



TOWN HALL  
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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
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June 9, 2010; revised June 23, 2010

DRB Memorandum #2010-6

**Memo to:** Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner  
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director  
**From:** Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner  
**Subject:** DRB Meeting – June 8, 2010

The Tuesday, June 8, 2010, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:35 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall. Design Review Board members Janet Winston (Chair), Anita Licis, Jonathan Salvo, Kathryn Grandonico and Jim Wald were present. Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, Adam Niksa of Sign-a-Rama, Katrina and Kerri of Sei Bella Salon, Jason Brown of Clearwater Restaurant and Vincent Tran of Miss Saigon Restaurant.

**DRB 2010-00012, Sei Bella Salon, 59B Boltwood Walk – review of awning with sign and window and door graphics**

***Recommended approval***

Mr. Niksa presented the application. The awning will be a “waterfall style” awning, 11’-9” long and 3’ high. It will extend out from the building wall by 2’. The letters on the awning will be 12” high, black vinyl letters spelling out “Sei Bella Salon”, on a light-green awning. Door graphics will include the hours of operation and will be white letters on glass. There will also be white vinyl window graphics on a window on the north side of the building, with the name of the establishment, the phone number and the note “Walk-Ins Welcome”.

Ms. Grandonico suggested that the owners might wish to put their website address on the window and door once they have a website.

The awning will have lights underneath, to light the entryway, but the awning itself will be opaque. There is street lighting in the vicinity of Boltwood Walk parking lot, which will help to light the awning and sign.

Ms. Brestrup noted that she had measured the building façade and the size of the proposed signs is within the allowed 10% of the façade area controlled by the proprietors.

Board members, Ms. Licis and Mr. Salvon, stated that they liked the font of the sign. Although the photo shows a black line around the edge of the awning, this is an artifact of Photoshop and there will be no black line around the edge. The awning will have a rounded top similar to that of Bueno Y Sano.

Ms. Grandonico suggested that the door sign could have a green background to match the awning. Katrina and Kerri preferred to leave the window clear so that passers-by could see into the salon.

Board members commented that the awning and window signs look beautiful.

**DRB 2010-00013, Miss Saigon, 96 North Pleasant Street – Review of the addition of 12” dimensional letters matching the existing font on the sign on the front of the building and the addition of a small projecting wall sign affixed to the corner of the façade**

***Recommended approval with conditions***

Adam Niksa presented the application. The owner of Miss Saigon Restaurant, Vincent Tran, is proposing to add “dimensional” lettering to his two existing signs on the front of the building and to add a blade sign at the corner of the building. The two existing signs on the front sign panel will remain in place.

Mr. Tran is proposing to install plastic “dimensional” letters on the existing signs on the front of the Miss Saigon Restaurant, in the same font and same (green) color as the existing signs. The letters will be ¾” deep formed plastic, attached to the existing signs with holes drilled into the signs and studs holding the letters in place, with foam filler. The dimensional letters will make the existing sign more legible and more visible. There is existing downcast fluorescent lighting over the top of the signs. This lighting will remain. The Board was satisfied with this proposal.

The Board then reviewed the proposal for the blade sign. The blade sign is proposed to be installed on the cornice of the building, at the southeast corner (near the alleyway).

Ms. Lisis noted that the letters seemed too large for the blade sign.

Mr. Niksa agreed that the letters could be smaller. He had not yet created his final design for the blade sign. The intent is that the blade sign will be similar to the other two existing signs in color and pattern. That is, the blade sign will have vines similar to the existing signs and the background color will be more brown than green.

Ms. Brestrup reported that she had spoken with the Planning Director, Jonathan Tucker, and the Building Commissioner, Bonnie Weeks, about the blade sign. Mr. Tucker had concerns about the extent of “sign clutter” that exists along the front of the building and suggested that this would be exaggerated by the addition of the blade sign. Ms. Weeks had concerns about whether a blade sign would be allowed under the Zoning Bylaw, in addition to the signs already existing on the cornice sign panel.

Ms. Lisis and other Board members stated that the blade sign will be “quieter” once it is rendered in its real proposed colors. They were not concerned about the issue of “sign clutter” although the Board members questioned the positioning of the blade sign. They suggested that it might be better located closer to the entryway of the restaurant, so that it could direct people to the entrance.

Ms. Brestrup reported that the bottom of the cornice is 8’-7” from the sidewalk. The bottom of the blade sign will need to be 6’-8” up from the sidewalk to comply with ADA and AAB guidelines.

There was discussion about an appropriate location and height for the blade sign and whether the sign should take a vertical or horizontal format.

**Conditions for blade sign:**

- 1) Planning Department staff shall determine if the blade sign can be permitted under the Zoning Bylaw.
- 2) If the sign is found to be permissible, the design shall be revised to show smaller letters and the true colors and patterns that are being proposed; alternative locations shall be explored.
- 3) If the sign is found to be permissible, a plan for the revised, blade sign, with proposed alternative locations, shall be brought back for review by the Design Review Board at a future meeting.

**Old Business**

**Public Works New Policy on Review of Transportation and Roadway Projects – Spring Street Improvements and Town Common Parking Lot**

In keeping with the new Public Works policy for roadway projects, the Public Works Committee held a public hearing for the proposed Spring Street roadway and streetscape improvements and the proposed improvements to the Town Common Parking Lot on Tuesday, June 1, 2010. Ms. Brestrup attended the hearing and reported on the proceedings. She presented a set of plans and described the proposed improvements. The Design Review Board had seen earlier versions of these plans at previous meetings and had commented on them.

