

CITIZEN'S GUIDE  
TO THE  
DOWNTOWN  
RENEWAL PLAN

Presented by



HISTORIC  
SALEM, INC.

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SALEM INC

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► Preservation at work

April 5, 2021

Dear Citizen,

The mission of Historic Salem, Inc. (HSI) is to ensure that the historic resources of Salem, Massachusetts, which are the key to its identity, its quality of life, and its economic vitality, are preserved for future generations, and that **new development complements the historic character of the city.**

With that mission at the core of all we do, we offer you this guide in the hope that it assists you in navigating the 189 total pages of the The Salem Downtown Renewal Plan Objectives and Design Standards so that you and our neighbors will be able to directly reference the specific guidelines, standards, and expectations when working with the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) and the Design Review Board (DRB).

Thanks to the combined efforts of our Education and Programming and Preservation Committees, the details of the Salem Downtown Renewal Plan Objectives and Design Standards have been abridged and collated into this format for ease of use and reference in real-time conversations and at public meetings. It is our intention that this guide be used hand-in-hand with the official Plan document available [here](#).

Ultimately, it is our goal to empower Salem's citizens to feel confident in interactions with the City of Salem's municipal authorities who oversee design and new construction and modifications to existing historic buildings, and equip citizens with accurate and detailed information about the powers and purpose of the SRA and DRB. Historic Salem has been the longest-standing preservation advocacy organization in Salem, putting our mission to action for over 75 years. Through the use of this guide, we hope more residents will engage in these important conversations, joining us in this vital work for historic Salem.

Looking forward,

Caroline Watson-Felt  
President

# HSI's Citizen's Guide to the Downtown Renewal Plan

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## About this Document

### Guide to the Salem Redevelopment Authority

The goal of this document is to consolidate the 189-page Salem Redevelopment Plan of the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) and the Design Review Board (DRB) guidelines and objectives into an easily accessible format to ensure an inclusive public design process—crucial when decisions are made that will impact the city's look, feel, and character well beyond our generation.

Historic Salem, Inc.-specific language is shown in purple. All other content and images, in black text, is pulled from the Salem Downtown Renewal Plan or other reference documents.

### History and Role of the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA)

The SRA was created in 1962 to facilitate urban renewal amidst economic downturn in downtown Salem, largely due to suburban development and shopping mall construction in nearby towns. The original plan was part of a national effort to “reduce blight” in the nation's congested city centers, and in most places meant wholesale demolition and replacement with new construction. Urban Renewal Agencies were granted enormous powers and resources to purchase and demolish properties. In Salem, [39 acres of the downtown](#), including numerous historic structures, were slated to be demolished and a multi-lane access road proposed to run through the Peabody Essex garden. Beginning in 1968, over 45 historic residential and commercial properties were demolished in the downtown area, mostly in the location of the current Church Street parking lot ([link to 1851 map of Salem, showing pre-1900 development between Essex and Federal Streets at present Church Street parking lot](#)).

Aided by notable *New York Times* architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable, and spearheaded by local citizens with participation by Historic Salem, the Salem Plan drew national attention due to the level of destruction and the significance of the historic buildings. In 1970, Salem's new Mayor Sam Zoll amended the Plan to emphasize historic preservation rather than demolition, and the SRA became a national model for a new approach. Alongside updated

regulations, the amended Plan established the pedestrian mall, designed by John F. Collins, which received numerous architectural and planning awards. For further information about this important preservation battle which effectively saved the historic downtown from further demolition, visit [this link to the HSI website and Ada Louise Huxtable symposium](#).

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the original Plan was approaching its 40-year expiration date and the City undertook a year-long revision effort that included public hearings and input from Historic Salem and the Salem Historical Commission. The revised urban renewal plan, now known as Salem's Downtown Renewal Plan, was approved by the City Council and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development in 2011.

The 2011 Plan emphasizes historic preservation and high quality urban design as its central goals. All building alterations, new construction, and signage in the [Plan area](#) are subject to approval by the Salem Redevelopment Authority. The project approval guidelines are described in the [Plan](#) and the [Commercial Design Guidelines](#). Importantly, the Plan dictates that any alterations to buildings 50 years or older in the designated area must be reviewed using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation ([link](#)) and the guidelines of the Salem Historical Commission ([link](#)). This 50-year cutoff follows the current guidelines for the National Register of Historic Places program, and ensures that potentially significant modern buildings and structures are also evaluated for their contributions to Salem's diverse architectural history.

