

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, July 22, 2015 at 6:00pm
Meeting Location: Third Floor Conference Room, 120 Washington Street
Members Present: Paul Durand, Glenn Kennedy, David Jaquith,
Christopher Dynia, Ernest DeMaio
Members Absent: Helen Sides and J. Michael Sullivan
Others Present: Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner
Recorder: Jennifer Pennell

Paul Durand calls the meeting to order.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. 299 Essex Street (Bonchon): Discussion of proposed installation of signage.

The submission under review includes a sign permit application, drawings, and photos of the proposed signage. Peter Ahn was present on behalf of Bonchon.

Shapiro explained that the applicant's proposed signage as currently shown is internally illuminated and goes against the recommendation of the City's Commercial Design Guidelines. He continued by noting that the proposed signage is also larger in size that what would ordinarily be recommended for the Urban Renewal Area. Shapiro noted that the DRB has the discretion to recommend what it would prefer to see with respect to both illumination and size, to the Salem Redevelopment Authority.

Kennedy noted that he is not opposed to an internally lit blade sign for this particular location. Kennedy commented that the proposed wall sign does not feel like it belongs because the existing storefront does not accommodate signage in this style.

Ahn noted that Bonchon is a franchise; the business owner has little to no control over most design elements.

Durand commented that the provided design does not appear as linear as the signage expressed in the photograph.

DeMaio noted that he would prefer the signage to be backlit letters, in keeping with the City's Commercial Design Guidelines and the type of streetscape that we are trying to promote in this area. There is connotation of food shops having internally lit signage, and we should be trying to avoid that. DeMaio commented that the letters appear a bit large and does not seem to proportionally work for the building. The proposed text does not fit the surrounding one story streetscape.

Dynia agreed with DeMaio, noting that he would endorse reducing the size of the sign in order to proportionally reduce the size of the letters. He also commented that the addition of a tan colored border located above and below the proposed signage would help it blend in with the facade.

Durand commented that the proposed signage could be resized to 29 square feet.

Shapiro asked for clarification from the Board on where it stood with respect to illumination.

Durand said that he would not like to see lights on this building because it would not help the architecture. Backlit letters would be fine but does not like the idea of an internally illuminated sign. Signage could go down to a 3'-0" x 10'-0" sign with the letters proportionally reduced and centered between the borders.

Ahn said that with respect to positioning of the building sign, he has gotten a variety of feedback as to whether it should be centered or shifted more toward the door.

Kennedy commented that the placement of the blade sign should align with the left edge of the door. The larger sign could align with the window, pushing over to the left a bit instead of centering it.

Ahn presented two alternate scenarios for lighting, which included the use of gooseneck fixtures for external illumination, or backlit / halo. The blade sign would not be illuminated.

Jaquith said that he would worry about the potential damage to the façade that could occur with the installation of the gooseneck fixtures.

Kennedy noted that an LED lighting strip might be more appropriate for external illumination than the goosenecks.

Durand commented that if an LED light strip channel was to be used, a lower intensity black finish should be specified. This could be achieved on both proposed signs.

DeMaio commented that he would fully approve the use of halo lit letters but would endorse further review of an external lighting fixture, such as an LED strip.

Kennedy: Motion to approve building signage with halo / backlit letters and/or Led lighting strip channel (sample to be reviewed by Kennedy), as well as the blade sign.

- Blade sign moved to align with the left of the door
- Wall sign becomes 36" x 120", text proportionally reduced.
- Wall sign moved to the left aligning with the window.

Seconded by: Jacquith, Passes 5-0.

2. 179 Essex Street (Salem Arts Center): Discussion of proposed installation of building sign.

The submission under review includes a letter, designs, and photos of the proposed signage. Laura Potter was present on behalf of Salem Arts Center.

Potter noted that the proposal contains two options, one painted directly onto the existing granite with stencils and the second would be a white wood sign.

Durand asked whether the building owner would approve of painting directly on the granite.

Robert Monk who was present on behalf of the Peabody Essex Museum explained that the paint is acrylic and would be easily removed, so they would not have an issue with it.

