

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, September 23, 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

Signs in the Urban Renewal Area

1. 11 Charter Street: Diehl Marcus & Company

Erika Diehl and Christian Marcus were present to discuss the proposal:

- The proposed banner is intended to provide more wayfinding and tell people what to expect in their store.
- The rendering of the proposed sign was shared.
- The post is proposed to be mounted to the 3 x 6-foot concrete platform.
- This application was approved three or four years ago and the proponents would like to switch out the artwork on the banner. A photo of the old artwork was shared.
- The sign meets the City's size requirements.

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

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to approve as submitted.

Seconded by Mr. Perras.

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

2. 2 East India Square: Sinistry

Kevin Lyons was present to discuss the proposal:

- An image of the proposed sign was shared.
- Mr. Lyons said he thought the sign wooden sign on the brick wall was intended to be included in the DRB meeting two months but was not.
- The sign has already been created and installed.
- The sign is attached to the brick with a mounted bracket.
- The sign meets the City's size requirements.

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

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve as submitted.

Seconded by Mr. Estes.

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

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **6 Front Street:** Small Project Review – Replacement of 34 windows on the second and third floors of the property.

Ben Goldberg, the applicant, could not be in attendance and requested to be included for the October meeting.

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to continue.

Seconded by Ms. Miller.

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

2. **196 Essex Street, Unit 170, Flying Monkey:** Small Project Review – Facade trim painting at Flying Monkey.

Beverly Manukyan was present to discuss the proposal:

- An image of the façade was shown. The applicant painted the trim black and it was previously white.
- The trim was prepped, primed, and sanded prior to painting.
- The condo association does not require permission prior to painting trim.

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

- Ms. Miller noted that door cling sign, window signs, and stripes appear to be getting close to being over the maximum allowance. Ms. Owens said she has spoken with the applicant about that and that Ms. Manukyan started an application for the signage.

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve as submitted.

Seconded by Ms. Miller.

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

3. **194 Essex Street, Unit 171, World of Wizardry:** Small Project Review – Facade trim painting at World of Wizardry.

Eric Rodenhiser, the applicant, could not be in attendance and requested to be included at a future meeting.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to continue.

Seconded by Mr. Perras.

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

4. **161 Essex Street, Peabody Essex Museum:** Small Project Review – Proposed sign package for Charter Street facade.

Derek O'Brien, P.E.M., was present to discuss the proposal:

- A map showing the Charter Street location was shared.
- Mr. O'Brien noted that the Charter Street entrance had not been in use.
- A rendering of the three frames was shared.
- The proposed signs allow for flexibility and are not illuminated. They are fabric banners that are the same scale as what the P.E.M. has on Essex Street.
- The SRA approved the signage pending DRB review.
- Ms. Owens said she did not believe the banners down the street were included in the calculation.
- Mr. O'Brien said they are having a hard time letting people know that the Charter Street location is an entrance.
- The proposal is in excess of what the new signage regulation permits. Only one aluminum frame would be permitted under the sign regulations, but it did not seem appropriate for the scale of the façade.
- Mr. Perras asked if more positions of the frames were explored. Mr. O'Brien said they did and that they feel this proposal activates the area and allows them to feature current and future needs.
- Mr. O'Brien said he didn't have the other options with him, but that they have a large interior team and that the current proposal went through rounds of approval internally.
- Mr. O'Brien said that despite the size of their façade on this whole block, the sign regulations only allow for a maximum of 100SF of signage.
- Mr. Durand noted that this is not a typical storefront and as such they are going through the Small Project Review, not signage approval.
- The elevations of the banners are about 10 feet high from the finished grade.
- The banners do not cover the decorative band.
- Ms. Miller said she was supportive of approving the signs if they highlight the exhibits and gallery spaces, not an advertisement to buy tickets.
- The interior of the frames could be swapped out based on the museum's exhibits.
- Mr. Estes said he would be supportive of the signs being taller to be more in keeping with the scale of the façade. He asked if there was any consideration of placing a sign on the left wall facing the entrance. Mr. O'Brien said they had not looked at that yet.
- Mr. O'Brien said the size was chosen to utilize the same materials they have on Essex Street.

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

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to approve under small project review acknowledging that the size exceeds the maximum square footage for a program display but is appropriate given the size of the façade and the program display is at the appropriate scale for the façade on which it will be installed, and that the signs be program and event banners, not sale banners.

Seconded by Mr. 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.