The Salem Redevelopment Authority consists of five members, all of whom must be Salem residents, and is authorized and governed according to MA General Law 121B. Four of the members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council and a fifth member is appointed by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. The SRA is subject to Massachusetts open meeting laws and there is a newly adopted policy of notifying abutters that will improve the ability of the community to interact with the SRA process. *(Paragraph updated 4/10/2021)*

In certain circumstances, the SRA is also equipped to take and dispose of properties to facilitate redevelopment. Recent examples (as of the date of this document) include the [redevelopment of the Salem Jail](#), the [historic courthouses](#), and the property commonly referred to as the "Crescent Lot."

### **History and Role of the Design Review Board (DRB)**

The Design Review Board (DRB) is an advisory board to the SRA which reviews the architectural details of proposed projects and ensures they conform to the Salem Downtown Renewal Plan guidelines. The DRB also provides advisory opinions to the Salem Planning Board for certain projects, including design review under the North River Canal Corridor Zoning. These latter roles are separate from the DRB's advisory role to the Salem Redevelopment Authority. The DRB members are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

*It's important to remember that design is subjective. The SRA and DRB are composed of professionals, many of whom are subject-matter experts in the areas of architectural design, street and landscaping, and real estate development. Nevertheless, there will be differing opinions and if you don't agree with a decision, **you have the right to ask them how and why decisions were made the way they were with direct reference to the plan based on [this Compliance Alternative section](#)**—which is how discretionary decision making should be done.*

# How to: Participate in a SRA or DRB Meeting

Visit the City's [Salem Redevelopment Authority webpage](#) or [Design Review Board webpage](#).

## SRA Meeting Information

When: 2nd Wednesday of each month

Time: 6:00 pm

## DRB Meeting Information

When: 4th Wednesday of each month

Time: 6:00 pm

You can subscribe at <https://www.salem.com/subscribe> to get notice of each meeting and agendas in your email.

You can review projects beforehand via link to submitted project material found on the posted agendas, or you can reach out to City planning staff to request meeting material. Reviewing the submissions beforehand helps you to formulate questions and identify concerns. The applicant will also present their plans at the review meeting.

**Public involvement in the review is a key part of the process.** Your thoughts are valid, regardless of your experience or background. Often, the first meeting regarding a project has high attendance that wanes as the review continues month to month. Public comments and attendance do a lot to empower the board to represent the desires of the community. If you care about a project, keep attending meetings throughout the entire process.

### **If you plan to write a letter (or email):**

- Address it to the Board chair and email it to the City staff person, (at the time of this writing, Kate Newhall-Smith, [knewhallsmith@salem.com](mailto:knewhallsmith@salem.com)) who will distribute it to each member of the SRA or DRB. You can also “cc” your ward or at-large councillors and others, if desired.
- Submit comments by 4pm the day of the meeting (earlier is better).
- These letters become part of the public record and are available for other members of the public to view. It has become the practice of the planning staff to read the names of people who submit letters, but not the entire letter, at the opening of the public comment period.

### **If you plan to speak during the public comment period:**

- In a Zoom meeting you can raise your hand (via the “Raise Hand” feature) and be prepared to unmute your computer. You will not be visible to the audience, but your voice will be heard (and recorded), becoming part of the public record.
- The opportunity for the public to speak will take place after all Board members have commented on a project and will be closed once all comments have been heard. There is a public comment period for each project and at each meeting.

### **For both letters and public comment:**

- Be direct and considerate, focusing on the 2-4 most important points you would like to make.
- Referencing relevant zoning and planning documents (especially the Downtown Renewal Plan) is helpful.

**Important Note** – in public comment you are officially speaking only to the chair of the Board. You may have questions for the applicant, the board, or City staff and so you are asking the chair to bring your question; it is up to the chair to decide if other participants should address your comments.

