

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, Daniel Estes, Catherine Miller, Elizabeth Murray, Marc Perras, and Joseph Badowski
Others Present:	Stephanie Owens, Senior Planner
Recorder:	Christine Petryszyn

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 260 Essex Street: Warren Museum

Ken McTague was present to discuss the proposal:

- Mr. McTague said there are some components of the proposal that are incomplete. He said this request is for review of the A-frame sign and window graphics.
- He shared and reviewed the proposal.
- There is only one A-frame with directional signage.
- The window signs meets requirements.
- The previously approved blade sign will remain.

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to approve the two window decals and directional A-frame signage with the condition that approval is consistent with Section 460 of the sign code which include the number of portable signs, term placement, structure integrity of the sign, and liability insurance. Seconded by Perras.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

2. 76 Lafayette Street: Couch Dog Brewing Company

Ken McTague and Adam Shoemaker were present to discuss the proposal:

- The mock-up was shared. The proposed sign is 18' x 2.5' on the face of the building facing Lafayette Street.
- The construction is a 1-inch square tube aluminum frame with an extruded molding and aluminum face.
- Concern was expressed about the encroachment of the sign on the arches.
- Ms. Miller shared a suggested sign adjustment. She noted that she thought the lettering was very big and that it detracts from the beautiful logo.
- She suggested that the sign be placed in between two of the diamonds on the building and that rather than fixing it to the building, to put it on pins. Mr. McTague expressed concern about suspending such a large sign too far off the building.

- Mr. Durand suggested that the sign could be more elegant if the sign stood off the center pylon. Mr. McTague said the sign would have six brackets, top and bottom.
- The sign could safely come off the building one to two inches.
- Mr. Shoemaker said they found some old photos of the building and were trying to create a wall sign that was in a similar style to what was there years ago.

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve the signage as modified including the standoffs making it proud by an inch or two from the center of the pilaster.

Seconded by Murray.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **195 Essex Street & 2 East India Square:** Signage & Small Project Review – Zitelle signage and proposal to paint three awnings along the Zitelle storefronts at Witch City Mall to match the business' approved signs.

Ken McTague and Tina Buxton were present to discuss the proposal:

- The sign is 1/8- inch ACM black panels over the existing façade with 10-inch gilded raised plastic ladders.
- The applicant would like to relocate their existing sign to the building.
- No window signs are planned as of now.
- A rendering was shared showing the black awning. The standing seam roof would be painted black.
- The application is for both store locations.
- Ms. Miller noted that the green awning is consistent across the way. She said the DRB's goal has been to make the building as cohesive as possible. She said she appreciates the effort being put in but feels the City should take care of the building and decide how it is going to be painted. She does not feel the ad hoc approach is successful. She would like to see a flat black paint and recommended the top of the awning remains green like most of the other shops.
- Mr. McTague said he does not think the building tenants like the green.
- Mr. Perras and Ms. Murray recommended the applicant be allowed to paint it black.
- Mr. Perras said that all planters and items located outside be painted black.

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

- Mr. Perras raised the issue of permitting signage being attached to the brick of this building where the DRB has not done so before. It would be a change in precedent.
- Mr. McTague suggested that standard lag bolts would be used to attach the sign to the brick.
- Ms. Murray and Mr. Durand said each request for signage would be reviewed on its own merits. Mr. Perras suggested that other business owners who are not permitted to put up temporary signs on the brick may request to put up permanent signs instead.

- Mr. Estes recommended that it be clearly noted that this sign relocation is acceptable in this one instance because of its unique location.
- Ms. Murray noted that the metal should be treated properly prior to painting.

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve as presented ensuring that all items, planters, etc. are painted black, that the signage is approved as presented, both the wall mounted and the iron mounted signage, that the roofs be painted black, and that the surface of the sign be a flat black paint. The sign relocation is acceptable in this one instance because of its unique location.

Seconded by Miller.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

2. **6 Front Street:** Small Project Review – Replacement of 34 windows on the second and third floors of the property. Request to continue to the next DRB meeting.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to continue to the next DRB meeting.

Seconded by Perras.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

3. **11 Summer Street:** Small Project Review – Proposed expansion of the Salem Inn campus through the renovation of the main structure into 15 hotel rooms and the carriage house into one townhouse unit. Proposed site improvements include a new parking area with a solar panel carport, walking paths, landscaping, drainage system, and geothermal system.

