

SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2022

A regular meeting of the Salem Historical Commission was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 6:05 pm. **VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING.** Present were: Reed Cutting, Milo Martinez, Mark Meche, Mark Pattison, Larry Spang (Chair). Staff: Patti Kelleher. Not present: Rebecca English, Vijay Joyce.

6 Lathrop Street - CONTINUATION

Michael Buonfiglio submitted a Request to Waive Demolition Delay to demolish more than 50% of the building

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 1/31/22
- Photographs
- Drawings by MAC Designs

Attorney Kristin Kolick of Correnti & Darling (63 Federal Street) on behalf of Michael Buonfiglio (Owner), and Matt Carlson - Project Designer at MAC Designs were present to discuss the project.

Atty. Kolick stated that this is the third meeting, the Commission held a site visit, and the project designer has revised the plans and implemented the requested changes based on the Commission's comments and site visit. They are seeking a vote to close the public hearing and for the Commission to grant the waiver of the Demolition Delay. Mr. Carlson noted that the request to show the change in building height has been indicated on the revised elevations, and the proposed height is nearly 28-feet to the ridgeline, with a 7-foot height increase. A comparison to other properties shows that there are taller properties further down the street despite the neighboring properties being shorter.

Mr. Buonfiglio noted that during the site visit he was encouraged to try to save the wood floors and a second-floor wood mantel. He believed they have met the Commission more than halfway, including removing the proposed decks and added floor place.

Mr. Pattison joined the meeting at this time.

Chair Spang asked how much of the framing would remain. Mr. Carlson replied everything from the second floor down and the upper floor would be removed to increase the height. Mr. Buonfiglio noted that the first-floor ceiling height is 7-feet. Chair Spang requested the occupancy. Atty. Kolick replied that it was a 2-family and the ZBA granted a special permit to go from 2 to 3 units.

Mr. Martinez suggested the height be reduced by a couple feet. Mr. Meche noted that the building is substantially not preserved, he doesn't feel strongly about the design, and he had no issue with the decks that were removed. He suggested that this newly proposed design may satisfy Mr. Joyce's written concerns in terms of style but not the scale. Mr. Meche also believed the gutter should be moved back 6-12 inches because it appears as a trim board, and that vinyl siding although durable is not a good product, and he encouraged the consideration for alternative material.

Chair Spang read comments provided by Commissioner Joyce, who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Pattison stated that the feel of the three floors is too uniform and suggested the top floor windows be reduced in height to feel more natural. He agreed that the height could be reduced by 2 or 3 feet to better fit the neighborhood. Chair Spang requested the floor heights. Mr. Carlson replied, approximately 8-foot ceiling heights and an approximate 10-inch floor sandwich. Mr. Pattison understood the desire is to maximize the upper floors and create a flat ceiling and suggested that for an antique home the roof could pitch down at the side if the ceiling were lowered. Mr. Meche suggested the lower part of the gambrel room be extended 6-8 inches to gain some square footage which is typical of the gambrel style roof. Chair Spang agreed and noted the minimal transition between the fascia and the gutter which is currently flat. Mr. Pattison also suggested the side of the gambrel be brought out, so it looks for traditional and adds more square footage.

Ms. Kelleher noted Mr. Joyce's concern with the new increased height when compared to the surrounding buildings which adds to its significance and the building is a contributing property within the area. He suggested the height

would be exaggerated for people walking by. Mr. Buonfiglio reiterated that other buildings on the street are as tall or taller than this building. Atty. Kolick added that the property is zoned B4 with a maximum of 40 feet, so something much taller could be built. Chair Spang noted that although the buildings further down the street are taller the ones immediately next door are not.

Public Comment:

Joyce Kenney. Not in favor of raising the height of the house.

Barbara Cleary, HSI. Submitted a letter today, the current design is vastly improved, and the Commission's comments are consistent with HSI's, particularly the height. The height is not just about the neighboring buildings it involves proportion, and a reduction of a couple feet would make a big difference. If a waiver is granted it should be tied to a particular set of drawings and alternates to vinyl siding should be considered. She noted that the Commission is consulting on the design, which according to the Demolition Delay Ordinance should occur afterward.