# SRA Plan Objectives:

*This is a condensed and reformatted list of the SRA Plan Objectives. The Design Standards found in section 4 of this document were developed to meet these goals. The context for these decisions is the last 60 years of urban renewal and development.*

*All decisions by the SRA and DRB should conform to these guiding principles:*

1. **To eliminate and prevent the recurrence of blighting factors:**
  - inappropriate demolition of the historic buildings that are central to the identity and value of the area.
  - the neglect and disinvestment in existing properties
2. **To preserve and enhance historic architecture and resources**
3. **To promote the health, safety, general welfare and amenity of the City and its people, by preserving and enhancing the following:**
  - a range of compatible uses, each well suited to its location;
  - a diverse and consistently high quality architectural character expressing a range of periods and respecting the integrity of both historic and contemporary styles while avoiding derivative design;
  - urban forms that respect the patterns of blocks, sidewalks, streets and open spaces that distinguish the compact, historic character of the area including:
    - the orientation of building frontages toward streets and public open spaces
    - varied scales among closely-spaced buildings
    - the integration of off-street parking, if required, and vehicle access to substantially limit their visual impact from public vantage points.
  - a complete network of active and vital sidewalks and pedestrian-oriented spaces
    - activated by the entrances and uses along the ground floors of the buildings and through the interaction among the compatible designs of sites, buildings, landscapes and streetscapes.
4. **To develop and apply urban design criteria, standards and guidelines to the Project Area that will create a central city urban environment.**
  - a. The design criteria are sympathetic to and conducive of the preservation and enhancement of historic and architectural values and to the construction of new buildings and facilities compatible with the preservation and enhancement of such values.
  - b. The design criteria shall be consistent with the needs of the City and its people for new and expanded residential and non-residential opportunities, services, facilities and amenities.
5. **To undertake activities and initiatives to accomplish public or private redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land and buildings, public open space and the infrastructure of streets, sidewalks and utilities consistent with the other purposes within this Salem Downtown Renewal Plan.**
6. To sponsor or participate in planning for areas adjacent to the Downtown Renewal Project Area and for the principal transportation and land use corridors that lead to and from the Downtown. The purpose of these activities is to encourage public actions that will reinforce the edges, approaches and gateways to the Downtown and promote the other purposes of this Plan.

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*We have organized and created internal links to this index for ease of accessibility.  
Section 3 of the original Salem Downtown Renewal Plan page numbers shown as: (SDRP 3-  ).*

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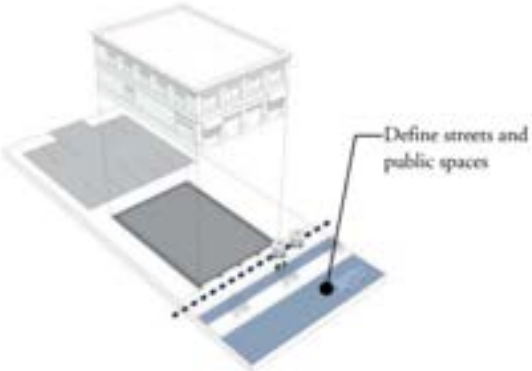
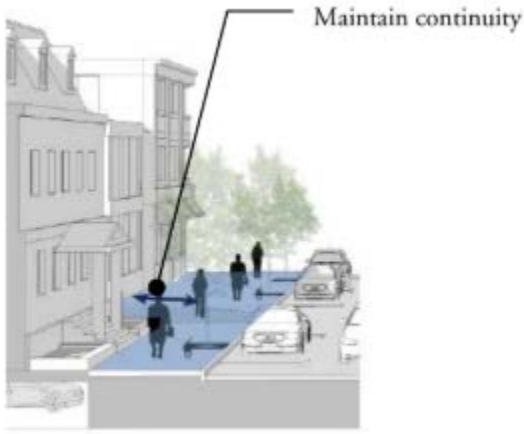
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**A. Sites and Blocks**