Christine Granese, attorney representing Emerson House LLC, Mike Bleier of LandWork Studio, Dan Ricciarelli and Julia Mooradian of Seger Architects, and Dick Pabich, owner of the Salem Inn were present to discuss the proposal:

- Ms. Granese noted that the building currently houses six apartment units and will be converted into a 15-unit hotel with an interior elevator, an accessible hotel unit and an exterior accessible ramp. The existing Carriage House would be converted into a single townhouse hotel unit for a total of 16 units for the project.
- There will be substantial site improvements including a solar panel carport, site drainage, a geothermal system, landscaping, and a garden seating area.
- Following completion, the property will be maintained and operated by the Salem Inn.
- Mr. Ricciarelli noted that the building was originally constructed in 1762 by Judge William Pinchon and his wife Catherine. It was a two-story building that was added on to by John Derby.
- Most of the building's detail was stripped and it was stuccoed with concrete in the 1930s. The double entry was added and many of the windows changed out. The hope is to restore the building to its previous grandeur as a federal building.
- The existing vinyl siding is being removed.
- The site plan was shared and reviewed.
- The garage has been approved for demolition.
- Existing and historic photos of the buildings were shared.
- Mr. Bleier reviewed the owner's vision for the property which includes the three buildings.
- He reviewed the site and landscape plan.
- The current site is almost entirely impervious with very little plantings.

- Renderings of the proposal, including the vehicular circulation plan, was shared, which will allow for additional plantings and gardens. They are also hoping to create a more continuous street edge.
- The proposed, initial lighting plan was shared which consists of low-level lighting to not interfere with the existing lighting. The proposed lighting is intended to accentuate certain aspects of the project; the canopy structures, safety, specimen trees, and path lights.
- Mr. Pabich said the guests will have the ability to come behind the courtyard without having to walk along Summer Street.
- Ms. Mooradian reviewed the existing building drawings. The porches will be demolished and staircase will be rebuilt.
- Renderings of the future building were shared which includes bringing the building back to the federalist style with clapboard siding, wood shutters, six over six aluminum clad wood windows with SDL space bar. The center entry will be brought back and the 1880s portico recreated.
- The carriage house will have similar features as the main house.
- Geothermal energy will be used along with solar panels.
- Federal and state historic tax credits are being pursued.
- The elevator will be incorporated inside in the back corner.
- One unit will be ADA accessible.
- Elevations of the carriage house were shared.
- The materials were reviewed.
- The Historic Commission has reviewed the project.
- Mr. Pabich noted that it has been his and his wife's Dana's dream to buy the subject property since 1990. He hopes the three buildings will be incorporated into Salem's historic district.
- Mr. Perras congratulated the owner and designer and thought the solution was elegant. He asked what happened to the chimneys. Mr. Pabich said the chimneys were removed in the 1920s.
- Ms. Murray said she is very excited to see this type of project come to fruition in Salem. She said this type of architecture is very special and is not seen elsewhere in the world. She thought the boutique value of the two properties is amazing to have in Salem. She congratulated the owner.
- Mr. Pabich said he had difficult legal challenges to overcome in order to buy the property.
- The clapboard manufacturer hasn't been selected yet. They are hoping to get as close as possible to the historic profile.
- Ms. Miller said the clapboard should be smooth, not textured.
- The fence will be iron with a gate. It has not been designed yet, but they are looking around downtown for ideas. They want it to be contextual and contiguous.
- Ms. Miller inquired about the ADA ramp. She said the deck must be at least 60 inches of space to turn. She also recommended that a fourth wall be considered along the dumpster bin to create a nicer experience for someone who uses the ramp. Mr. Ricciarelli said the only opening is towards the driveway.
- Ms. Miller recommended the use of later generations of granite planks which is cut. Mr. Bleier agreed.
- Ms. Miller asked Mr. Bleier to run through the planting plan. Mr. Bleier said that the idea is use largely native materials with multi-heights. The planting material list was shared. There will be no grass. The owner does not want to need irrigation and prefers a low maintenance landscape for sustainability.

- Ms. Miller suggested that the owner consider not having the two buildings match in color as it may not be historically accurate.
- Mr. Estes had the same thought and suggested changing the color of the carriage house for more variety.
- Ms. Murray said she appreciated the conformity of the campus color. Mr. Perras agreed.

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

- Ms. Owens said the property will be going back to the SRA and they will be going before the Planning Board. She said they could come back to the DRB for small project review if there is appetite for it from the board.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to approve the schematic design with the applicant to come back with design development drawings to review signage, materials, and the items discussed during the meeting.

Seconded by Perras.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

4. 14 New Derby Street: Small Project Review – Review of proposed ADA accessible ramp entrance at the rear of the building.

Ben Goldberg was present to discuss the project:

- Mr. Goldbery noted that they are looking to install an accessible route to overcome a one- or two-inch difference in height between the door entry and the existing parking lot.
- A rendering was shared.
- The black bollards will be lit.
- The request for the ramp came from the new tenant, Citizens Bank.
- The door is a pull out door and the ramp has more than the required 60 inches of clear space. The applicant shared a schematic showing the depth of pad.
- The ramp extends an additional foot past the bottom.
- The posts will be drilled into the pad once it's poured and fastened to the wall.

