development to fit the neighborhood filled with two and three-story homes. She liked the 9 Mason Street condominiums and townhomes on Water Street that look like they belong in New England. These look like a factory with glass walls and vertical siding.

Tim Jenkins, 18 Board Street. Agreed with DeMaio's views on document submission process and the Board not being given enough time to review revised documentation and provide comment. He encouraged the Boards to demand that they receive it on time. The NRCC visioning process in the North-East area supports reused and rehabilitation that is in scale with the neighborhood. He added that he thought the idea was for lower density.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. This proposed project should respect the neighborhood where many houses are red brick along Franklin Street even the first floor of the commercial building. South Mason Street is a better fit for the Northfields construction. She was unsure that if this were done as proposed if there would be enough space for snow storage internally and ultimately snow drainage.

Judy French, 16 Foster Street. Agreed with the others, the vertical siding emphasizes the height, the design doesn't fit the neighborhood she lives in. This sets a precedent is too big, too tall, and unattractive.

Victoria Ricciardiello. There was a vision plan for the canal area and the City did an outstanding job fixing the canal walls but no one sees it. The properties along the North River also specify cleaning up the coast not just cleaning the river itself. This project will detract from the beautiful fresh water river but dirt will be brought in to build up the site. Chair Durand replied that that is a Planning Board issue.

Meg Ricardi, Orchard Street. The design is boxy but as a taller building it has had some change in elevation so the height wasn't as severe. Red building wasn't liked previously but it's back now and the Franklin Street looks partially industrial.

Judy French. Wants the building to blend in and be less visible by using muted colors.
Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy stated that he has density concerns, the NRCC and zoning have a disconnect but the DRB can't change the density issue. Chair Durand added that the zoning groups were given to many properties but didn't match them to each individual area. The proposal will never be single family home so have to be an acknowledgement to the fact that clean-up adds to the developer's expense. Size and scale are reviewed and need to be handled by the architect. Landscaping gives it a human scale but this needs to have an urban planning solution, so it can be achieved in an elegant way. The property is very visible from all sides and the neighborhood has a character that is not reflected in the proposed design and the proposal doesn't enhance the neighborhood.

Sides stated that providing the radius plan of the neighborhood was good to identify the distance to the adjacent industrial sites and the proposal seems to be a continuation of those areas and not the houses. This site is not imbedded in the neighborhood, these are large toxic sites that needs more programming than standard residential housing. The architect must respond and judge it differently. Chair Durand added that the site is

transitional. DeMaio stated that he partially agrees because it has industrial and commercial neighbors but there are other factors; the abrupt transition to residential at the tree line and across Franklin Street and Furlong Park which is in a small quiet residential neighborhood. Those issues can be address in a more successful way.

Sides noted that all other projects are along the Canal. DeMaio stated that it was a mistake to categorize this site as industrial because it is in a neighborhood. Chair Durand noted the slight industrial turn on Franklin Street. DeMaio replied that despite this being an industrial site the proposal should better fit to the residential neighborhood than the industrial neighborhood and the townhouses could be a closer match to the existing houses. The greenspace at the edge is an opportunity to make better gestures to the immediate neighborhood, such as the node where the site should become more welcoming to the surroundings. Chair Durand noted that there are too many big buildings and 1 bigger building would allow for and more open space since 5 buildings creates a visually dense site. It's a challenging project.

McShera stated that they are trying to be sensitive to everyone's opinions and meet the owner's product requirements for the site financially. Their original red buildings were too large in mass and too close to the park. This is their second big change; reducing the massing and moving it 30 feet away from the park, allowing the drive aisle and trees to create that buffer, stepping down as they approach the neighborhood, attempting to reorganize the massing and density and move it towards the City. Chair Durand asked why 5 buildings are proposed and not 2 or 3. The proposal is dense both vertically and horizontally. McShera questioned the size of the buildings when the number of them is reduced. Jaquith added that there could be 1 building with more green space and better views.

Frank Wardley of Pitman and Wardley Associates stated that this a joint design project between Red Barn Architecture and Pitman and Wardley. All the proposed units have bump-outs which can provide a view and the separation of the buildings will also provide some views. A simpler building has 1 or 2 sides with full view and the others on the opposite side of the water won't get a view. Multiple buildings allow for a layering of the site. Chair Durand stated that not necessarily a block building but not 5 buildings either, because some of the projects referenced aren't all small buildings. Wardley replied that transparency was a goal as well as views in between the building and in different directions throughout the site. The buildings have enough air around them now to give them transparency. Chair Durand stated that he sees slivers of views and they should consider an angled orientation with a single loaded corridor, because people don't seem to be pleased with the proposal. Jaquith noted that it isn't a great design yet. Pitman requested a check-list of items.

Coogan stated that the relationship between neighborhood, scale, size, and street, the connection to the street and the mid-rise buildings. Sides noted that a traffic study has been conducted through the Planning Board. The Planning Board has provided the applicant with a lot of input and she has spoken of wanting more cohesion to tie the townhouses to the rest of the buildings, but placement is also a consideration. The mid-rise buildings are placed in a more open field and the townhouses are placed on the corners and are so distinctly different. This creates a battle of them wanting to be transitional and they asked for them to be brought closer to the street so there are overlapping requirements. McShera stated that at their previous meeting, when it came to the streetscape, stepped buildings, balconies, and landscaping, the DRB seemed

more comfortable. Chair Durand noted that there is no transparency. Jaquith stated that there must be at the driveway to see the river. Kennedy noted that either multiple or one large building still blocks off space. DeMaio added that more horizontal buildings could lower the buildings. Chair Durand noted that the scale, views and experience can make it fit the neighborhood. Jaquith stated that the buildings are trying to fit in with what is across the river. Kennedy noted that density and views to the water are different and at 40-feet you are almost at the peak of a house in the neighborhood because the land rises the further away you are from the water. Chair Durand stated that the masses and very little voids isn't successful. There should be transparency and lightness because more pieces are more difficult to handle. The floor plan also needs work. They want the developer to be successful, but no one on the Board or from the neighborhood is comfortable with the design, and they don't want to approve something the Board isn't happy with and doesn't feel they've done their job with. Designers need to respond to the Board's concerns.