Text taken from Downtown Renewal Plan	Diagrams taken from Downtown Renewal Plan
<p><b>1. Building Placement</b> (<a href="#">SDRP pg 3-9</a>)</p> <p>Buildings shall be placed on the site to define the edges of streets and public spaces.</p> <p><b>Building placement</b> shall respect existing patterns of building placement for the street on which they are located.</p> <p><b>The individuality of the building</b> shall be subordinated to the overall continuity of the streets and public spaces.</p> <p><b>Buildings shall be placed to conceal parking</b> at the interior or rear of building lots.</p>	 <p align="center">Figure 3.1 Building Placement</p>
<p><b>2. Building Setbacks</b> (<a href="#">SDRP pg 3-9</a>)</p> <p>Building setbacks shall be in accordance with the City of Salem Zoning Ordinance.</p> <p><b>Infill buildings</b> shall continue patterns of setbacks and street edge treatments of adjacent existing properties and maintain the continuity of existing patterns of use.</p> <p><b>Where discrepancies between zoning and existing setback patterns</b> may occur, the DRB shall review design proposals with the proponent to balance the two requirements. A variance from the City would also be required.</p>	 <p align="center">Figure 3.2 Building Setbacks</p>

### 3. Building Orientation ([SDRP pg 3-9](#))

Buildings shall be oriented with the primary building façade(s) facing the primary street frontage(s) of the site.

Building massing and façades shall be designed to frame streets and public spaces to provide a sense of spatial enclosure and to define street edges.

Building entrances, storefronts and windows shall be oriented to the primary streets with transparency to streets and public spaces.



Figure 3.3 Building Orientation – Frame and address streets and public spaces

### 4. Streetwall Continuity ([SDRP pg 3-9](#))

The blocks of structures that line the street and define the visual limits of the street are known as a streetwall.

On those streets in the Project Area with a continuous streetwall, every revitalization project undertaken shall maintain and reinforce that streetwall continuity, resulting in infill buildings and rehabilitation that respects and continues existing street setbacks and concealed parking areas at the rear of the site.

Redevelopment of empty blocks shall introduce a streetwall, create an open green space, or accomplish both.

Taken from [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 24

#### **Street wall continuity**

*In retail areas, shops are set along the back of sidewalks with common walls and no gaps. Introducing large gaps between structures can discourage shoppers by depriving pedestrians of storefronts displays.*

*Maintaining the same scale and proportion of structures helps to unify the appearance of the street. Fences and driveways can impact the primarily green environment if not sufficiently controlled.*

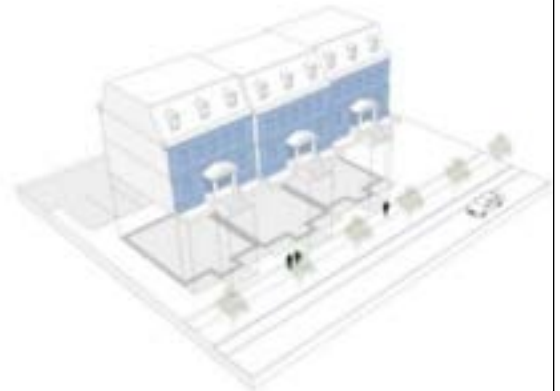


Figure 3.4 Streetwall Continuity – Maintain and contribute to consistency

## 5. Street Corners [\(SDRP pg 3-9\)](#)

Corner sites within the Project Area are of particular importance with the ability to define two street edges and an intersection.

Revitalization efforts **located at a corner site** shall be oriented and configured to define both the street edges and the corner of the site.

**The corner** may be defined positively by placing the building with built edges at the corner or negatively by framing an open space at the corner with built edges setback from the corner and the provision of a landscaped plaza or other appropriate surface treatment.

*In this context, 'positive' and 'negative' are design terms that refer to the presence, or absence, of a physical structure in a space.*

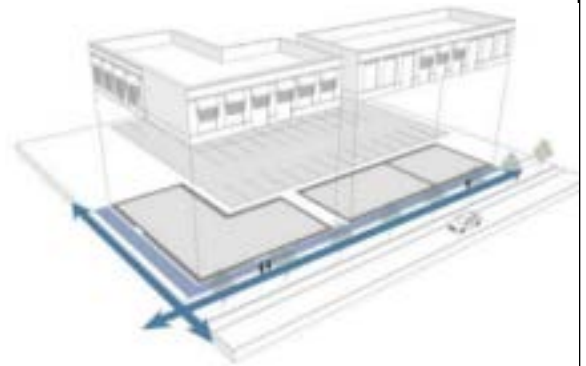


Figure 3.5 Street Corner – Acknowledge corner sites and multiple frontages

## 6. Design Treatment of Edges [\(SDRP pg 3-10\)](#)

**Buildings that are not physically adjoined to abutters** shall treat side yards and the spaces between buildings in a manner consistent with existing patterns of use, in terms of setbacks and use.