Mr. Buonfiglio stated that they need 8-foot ceiling height, and the neighboring houses will eventually need to be renovated and will likely do the same. He has accommodated the Commission's requests, but if they don't agree he is willing to wait the 18-month delay to construct his original design.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to close the public comment. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Chair Spang stated that the Commission is generally sympathetic to allowing the renovation, the carbon savings on maintaining existing structure, ability to reuse much of the structure, with the details needing to be worked through.

Ms. Kelleher noted that in regard to a determination of historical significance, this property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource in the Bridge Street Neck Historic District.

Ms. Kelleher noted that Mr. Pattison can't vote since he wasn't at two previous meetings and Commission members are allowed to miss one meeting and listen to one recording, they are not allowed to miss two meetings.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to find the building historically significant. Mr. Meche seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Spang (Pattison not eligible to vote) were in favor and the motion so carried.

Chair Spang stated that the structure doesn't have to be preserved as is, but they can work on it going forward. Atty. Kolick replied that the Demolition Delay Ordinance talks about the applicant making a reasonable and meaningful effort for preservation and the building was purchased before the Ordinance went into effect and there was a different budget at that time. While they appreciate the Commission feedback, time is running out given the rising costs. What's currently proposed is the best alternative that takes the historic elements of the building into consideration and the owner has agreed to preserve some interior elements as well, so perhaps a consideration can be made with condition with an approval. Chair Spang replied that construction costs may be higher in 18-months and by working through some details they could receive an approval soon.

Ms. Kelleher stated that if the Commission finds the building preferable preserved, it would go into a delay period of 18-months, which could be waived at any time during that period if the revised plans are satisfactory or if the applicant has made a good-faith effort. Chair Spang suggested a couple Commission members could work with the applicant.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to consider the existing structure as preferably preserved. Mr. Spang suggested a friendly amendment to move that's preferable preserved with the understanding that the applicant can return with adjustments within the next couple of weeks. Mr. Cutting seconded the amended motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Spang (Pattison not eligible to vote) were in favor and the motion so carried.

Mr. Buonfiglio felt that he's met the Commission more than halfway and that he's done enough. Mr. Meche reiterated that the applicant is very close to an approval, and it will be a better building in the end.

393 Essex Street - CONTINUATION

Carling Audette submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for paint colors

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 2/14/22
- Photographs

Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant requested a continuance.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to continue to the next meeting. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

2 Oliver Street- CONTINUATION

33WSNS LLC submitted a request for a review of detailed plans per Certificate of Appropriateness/Conceptual Approval issued September 1, 2021

Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant requested a continuance.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to continue to the next meeting. Mr. Meche seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

9 Cambridge Street

Elisa Hofmeester submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for chimney vent

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 2/22/22
- Photographs

Elisa and Nicolaus Hofmeester were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Hofmeester stated that they are unable to use their chimney since it doesn't have a liner. They would like to install a gas insert which requires approval for a termination cap. She presented options for the cap in aluminum or matte black, and they prefer black. Ms. Kelleher added that she couldn't find any others in the district to refer to and believed that black would be less noticeable.

Mr. Meche asked if a City Inspector made the determination. Ms. Hofmeester replied that Brandon Murray of Murray Masonry inspected the chimney and made the recommendation. The proposed cap is from Yankee Fireplace in Middleton.

Chair Spang asked if a high wind determination cap was needed on top of the metal flu that is not brick. Ms. Hofmeester replied that they were told that only a round unit would work in their chimney. Chair Spang asked where the exhaust escapes. Ms. Hofmeester replied through the horizontal slats. Chair Spang suggested a stone cap with brick posts be added that integrates into the chimney like other chimneys in the district. The surround cannot be combustible so the stone will need to be raised slightly and heat from a gas fireplace may be higher than traditional fireplaces. Ms. Hofmeester replied that they will determine the direction of venting.

Chair Spang suggested the vent exit the chimney in a more obscure location such as at the rear of the gambrel rather than at the highest point of the structure. Ms. Hofmeester replied that they are unsure, but it will need a cap to keep out wildlife.

Public Comment:

Joyce Kenney. There is a furnace flue at her house that rotates.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to continue the application to the next meeting. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Mr. Meche asked if the vent would be visible from Summer Street. Ms. Hofmeister replied that they took photos and it's minimally visible between tree trunks. Mr. Meche noted that it's very obscured from that distance, there may be some clearance issues to consider as well, and suggested it exit through the roof behind the chimney.