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to approve

Seconded by Perras.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

Projects Outside of the Urban Renewal Area

- 1. 56 Margin Street, 54 Margin Street, 7 High Street, 20 Endicott Street, and 24 Endicott Street:** Smart Growth Overlay District - Design review of the proposed project at Lifebridge Main Campus. The applicant proposes the demolition of the buildings at 24 Endicott Street and 56 Margin Street, the adaptive reuse of 54 Margin Street, and the preservation of the facade of 20 Endicott Street to accommodate for a 22,806 square foot building comprised of 53 affordable homes, a shelter with 70

beds, and supportive programming space along with other site improvements. Thirteen parking spaces are proposed on site.

Andrew Leonard with Harborlight and Stefano Basso with SV Design were present to discuss the project:

- Harborlight Homes seeks to create 53 affordable supportive homes (41 new and 12 renovated).
- Lifebridge North Shore seeks to create 70 shelter beds with supportive programmatic space and office space.
- The project includes the complete demolition of 24 Endicott Street and 56 Margin Street.
- There will be a partial demolition of 20 Endicott Street with the front façade to remain.
- There will be adaptive reuse of the church at 54 Margin Street.
- There will be a 3-4 story infill development to create one building with a fire wall dividing Harborlight and Lifebridge.
- The Christopher Columbus Society will be incorporated into the Harborlight sider.
- There will be a passive house design with solar ready roof and 13 parking spaces.
- The project is within the Smart Growth Overlay District created by the 40R process. They are continuing to work with neighbors, Planning Board, and Historic Salem on feedback received.
- The roof type has been changed, and they are working to see if Memorial Park can be preserved despite the needed flood storage.
- Mr. Basso reviewed the project site and floor plan.
- The historic entryway of the 20 Endicott Building will be used. There will be a new planting bed and landscape buffer.
- There is a small outdoor patio space planned for residents which will be screened with shrubs and secured with fencing.
- A new entrance for Lifebridge will be created with some steps and an accessible ramp. An additional entrance would be used for program workforce development.
- Lifebridge would like to fit out the building but maintain flexibility as different needs arise over time.
- The façade of the church is being maintained with a side addition and outdoor terrace planned which will be screened with landscaping and fencing.
- A service and emergency egress is planned for the back of the building.
- Existing condition photos were shared.
- The proposed façade was adjusted for the comments received regarding the roof and simplifying materials.
- The new, proposed façade renderings were shared and reviewed. The gable and white siding is gone.
- The brick color was chosen to complement the brick used for the church.
- Mr. Basso suggested a site visit to look at the physical samples of brick.
- Mr. Perras asked if any further drawings have been completed showing the imagery context on Endicott Street. He noted that he liked the multiple tones of charcoal and wondered how it was going to work in the neighborhood.
- Ms. Murray noted the public comment received saying that the charcoal felt dark and ominous. Mr. Basso said the site visit could be helpful to see the true intention of the color. He said the color doesn't look as dark in person.
- Mr. Perras said the site walk would be helpful and he would be happy to join the walk.

- Mr. Perras asked how the memorial would be addressed. Mr. Leonard said they are working to find a place for it as Memorial Park would be replaced by the parking garage structure. He said the memorial itself is owned by the Christopher Columbus Society. He said there are issues because the parking garage is serving as compensatory flood storage.
- Ms. Murray asked about the bricks that have been purchased over the years and that there is sentiment around them and they could be ruined during removal. Mr. Leonard said they are working on it.
- The memorial garden is 1500 SF. Ms. Murray asked if it could remain.
- Ms. Murray asked about the increase in the number of units from what was originally planned. Mr. Leonard said there is a significant need for supportive affordable housing units here. He said they are looking at ways to preserve the park, but don't want to do it at such a significant loss of units and significant missional impact.
- Mr. Perras asked if the Memorial Park can be sited at the back of the building. He noted that there is something to be said about the park being on the street and believes that would be important to the neighbors.
- Mr. Leonard said they would look at the spaces and speak with the Christopher Columbus Society.
- Ms. Murray said it is going to require precision.
- Ms. Miller noted that the reality is the bricks break. She hopes that there might be way to maintain the space/courtyard and to be selective about what things should be saved. She noted that one of the letters mentioned the bell and the people that contributed to it. She suggested that the bricks could take another form, like a plaque. Mr. Leonard agreed.
- Mr. Durand asked if internal space had been considered for the memorial. Mr. Leonard said there was concern about the loss of accessibility if it moved inside. Under an awning could be an option or behind a glass wall.
- Ms. Murray strongly recommended that the bell should not be put in front of the building.
- Mr. Perras said the plan continues to improve but he is concerned about the amount of volume and the kind of leftover space in between them. He asked if their landscape architect could join the next meeting to discuss how the landscape is being treated all the way around the building.
- Ms. Miller said she has a list of landscape architecture questions such as tree planting details. Mr. Basso said they are working on revisions to the landscape plan. Ms. Miller said it would be helpful to know more about the existing trees.
- Ms. Miller circled back to Mr. Perras' comments regarding a montage of the elevations on High Street and Endicott Street. She said it would be helpful to understand for the neighborhood, scale, and color palette.