**Landscaping** shall be used to define street edges and to buffer and screen edges that may have a negative visual impact, such as parking or loading areas.

**Access driveways and curb cuts** using side yards may be combined between adjoining properties to access parking for multiple buildings at the interior of the block.



Figure 3.6 Design Treatment of Edges – Reinforce positive views and screen negative views

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### B. Building Massing and Form

Text taken from Downtown Renewal Plan

#### 1. Relationship to Existing Context [\(SDRP pg 3-10\)](#)

Building massing, form and scale shall be complementary to and respectful of the patterns of existing buildings in the immediate vicinity.

## **2. Building Form** ([SDRP pg 3-10](#))

The shape and massing of new and renovated buildings shall provide a balance among building height, story-height, building width and block width.

The shape and massing of the building shall complement the abutting structures and define the edges of streets and open spaces.

The building form and massing shall use the techniques described herein to reduce the impact of large uninterrupted building masses and façades and to create building forms that are human-scaled.

Elements that may help to relate building massing proportionally to the size of the human body shall include: articulated building bases through a change in material or color; placement of windows in a regular pattern; use of materials that are made of smaller human-scaled modules; articulation of building entries with canopies, porches or awnings, façade and roof projections (such as bay windows or dormers); and [building height stepbacks](#).

## **3. Scale** ([SDRP pg 3-10](#))

The scale of proposed revitalizations shall be compatible with the surrounding architecture and landscape context.

Large scale developments or buildings shall be reduced in overall impact by providing variation in building massing.

The configuration of architectural components shall be composed to reduce the overall scale of buildings to relate to a human-scale.

Elements that may help to relate building massing proportionally to the size of the human body shall include: articulated building bases through a change in material or color; placement of windows in a regular pattern; use of materials that are made of smaller human-scaled modules; articulation of building entries with canopies, porches or awnings, façade and roof projections (such as bay windows or dormers); and [building height stepbacks](#).

## **4. Proportion** ([SDRP pg 3-11](#))

The proportions of building elements shall be generally compatible with existing structures and the features and components of the façade.

## **5. Height** ([SDRP pg 3-11](#))

Building heights shall be in accordance with the City of Salem Zoning Ordinance. [See Zoning chart, 70 ft]

**Infill buildings** shall continue the patterns of height of adjacent existing properties.

Where the discrepancy between the proposed height and existing height patterns is greater than ten feet, the DRB shall review design proposals with the proponent for context sensitivity based upon the following: building height stepbacks; articulation of façade; building mass, scale, bulk and proportion; or other building massing considerations.

Taken from: [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 26

### **Building Height**

*The best way to fit into a district is to match the height of existing adjacent structures and line up cornices and floor heights.*

## **6. Building Height Stepbacks (SDRP pg 3-11)**

A height stepback shall be used to match the height of adjacent buildings of a lower height than the proposed structure with a break in the building massing and building stepback at that height.

The step back shall be a minimum of ten feet.

The remaining allowable building height shall be allowed above this cornice/parapet line. The stepback reduces the visual effect of the additional height as viewed from the street and maintains continuity of the existing street wall.

From [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg26:  
*If a few additional stories are...permitted, setbacks of the upper floors can effectively shield the added height from most street level pedestrians.*

*In cases where extreme differences in heights and density are considered relative to neighboring development, masking taller buildings with lower scaled buildings along the edges of the site can effectively screen the taller development.*

*Oftentimes the terms 'setbacks' and 'stepbacks' are used interchangeably.*



Figure 3.7 Building Height Stepbacks

## **7. Façade Length and Articulation (SDRP pg 3-11)**

Buildings or portions of a building with wide façades shall be divided into smaller parts through the pronounced variation in the primary wall plane.

Façade length shall be articulated at least every fifty feet, or at a shorter length compatible with buildings in the immediate vicinity.