Kennedy commented that the signage appears cleaner without the border.

Jaquith noted that the word “center” appears a bit shifted to the left. This word could be pulled in a bit.

Kennedy: Motion to approve painted letters on granite or wood signage that does not fill the granite space height and width.

Seconded by: Jacquith, Passes 5-0.

3. 52 Charter Street (Peabody Essex Museum): Discussion of proposed demolition of boiler plant building.

The submission under review includes a detailed coverletter and photos of the building proposed for demolition. Robert Monk was present on behalf of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Monk noted that the proposed building to be demolished is no longer active or utilized. The original building was built in the 1950s. It was used for heating and cooling operations up until the fall of 2013, but those operations have since been relocated to the roof of the main building of the museum. A DEP order of environmental cleanup for an oil spill located beneath the building has been issued, which also must be addressed. Monk noted that the land would be partially landscaped with paving.

Durand asked when the building would be taken down.

Monk responded by saying it would occur within a month of final approval; most likely late August or early September.

DeMaio questioned what protections would be up while work is done.

Monk noted that proper screen fencing would be used. No fencing during the remediation phase would be located along the street, just a buffer between the sidewalk and building. The entire project should be done before the middle of October.

DeMaio questioned if the sidewalk would be passable during October.

Monk noted that the sidewalk would be passable after the building is taken down.

Shapiro noted that a waiver of demolition delay has already been approved by the City's Historical Commission.

Kennedy questioned what the area would ultimately look like.

Monk responded by noting that it would ultimately be addressed with the new yet-to-be presented plans for the Museum's expansion.

DeMaio asked what type of fence would be used.

Monk noted that it would use the wooden fence shown in one of the provided photos to separate its property from the adjacent property, but no fence between the property in the sidewalk. The area will be graded and have about 12' of turf.

James Warren, abutter to the property (17 Central Street, Unit 12) commented that the demolition of the proposed building would provide an unexpected benefit to the neighborhood. The unused 4-story chimney would be removed. Currently the building makes it difficult to view people coming in and out of the driveway.

Jaquith: Motion to approve the proposed demolition as presented.
Seconded by: Kennedy, Passes 5-0.

4. 9-11 Dodge Street, 217-219 Washington Street, 231-251 Washington Street (Dodge Area LLC c/o RCG LLC): Discussion of proposed revisions to previously approved schematic design.

The submission under review includes a full set of plans with elevations and perspectives of the proposed revisions to the previously approved schematic design for the development.

Seth Zeren and Matt Picarsic from RCG LLC, and architect Jai Singh Khalsa were present on behalf of 9-11 Dodge Street, 217-219 Washington Street, 231-251 Washington Street.

Zeren noted the following proposed changes while moving through a presentation provided to the Board:

- The main change would be to remove the top floor off of the West/South building that stretches along Washington Street resulting in 16 less residential units. The north building would remain the same.
- The proposed lower parking level diagonal parking portion would not be built for cost concerns. 27 net parking spaces would be lost.
- Retail spaces would become deeper along Washington Street.

Durand questioned if the parking removed is proportional to the housing removed.

Zeren noted that the changes are being reviewed as an overall package and are not being addressed as a 1:1 ratio. There will be 68 housing units with 216 spaces, so there is still a substantial amount of parking. The proposal would still provide adequate parking to meet the needs of residents. Zone B5 requires no parking for commercial uses.

Durand commented that he applauds the change. It appears more proportional.

Jaquith, Dynia, and DeMaio all commented that they agree with Durand's sentiment.

Judy Copp, who was present in the audience, asked when construction would begin.

Picarsic responded by noting that phase 1 infrastructure work would begin in the fall of this year, with excavation of for building construction to hopefully begin in spring of 2016.

Jaquith: Motion to approve as presented,
Seconded by: DeMaio, Passes 5-0.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes from the June 24, 2015 regular meeting.

DeMaio: Motion to approve.
Seconded by: Jacquith, Passes 5-0.

Adjournment

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

Meeting is adjourned at 7:16 pm.