The meeting was open for public comment.

- Joe Cultrera reiterated his written concerns about making the color lighter. He provided Andrew Defranza with photos of the homes along Endicott and Prescott Streets as examples as to what could be a good color fit. He said they hope that the memorial could remain in place by adjusting the size of some of the units. He said the memorial is for those killed in action during WWII and some of them were parishioners of the church and they are important to the neighbors. He noted that the design looks very dense and imposing and would prefer more open space. He said the behind the building is where people do drugs and he doesn't see that changing with the alleyways. He asked if the apartments overlooking the park could be shielded

from view. He believes there may be sex offenders in the building and doesn't want those individuals to look over at children in the playground.

- Bob Femino, Co-Chair of the Greater Endicott Neighborhood Association noted that he spoke to Mr. Defranza about the City moving away from parking requirements for this type of project and that keeping the Memorial Park would be something the neighborhood would appreciate. He said they would like to be kept informed as to the schedule of the neighborhood walkthrough.
- Ms. Owens said she could help coordinate the site walk date and that it would be posted if there was a quorum of the DRB members present.

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to continue.

Seconded by Murray.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

New/Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes:

a. July 22, 2026

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve the July 22nd meeting minutes.

Seconded by Miller.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

b. July 23, 2026

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve the July 23rd meeting minutes

Seconded by Miller.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

c. August 5, 2026

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve the August 5th meeting minutes

Seconded by Estes.

Roll Call: Badowski, Estes, Miller, Murray, Perras, and Durand. 6-0 in favor.

Staff Updates

Ms. Owens noted that there will be a joint meeting with the SRA on Wednesday, September 9th at 6pm regarding Lappin Park. She said the meeting will be hybrid. If members would like to attend in-person, it will be in City Hall Annex in one of the first floor meeting rooms.

Ms. Owens noted that there is a vacancy on the Public Art Commission and a spot for a DRB member. She asked that anyone interested in serving on the Commission to let her know. The meetings are held via Zoom and the meetings are roughly 1 ½ to two hours.

Ms. Murray asked if they could do anything for quality assurance and quality control. She said metal is being painted with inappropriate type of paint and it will peel.

Mr. Estes said the applicant for the 11 Summer Street project should check with the fire department regarding the space availability for the proposed solar panels.

Mr. Badowski said his background is primarily in the design realm, marketing branding, storefront facades, signs and murals. He is very familiar with the process of working with local municipalities and cities. He is excited about being on the DRB.

Upcoming Meetings

1. SRA: September 9
2. DRB: September 23

Ms. Miller noted that Wicked Duck on North Street started painting the façade but appears the never finished the top work. Ms. Owens said she would reach out to the owners.

Ms. Murray inquired about the work at the World of Wizardry. Ms. Owens said she has already reached out to them, and they are completing an application. She said she also reached out to Flying Monkey who painted their façade and needing to come back to the SRA.

Adjournment

VOTE: Mr. Badowski made a motion to adjourn. Second: Miller. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 39 §23B and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033

Business	Item	Status
Ascend	Window clings	Emailed again on 8/17
Witchside Tavern	Menu displays on brick facade	Denied permit in OpenGov in May. Emailed on 7/23.
Salem Wax Museum	Cornice lights	Part of orange light wayfinding for Haunted Happenings – presentation to follow at September 2026 SRA meeting

Fountain Place	Tattered awning signs	Emailed on 7/23, response received 7/24
World of Wizardry	Window cling on door and facade painting– more than 20% coverage	Phone and Email 9/4 - filling out application
Flying Monkey	Submitted facade and updating sign application	Applications submitted, emailed on 8/27 for updated sign items
Pirates Museum	String lights at cornice	They are submitting a small project review application as of 8/18
TruNorth Bank	Temporary banners	Observed on 7/30
The Goat	Temporary banners	Observed on 7/30
Diehl Marcus & Company	Sign on 9/23 agenda	Emailed on 8/18, response received on 8/18
Black Cat Curiosity Shoppe	Temporary banner	Observed again on 8/27
Thai Place Restaurant	Temporary banners on Essex side of Mall	
Not Ya Mama's Vegan Cafe	Temporary banners on Essex side of Mall	
Sinistry	Sign on 9/23 agenda	Emailed on 8/31
Wicked Ducks	Have not finished painting	Sent email on 8/27, observed again on 9/4