This may be accomplished through the division of the building façade into smaller parts, variation in the cornice or roofline, or projections or recessions in the building façade.



Figure 3.8 Façade Length and Articulation

## **8. Modulation of Building Mass, Scale and Bulk**

[\(SDRP pg 3-11\)](#)

Large building masses and volumes shall be reduced in scale and bulk by varying architectural form. By creating variations in roof form, cornice and roofline, treatment of corners and interruption of façade lengths, large building masses can be reduced to be more compatible with the Project Area.



Figure 3.9 Modulation of Building Mass, Scale and Bulk

## **9. Building Massing at Street Corners** [\(SDRP pg 3-12\)](#)

Building massing at street corners shall acknowledge and address the street corner. The building shall be oriented and configured to define both street edges and massing. Architectural definition of the street corner shall be a recognizable component of the building design.

Further discussion of architectural and landscape treatments at street corners can be found under [A.5. Street Corners](#)

## **10. Building Roofs** [\(SDRP pg 3-12\)](#)

Building roofs that are visible from the street shall be composed of materials compatible with the Project Area (for example slate or composite shingle roofing materials).

Roofing materials shall not call undue attention to the roof itself with bright or contrasting colors, unless historically documented. Large, unbroken expanses of roof shall be articulated at least every one hundred feet, or at a shorter length compatible with adjacent or facing buildings, by interrupting the cornice or roofline, providing variation in roof form, or architectural components (for example a series of dormers or skylights).

Building mechanical equipment located on building roofs, sites, or other locations shall be screened from view from the street.

## C. Building Façades

Text taken from Salem Downtown Renewal Plan

### **1. Façade Design and Relationship to Existing Context** ([SDRP pg 3-12](#))

The façade, or primary building elevation, of new construction **shall be compatible with the façade design of neighboring buildings so as to create continuity** across projects and the street edge...and shall be sensitive to the existing context of building façades along that street.

Building façades facing the street shall have at **least 25% of the overall façade in transparent windows** and at least **40% of the ground floor façade** in transparent windows.

From [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 12

*“Successful commercial districts strive to retain and **replace missing buildings with compatible replacements that maintain the continuity of elements**. Buildings that fail to have these essential elements erode the cohesive quality of the street.”*

### **2. Architectural Treatments** include, but are not limited to, trim around entrances, corners, eaves, doors and windows; exterior cladding materials; and roof type. ([SDRP pg 3-12](#))

These components shall be coordinated to be **compatible with the character of the existing buildings** in the immediate vicinity of the Project Area and **to reinforce the human-scaled aspects of the building design**.

### **3. Proportion and Pattern of Windows** ([SDRP pg 3-13](#))

Original window patterns and openings shall be preserved or restored, including conservation and repair to preserve historical details, in the redevelopment of existing structures.

New construction shall acknowledge and respond to existing adjacent window patterns in proportion, scale, rhythm and number of openings.

From [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 12

*Unless the building is a single story, a regular system of windows and wall panels makes up the upper floors of any façade.*

#### **4. Placement and Treatment of Entries** ([SDRP pg 3-13](#))

Entrances shall be oriented to the primary street frontage and address the street with an active and welcoming entry.

Read more in the [Downtown Renewal Plan page 3-13](#).

From [City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 14  
**Recessed Store Entrances**

*In most retail areas, shop doors are located within recessed entrances set back from the sidewalk. This provides sheltered areas that protect customers from weather and prevent doors from swinging into sidewalks. Recessed entries protect doors from weather and increase the display window areas for visibility.*

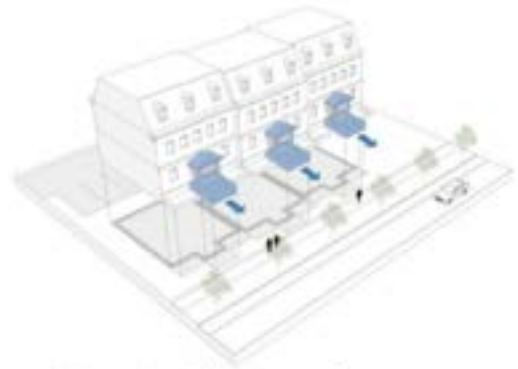


Figure 3.10 Placement and Treatment of Entries

#### **5. Ground Level Articulation** ([SDRP pg 3-13](#))

The building façade shall clearly define commercial ground floor space and differentiate the articulation of the ground floor from the residential or mixed-use space on the building stories above.