293 Jefferson Avenue

Michael Becker submitted an application to waive Demolition Delay to demolish more than 50% of building

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 3/1/22
- Photographs
- Drawings by Seger Architects

Michael Becker (developer) and Julia Mooradian of Seger Architects were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Becker stated the ZBA has approved their plans. The entire roof will be removed. The structure was built as two separate pieces with a poured concrete foundation. The left side has an approximate 7-foot-6-inch-high foundation wall in the basement, while the right side has a crawl space.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she researched the property. The parcel was vacant from 1897 until the 1960's when this building was constructed. Since the building is between 50 and 100 years, the delay period would be 12-months.

Ms. Mooradian stated that the project was approved by the ZBA, meets the 10-foot setbacks for the addition and they will maintain the existing footprint. The right side is original, and the left side shed addition was added. The left side basement will be preserved and incorporated into the new unit, while the right side will be added. If the first-floor wall cannot be kept the footprint will be maintained. The two accessible units will be on the first floor and on the upper floors there will be two townhouses for units 3 and 4, for a total of 4-units at three stories high. The existing vestibule is less than 50-years old and will be demolished.

Mr. Meche noted that the main entrance is located at the back side of parking space number 3, which is cause for concern but not within the Commission's purview. Ms. Mooradian replied that the entrance is more than 22 to 24-feet away. Mr. Becker noted that the left section of the roof will remain, and the right side will be easier to demolished. Six parking spaces are proposed.

Mr. Meche asked if the Planning Board will conduct a site plan review. Ms. Mooradian replied no. Mr. Becker added that the parking will be straightened out to align with the building and lot lines, rather than remain parallel.

Public Comment:

Joyce Kenney. Has visited the establishment, it's nearly impossible to exit the parking lot, and believes the project would need to follow the 200-foot rule due to its proximity to the commuter line.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to find the building not historically significant. Mr. Meche seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattinson, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant provided photographs and dimensional drawings of the existing building but asked that interior photos be provided as well.

Mr. Meche asked if the ZBA approval included relief from the parking and driving lanes. Mr. Becker replied that 9-foot x 19-foot spaces were laid out and they have options for 6 or 7 parking spaces, also 12-foot is the required drive aisle, and they have 14-feet.

73-75 and 83-87 Lafayette Street

South River Partnership LLC submitted an application to waive the Demolition Delay Ordinance to demolish buildings

Documents & Exhibits

- Application: 3/1/22
- Photographs
- Drawings by MASS Design Group

Johnathan Evans and Megan Altendorf of MASS Design Group and Ilene Vogel of Northshore CDC were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Evans stated that the Lafayette Street building was an old car dealership with a façade they want to celebrate. They're waiting to receive storm water reports on repairing the culvert beneath the building. They believe that preserving the façade is untenable. They have considered preservation and are mindful of the character of the existing building. The existing first floor is at +9, the code minimum is +11, and they want the health center to be at +12.5 above the current sidewalk grade at the health center. The building code is based off FEMA maps which are conservative, and they want to do better than the bare minimum.

The structural engineer's analysis was submitted the previous week, and it indicated that the underwater stormwater culvert findings are that it's in stable condition but there are opportunities to invest in its repair. The seismic loads would impact the façade, and even with the required bracing during construction, Groom Construction analysis determined that they couldn't guarantee that the façade could be saved. Option 1 would be to brace the façade to keep in place, and Option 2 would be to deconstruct and rebuild it using original materials although it's estimated that only 1/3 of brick would be saved at most. They would introduce some modern elements but would pick up on the rhythms of the old façade to pay homage to it, such as the herringbone details and texture. The new grade change would be navigated with ramps and stairs to the new first-floor. The addition at 75 Lafayette is from the 1950's but has its own presence and significance. The new design would be considerate of the window layout, patterns to mimic, window scales, and would breathe new life into the historic forms. Curtain wall would be setback so the historic layout could own the corner. The new building will not add new loads onto the culvert which is city owned culvert below the building with an easement. The area surrounding the waterfront would become recreational spaces.

Chair Spang asked what other city boards or agencies will review the proposal. Ms. Kelleher replied, the SRA, DRB, PB. Some of those reviews have started but no approvals have been granted. The buildings were constructed after the 1914 fire. There has been some interested in creating a new National Register District in this area and these buildings were found to be contributing resources in the district. The buildings have been inventoried for their architectural and historic significance.