Pat Connolly and Stefano Basso with SV Design were present to discuss the project:

- Mr. Connolly thanked everyone for their input and time on the site visit.
- The revised site plan was shared which enables the Memorial Yard to remain where it currently exists though smaller in size.
- Plan renderings showing the Memorial Yard were shared and reviewed.
- There is now an egress door into the Memorial Yard which will be locked from the outside.
- Mr. Perras asked if the wall could be angled out to give more clearance to the door. Mr. Basso said they could look at that suggestion.
- Mr. Basso said they created this concept to gauge interest, and it seems like there has been positive feedback. Their next step would be to go in and refine details.
- The original church bell, the WWII memorial, benches, and commemorative memorial bricks would all remain.
- They propose adding a new commemorative memorial plaque that would be legible from the street.
- Mr. Basso said the commitment from Harborlight and Life Bridge is that they are willing to work with stakeholders to make sure that within the reduced space they can fit all the items and honor the memory of everyone who is served by the Memorial Yard.
- Various renderings showing views of the area were shared.
- Mr. Basso said they are still tweaking the colors on the rendering.
- Mr. Perras said he agreed with a previous comment about not liking the look of the wood infill panels.
- Ms. Murray applauded the attempt to create interest and something different with the architecture, but felt the attempt was not landing. She thought the cedar gave it interest.
- Mr. Durand noted that it looked like the door would be hard to secure. Mr. Basso said they are working with the civil engineer on that issue, but the slope is making the engineering difficult.
- Mr. Basso said they will use secure gates that have free passage from one side in a lot of areas and they can get the hardware to work. It will not be a stair for everyday use by residents; it would be an emergency stair only.
- The Memorial Yard gate is not currently locked.
- Mr. Basso said they have heard comments about safety concerns.
- Photos of the color palette were shared. The samples will be brought to the site to choose the final color.
- Images of the paint colors were shared.

- Mr. Estes asked if a section of the church could be cleaned to the expected spec as the building changes color roughly three feet up from the group. He noted that it would be important to make sure they are matching the right color. Mr. Connolly said they could make that happen.
- Mr. Basso said they will leave selected samples at City Hall for review as well as a large format photo of the existing brick for each building.
- Ms. Miller said she thinks the taupe color is right direction for the project. She is supportive of the velour brick texture from Belden that they had on site. She also advised that the two buildings at the corner of Endicott Street and the church have a blend mix and that the new building will not, and that it could give some leeway with color. She believes that the four-foot-high fence for the Memorial Park is too short and recommended a five-foot-high fence be considered. Mr. Basso said the fence will sit on a one-foot granite curb, so the top at the fence will be at chin height.
- Ms. Miller said she would like to see an analysis of which trees to keep and which not keep with the landscape architect becomes more involved.

The meeting was open for public comment.

- Barbara Mann, 29 Endicott Street, said she was happy the Memorial Yard is staying and hopefully there will be trees. She feels the color scheme has gone too far the other way and is now too dark. She would like to see it lightened.
- Ms. Owens noted that public comment was received on September 15th and shared with the Board and is available on SharePoint.
- Mr. Connolly noted that they agreed to extend the 40R beyond the 120-day time period. They agreed to extend it by 45 days. He expressed concern that it could crunch the Planning Board timeframe.
- Mr. Durand noted that the brick color was an outstanding issue. Ms. Owens said there are notes on the staff memo in terms of design guidelines such as signage, trees, sidewalk configuration, bicycle use, proposed mechanical screening, etc.
- Ms. Miller expressed concern about landscape planning being pushed back and there is little time to review and approve. She suggested that the sign package could happen later.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to continue.

Seconded by Mr. Perras.

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

New/Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes:

a. August 26, 2026

VOTE: Mr. Perras made a motion to approve the August 26th meeting minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Estes.

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

2. DRB Representative Appointment to Public Art Commission: Joseph Badowski

Ms. Owens reported that Mr. Badowski has offered to be the DRB representative on the Public Art Commission.

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to appoint Mr. Badowski as the DRB representative on the Public Art Commission.

Seconded by Mr. Perras.

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

3. Staff Updates

Ms. Owens noted the enforcement updates at the end of the minutes.

She said there will be a public window art conversation at a future SRA meeting. The meeting is not planned as a joint DRB SRA meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

1. SRA: October 15
2. DRB: October 28

Adjournment

VOTE: Ms. Miller made a motion to adjourn. Second: Ms. Murray. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08PM.

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 occurred 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	On 9/23 agenda
Flying Monkey	Working on sign application	Working on sign application
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
Black Cat Curiosity Shoppe	Temporary banner	Permit status discussed with Building Inspector 9/21
Thai Place Restaurant	Temporary banners on Essex side of Mall	
Not Ya Mama's Vegan Cafe	Temporary banners on Essex side of Mall	