Ground level façades in non-commercial buildings shall be articulated in such a way that they are visually compatible with adjacent commercial storefronts and maintain an active and inviting street level façade.

Articulation of the ground level of a building shall be used to visually anchor the base of the building on the site and to define a human-scaled base at the primary street frontage.

Glass shall be used in storefronts to maintain transparency and an active and interesting ground level at the street.



Figure 3.11 Ground Level Articulation

#### **6. Façade Projections** ([SDRP pg 3-13](#))

Façade projections, depressions or changes in direction of the primary building plane shall be limited to ten feet and restricted to the setbacks required by the [City of Salem Zoning Ordinance](#).

## 7. Roof Parapet and Cornice Lines *(SDRP pg 3-14)*

Building cornice lines shall be maintained, preserved or recreated to define building façades and create façade components consistent with historic parapet or cornice lines as originally designed and built in the Project Area.

Refer to [B.6. Building Height Stepbacks](#) and [B.7. Façade Length and Articulation](#) for additional treatment of roof parapet and cornice lines.



Figure 3.12 Façade Projections



Figure 3.13 Roof Parapet and Cornice Lines

## 8. Building Materials *(SDRP pg 3-14)*

Building materials shall be selected to be compatible with or complementary to the surrounding context.

Materials on the façade that are subject to deterioration (plywood or plastic) shall be avoided or removed and replaced.

## 9-10 Signage and Multi-Tenant Signage [\(SDRP pg 3-14\)](#)

See Downtown Renewal Plan page 3-14 for more information. See also, [City of Salem Sign Ordinance](#), Sec. 4-47, [SRA Sign Manual](#) and [Commercial Design Manual](#), pg18.

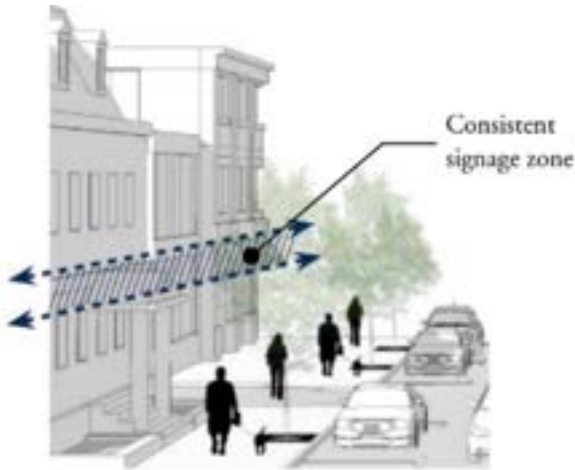


Figure 3.14 Signage

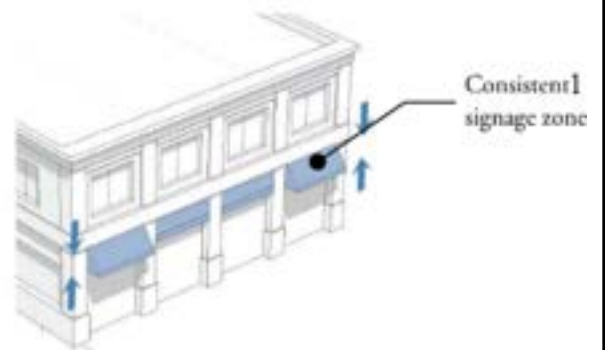


Figure 3.15 Multi-Tenant Signage

See [Commercial Design Guidelines](#), pg 18

## 11. Awnings [\(SDRP pg 3-14\)](#)

See [Downtown Renewal Plan](#) page 3-14 for more information. See also: [Commercial Design Guidelines](#) pg 16.