Mr. Pattison asked why the proposed elevation above the drive-thru doesn't mimic the existing building or offer any historic references. Mr. Evans replied that it was an intentional approach to the façade and the area is setback 2-feet. They will continue to review that area.

Mr. Meche stated that he is still not in favor of the bank drive-thru, believes the transition on the Lafayette side is rigid, and he'd rather construct a good building rather than one based on sub-par design.

Public Comment:

Ms. Kelleher read a letter submitted by HSI earlier in the day.

Thomas Kusterer, Resident at Derby Lofts. Liked what they did at Lafayette Street, although the view from Derby Street will be a large 5-story flat concrete slab with no stepping back of the façade which would be unattractive.

Mr. Evans replied that the brick turned the corner, then transitioned to a panelized flat return. They will continue to look at the façade design.

Barbara Cleary, HSI. Had a meeting with the Northshore CDC the day before and understands that they aren't seeking a waiver of the Demolition Delay and the purpose of this review by the Commission was to start the consultation process. Ms. Vogel confirmed that the Northshore CDC does not expect the waiver to be granted due to the significance of the buildings and is seeking to begin consultation.

Mr. Meche questioned the alley-facing façade and noted that he wasn't successful in his search for older photographs of this building showing the plaster lintel and asked if there was a photographic reference to what would be constructed. Ms. Kelleher replied that she hasn't found an original image of the side elevations either.

Mr. Meche noted that the permitting timeline will be lengthy. Ms. Kelleher replied if the Commission finds the buildings historically significant and preferably preserved the delay period begins and that's when the Commission would assess alternatives to determine whether the historic buildings can be saved or if any mitigation can occur to offset the demolition.

Chair Spang requested that engineering information about the façade replacement be submitted to the Commission. He noted that the project raises two questions for him, the first regarding flooding, and the presentation documented those issues well. With 'critical care' being offered he's unaware if they are seeking a higher level of protection that would occur for a police station of hospital, or if it will be at the same level as an office building. The second question is regarding resiliency given the proximity at the head of a river, where the structural engineer and mason having significant concerns, and he would like to review those reports. Ms. Kelleher noted that the buildings could be reused as they are now without any changes, which would not trigger resiliency adaptation. Mr. Evan agreed and noted that there is a threshold that if crossed the entire building must be brought up to code. Ms. Altendorf added that the renovation would need to be insignificant, such as painting or renovating bathrooms, to not trigger flood elevation codes. Mr. Meche noted that anything over 50% of the plan area triggers Chapter 34 requirements.

Chair Spang noted that details and proportions of the design of the buildings are missing, such as at the new thinner parapet where the existing was deeper and how the new parapet curves around the entrance and extends much further than the existing. The DRB will weigh-in on the design. If something is being substantially rebuilt, it's essentially new and to what extent to you recreate it and create a good design.

Mr. Martinez expressed his struggle with the proposal because he believes the buildings are historically significant. However, the new proposed could outweigh whether the building is preferably preserved. Not everything can be preserved and the new public good; a health center, businesses, and high-density housing in the downtown, could outweigh the preservation of the building. He echoed Chair Spang's comments on the extension of the parapet since the existing building has a stepped pyramid at the ends which could help break up the long flat run of brick.

Chair Spang noted precaution with the open space below the north-west corner of the building which are treacherous to deal with during the winter months.

Thomas Kusterer, Resident at Derby Lofts. Agreed with Mr. Martinez, although the building is historic it's very dark on the north side of the street. The design is for a brighter building that will brighten up the intersection while paying homage to the existing structure.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to consider the building historically significant. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattinson, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Martinez made a motion to consider the cluster of building preferably preserved. Mr. Pattison seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez – voted against, Cutting, Meche, Pattinson, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the buildings are more than 100 years old so the delay period is 18-months.

Ms. Vogel stated that the CDC is happy to work with the Commission and HSI on this project and they welcome input to make a better building. They understand the significance of the building, but this will also be a great and important project for Salem. Ms. Kelleher noted her appreciation for their well thought-out and very well-done presentation.