The Design Review Board members were pleased to note that many of their comments and recommendations from previous meetings had been incorporated into the latest plans, including the addition of “bump-outs” at the east end of the Town Common Parking Lot.

Board members were particularly gratified to note that the Department of Public Works and the Public Works Committee were exploring the possibility of placing the overhead wires underground, thereby eliminating the need for utility poles along the north side of Spring Street. They were also gratified to learn that the DPW and PW Committee were considering the use of granite, in place of a pre-cast concrete retaining wall, to take up the elevation change on the north side of Spring Street, east of the Grace Church Parish House.

Board members discussed placement of the benches. They understood that some people would want to sit facing the common and that others would prefer to sit facing the parking lot. The latter group might be handicapped or elderly and unable to walk on uneven grass. The Board members suggested that the benches might alternate, with some facing the common and some facing the parking lot.

They had no further comment on the plans.

## **New Business**

### **Proposed Town Flag – Inquiry from a Select Board member**

Mr. Wald, who is a Select Board member as well as a DRB member, reported that the Select Board had discussed the fact that Amherst does not have a “town flag”. Many other towns and cities in the Commonwealth do have town flags. Flags from many of these cities and towns are flown at the State House in Boston. Hadley has recently designed its own town flag and has copies of it on display around town. Amherst is considering designing a town flag. This is especially timely in light of the recently-concluded 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Ms. Brestrup reported that Diana Stein, another Select Board member, had asked her to ask the Design Review Board if the members would be interested in participating in the design process.

Board members were enthusiastic about becoming involved in the design process for a town flag. However, they did not wish to design it themselves. They agreed that a contest or competition might be an appropriate method to use to develop a design for a flag.

Mr. Wald recommended that the DRB provide criteria and think about what the town wanted to do with the flag. Do we want it to hang in the State House? Do we want copies of it displayed around town? He suggested use of the town seal, with the book and plow as the theme.

Board members suggested that elementary school children, middle and high school students and the university and colleges might get involved. They suggested that a design competition for a town flag might be held, a conceptual design developed and then the town could hire a designer to refine the winning design and create the flag.

The Board members plan to discuss this matter further at their upcoming meetings in July.

## **Membership**

Anita Licis announced that she will not be continuing as a member of the Design Review Board after her term expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>. She has taken a job with an architectural firm in Connecticut and will no longer be able

to attend DRB meetings. The Board thanked Ms. Licis for her valuable contributions and wished her well in the future.

Mr. Salvon recused himself from consideration of the next application and left the meeting.

**DRB 2010-00014, Jason Brown for Clearwater Restaurant, 178 North Pleasant Street – review of installation of new walk-in cooler at the rear of the building and enclosure of entryway on north side entrance.**

***Recommended approval with conditions***

Jason Brown presented his application to install a new walk-in cooler at the rear of the building and enclose the entryway on the north side. He plans to install an 8’ x 8’ walk-in cooler where the existing steps are located at the rear of the restaurant, adjacent to the ramp. He plans to install the cooler on a concrete base to make sure that it is level. The cooler will be encased in galvanized aluminum. It will be a self-contained unit that is meant to be outside. He may try to camouflage the concrete base with white-painted wood lattice work. Mr. Brown stated that there will be about 17 feet for cars to get past the cooler and into the parking lot. The driveway is also 17 feet wide. There will be lighting at the rear doors of the building as required by Building Code, but no exterior lighting directly on the cooler.

The Board members asked about pedestrian access from the parking lot to the front, handicapped- accessible entrance. Board members suggested that the property owner or the restaurant owner consider creating a walkway, perhaps by painting a stripe on the driveway, similar to a bike path, to designate a path by which people can get from the parking lot to the front entry without coming into conflict with a car. Mr. Brown stated that he is considering creating a small planting area along the north side of the building, or at least replacing the decaying timbers there.

Mr. Brown presented his proposal to enclose the entryway to create a vestibule on the north side of the building. The intent is to protect diners from the effects of cold winds coming in the door. He plans to build a wall on the west and north sides of the entryway, with a door on the east side. He proposes to install windows, similar to the windows that the landlord is installing, on the north wall of this vestibule.

Mr. Brown will use clapboards on the exterior walls of the vestibule. He may reuse the existing clapboards from the building, to make sure that they match in terms of texture. He would like to use a glass panel door, bordered by wood, stained a natural wood color, to stand out from the color scheme of the rest of the building, which is grayish blue and white.

**Conditions**

- 1) Consider installing a concrete-filled steel bollard to protect the corner of the cooler from vehicles.
- 2) Consider installing planting tubs with ornamental grasses along the sides of the cooler, rather than using lattice-work to camouflage the concrete base.
- 3) Consider using clapboards to match the existing building, windows to match those being installed by the landlord and a door stained a natural tone to differentiate it from the rest of the building.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

<b>Future Meetings</b>	Tuesday, July 13, 2010	Tuesday, July 27, 2010
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Cc:	Anita Licis, DRB	Nate Malloy, Associate Planner	Adam Niksa, for Applicants
	Janet Winston, DRB	Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner	Sei Bella & Miss Saigon
	Jim Wald, DRB & HC	Larry Shaffer, Town Manager	Aaron Hayden, Sel. Board
	Jonathan Salvon, DRB	Jason Skeels, Town Engineer	Diana Stein, Sel. Board
	Kathryn Grandonico, DRB	Guilford Mooring, DPW Supt’d.	Jason Brown, Applicant