McShera stated that red on a revised floor plan indicated the reduction of the massing in length, width, and massing and the introduction of new greenspace. Sides stated that this massing reduction drawings indicates where they have responded to the Board's concerns. Coogan stated that there seems to be some consensus with the Board at the last meeting that the applicant was ready to focus on architectural details, but no one is satisfied those as presented. Chair Durand stated that it was not well received but how the issues are resolved is for the designer to decide. It depends upon the execution, but a taller building should have more open space. Jaquith noted that it is not a good design. Pitman noted that a 50-foot height building is allowed. Chair Durand stated that they would want fewer mass and more open space that fits the neighborhood. Sides stated that this project has advanced through the other boards with approvals, it's a lot to ask for them to request the architect start over because they are asking for something that doesn't exist. Riverfront projects are always abrupt to the view and the Salem that people know, it is tough for people to accept, but the collective review process is what makes the projects successful. Chair Durand noted that this project has been criticized over time and some small changes have been done but the changes aren't what he has hoped although he knows that the owner has their wish list items.

Atty. Kolick stated that this project will also be reviewed by the ZBA and the Planning Board is waiting for the DRB approval. They filed with the Planning Board last August and this is the redesign that the team has been working on for well over a year. Once the Planning Board process has concluded, the ZBA, Conservation Commission, Ch. 91 License, etc. are also reviews that this project will undergo.

Jaquith stated that the architects haven't been listening to their requests. Chair Durand noted that the DRB is advisory to the Planning Board in NRCC cases. Kennedy noted that this project would not receive an approval at this time. Coogan stated that if an approval cannot be given the applicant needs guidance for how to proceed since some feel that this is the wrong path. He asked if there is more refined design to be done; landscaping at the node, relationship between the front and rear buildings or the townhouse and the street or if the Board see a solution within this current scheme.

Jaquith stated that 85-90% of the time their input creates a better project. Sides noted that the applicant has made some concessions. Chair Durand noted that he sees density not transparency. Pitman noted that the overall site plan and adjacencies are the problems. DeMaio stated that the Board doesn't agree, the applicant has addressed

the Board's concerns in a limited way but requesting a redesign could be problematic for the Board. This project can be massaged to what the Board has previously requested but not enough has been done to make him feel comfortable with it. Smaller buildings are better in scale but not in character. The applicant should find a way to make them fit in with materials or details, although this would be better with smaller buildings and less density. There are other ways to fit the buildings on the site and there could be numerous variations. Chair Durand stated that the application took a turn for the worst and the renderings haven't improved over time. McShera replied that they've moved forward with the section and elevations studies and not the renderings to keep up with the Board's comments and move the process along. DeMaio replied that that is not a fair statement. At the last meeting they specifically discussed how the townhouses related to the street and greenspace and the revised plans now have utility sheds at the sidewalks which indicated that you aren't listening to what the Board is requesting. Their comments weren't further developed which he would have found encouraging. If other parts had improved he could have been amenable to allowing bigger buildings on the site but that wasn't done. Jaquith noted that last minute drawings that were provided. McShera replied that they were minor changes and adding color to the plans.

Jaquith: Motion to continue to a future DRB meeting.
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 5-0.

Old/New Business

PEM Museum Addition: Coogan stated that there has been a change to the window at the PEM addition and he e-mailed Bob Monk. Monk's response was that there was a design change and they will return to the DRB in July to discuss it as well as with the Charter Street landscape details. Coogan stated that he believes the window change is due to the bend in the front façade. Chair Durand agreed and added that he believes it would have been difficult to build. DeMaio stated that there is also a disconnect between the rendering and the shop drawing. Chair Durand agreed and noted that the colors in the rendering are also different and not on the building, but another mullion will not make or break the building. The execution of that seam may have also been too costly. Coogan added that they may not have wanted to take the risk of the glass breaking. Sides stated that the mullions were stone and she remembered one façade color not two. Chair Durand replied that the revised plan now has the façade as the same color. DeMaio agreed that he has never seen anything multi-colored in the previous presentations or documentations and the color change may have been an artistic touch.

Adriatic Restaurant: Kennedy stated that the awning has been installed and they've adjusted the three awnings heights and there is some 1-2" differences that the installer is still working on. The owner will order the front panels in September but the owner Vini said that if they look off when installed the posts will be cut to lower their height and make them shorter. He let the owner of the awning company know that if the problem areas aren't addressed as requested there will be more scrutinizing with their next proposed awning.

Overall Project Review: Sides suggested that projects undergoing Planning Board review should have an overlap so other Boards can see how the projects are scrutinized by their very qualified Board and the review can be more unified. Coogan stated that there are different levels of expertise with the applicants but there needs to be better communication with sharing the meeting minutes, joint meetings, etc. Sides suggested Coogan coordinate when the projects will be discussed with another Board that also has to review the same project.

Chair Durand asked if the agreement that Entry Corridor projects are to be reviewed by the DRB review for buildings of a certain size. Sides replied that she believes it has been approved for buildings over 10,000 square feet but some project began before this agreement was reached. Sides stated that applications must also be submitted on time. DeMaio noted that prominent projects in an unwelcoming neighborhood are difficult to approve and it's the DRB that will be held accountable.

Adjournment

Durand: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: DeMaio. Passes 5-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:15 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.