Request for letter of support – Community Preservation Act Application – Salem Deed Conservation

Ms. Kelleher requested support for the City’s application for CPA funds to conserve the Salem Deed. She provided a draft support letter for consideration.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to provide a letter of support. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Request for letter of support – Community Preservation Act Application – Dickson Memorial Chapel - stained glass window restoration

Ms. Kelleher requested support for the City’s application for CPA funds to conserve stained glass windows at the Dickson Memorial Chapel. The window frames are deteriorated, glass panes are missing, and the windows are starting to sag. The building’s rose window was restored several years ago.

VOTE: Mr. Cutting made a motion to provide a letter of support. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Other Business:

Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to approve the November 17, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to approve the December 15, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

VOTE: Mr. Meche made a motion to approve the January 19, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

Old Town Hall

Ms. Kelleher stated that at a previous meeting the City Art Planning and an architect requested a letter of support for grant funding for accessibility upgrades to Old Town Hall, which the Commission granted. They also requested letters of support for the Architectural Access Board and the SRA, which the Commission was in favor of. The Art Planner and architect attended the Salem Disabilities Commission the previous night where members strongly recommended that the building have two accessible means of egress in case of emergency and that the existing entrance facing Essex Street was not sufficient based on the volume of people that could be in the building. She asked if the Commission would like the architect to re-present their plans based on the Disability Commission comments, noting that the Historical Commission has already commented that they were not in favor of adding a new ramp to the building or making any changes to the Front Street staircases. The Historical Commission can provide comment only, the SRA has jurisdiction over the building, but the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) does hold a preservation restriction on the building and has review authority over any exterior changes proposed. The City wants to be responsive to the Disabilities Commission’s concerns. The proposal is to change

out a first-floor window with a door at the second bay along the west façade and construct a ramp towards Essex Street. The new door would also lead directly to the elevator lobby.

Mr. Meche stated that an accessible means of egress doesn't require a ramp, only an area of refuge and the Disabilities Commission seems to be requesting two accessible entrances. He wasn't in favor of the proposed design for a couple reasons but there is room for improvement. Chair Spang noted that the accessibility code would only require this if it were to be used as an entrance, but there are other ways to provide the safety requirements the Disabilities Commission is requesting, and all those options should be considered by the architect. He suggested the City approach MHC before returning to the Salem Historical Commission to make a presentation.

Salem Inn

Ms. Kelleher stated that the owner of the Salem Inn is proposing to install solar panels on the roofs of two of the Inn buildings on Summer Street – a brick rowhouse and Colonial Revival house - which will be reviewed by the DRB on March 23, 2022. She will provide staff comments on the application. Climate change is a factor and finding alternative energy sources is critical, but it needs to be done in a way that doesn't detract from the historic facades of buildings, which will be a challenge. The roofs are visible, and the equipment will need to be away from public view. The roof of the rowhouse has asphalt shingles while the gambrel roof of the home is slate and solar panels are proposed at the upper portion only. Chair Spang suggested the solar panels be aligned with the face of the dormers to maintain the view of the snow fence. Mr. Meche noted that solar panels can be between 5 and 18-inches proud of the roof and low profile is preferred in this instance. Mr. Pattison stated that the existing ridge line should be visible. Mr. Meche noted that the panel installation should be installed to be reversible and easily removed, and the installation of them should all be aligned rather than turning the panels 90 degrees to make more fit. Ms. Kelleher noted that the rear slope has a lot of protrusions to work around but the front slope is clean and should have panels in regular alignment.

301 Essex Street

Ms. Kelleher stated that Mr. Becker will return to the Commission soon with plans to build above the former Jerry's Army Navy building. The project includes the removal of more than 50% of the roof, which will trigger the Demolition Delay Ordinance.

Demolition Delay

Ms. Kelleher stated that she sent an e-mail to the Commission members regarding the determination of "preferably preserved". She forwarded a definition used by the City of Newton, which could be adopted in Salem.

Pioneer Village

Ms. Kelleher stated that the applicant was still completing some documents but will likely present at the April 6, 2022 meeting.

Preservation Partners

Ms. Kelleher stated that another conference on climate change and historic resources is planned for September, to provide solutions and sustainability measures to offer property owners.

Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Pattison made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cutting seconded the motion. Roll Call: Martinez, Cutting, Meche, Pattison, Spang were in favor and the motion so carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Kelleher, Preservation Planner