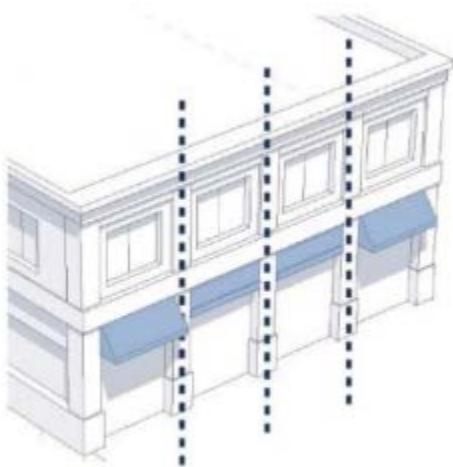
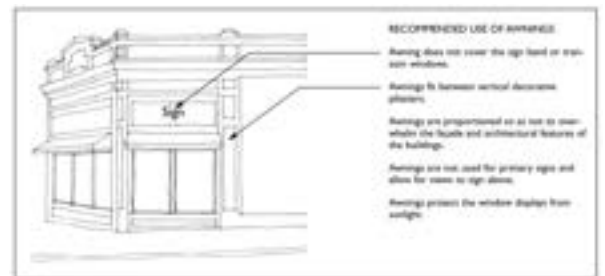


Figure 3.16 Awnings



From [Commercial Design Guidelines - Signs](#) pg16.

## **D. Public and Private Open Spaces**

### **1. Relation to Surrounding Public Spaces** [\(SDRP pg 3-15\)](#)

Proposed and existing buildings and properties adjacent to public open spaces shall be oriented to define the edges of those open spaces and provide a transparent ground floor to activate the public space. Building façades facing the open space shall have at least 25% of the overall façade in transparent windows and at least 40% of the ground floor façade in transparent windows. Refer to Figure 3.17.



Figure 3.17 Relation to Surrounding Public Spaces

### **2. Private Use of Public Spaces** [\(SDRP pg 3-15\)](#)

Private use and design of public spaces under municipal, state or federal ownership shall be approved by the SRA, conform to other applicable standards and ordinances and be subject to any other municipal approvals as applicable. Generally, public spaces shall be reserved for public uses. Sidewalk use for temporary displays, kiosks, etc. shall be coordinated with and approved by the SRA, conform to other applicable standards and ordinances and be subject to any other municipal approvals as applicable. Clearance and access required for public circulation shall be maintained at all times.

### **3. Site Details** [\(SDRP pg 3-15\)](#)

Public and private open spaces shall be designed, landscaped, and furnished to be compatible with or complementary to the character of the district in which they are located. Public art shall be used to define and punctuate public spaces. All art installations shall maintain clearances in public spaces, and be constructed of materials that are durable, easily maintained and that do not present safety hazards.

### **4. Open Space** [\(SDRP pg 3-15\)](#)

Underutilized or vacant space within the Project Area shall be considered for landscape installations or to be used as a public pocket park. Such improvements to vacant parcels can have a dramatic impact on the impression of the Project Area.

## E. Landscape

### **1. Landscape Use and Orientation** ([SDRP pg 3-15/16](#))

Site, block and building orientation and configuration shall use landscape features to shield negative views, define edges and frame streets and public spaces. No plantings shall obscure site entrances and exit drives, access ways, or road intersections or impair visibility of commercial storefronts. Tree species shall be selected to maintain relatively clear views of the ground floor and adequate height clearances for sidewalk circulation. Site and landscape features shall be integrated with the design of new construction and reflect a coordinated site and building design. Landscaping shall be used to reinforce human-scaled elements of the building and site and to create outdoor spaces that are scaled comfortably for people.

### **2. Site and Street Edges** ([SDRP pg 3-16](#))

Landscape strips with street trees, street trees in sidewalk tree wells or landscaped medians shall be used as is consistent with the existing landscape patterns of the location of proposed improvements. Landscaping shall be used to define the street edge if the existing pattern of building placement includes a front setback. Refer to Figure 3.18.



Figure 3.18 Landscape Site and Street Edges

### **3. Buffers and Screens** ([SDRP pg 3-16](#))

Landscape buffers shall be used to screen parking, loading and service areas that may be visible from public streets or open spaces. All views that could be associated with a negative impact should be screened with strategically selected and located landscape features. Screening may include architectural walls, fences or other visual barriers. Refer to Figure 3.19.



Figure 3.19 Landscape Buffers and Screens

### **4. Trees and Plantings** ([SDRP pg 3-16](#))

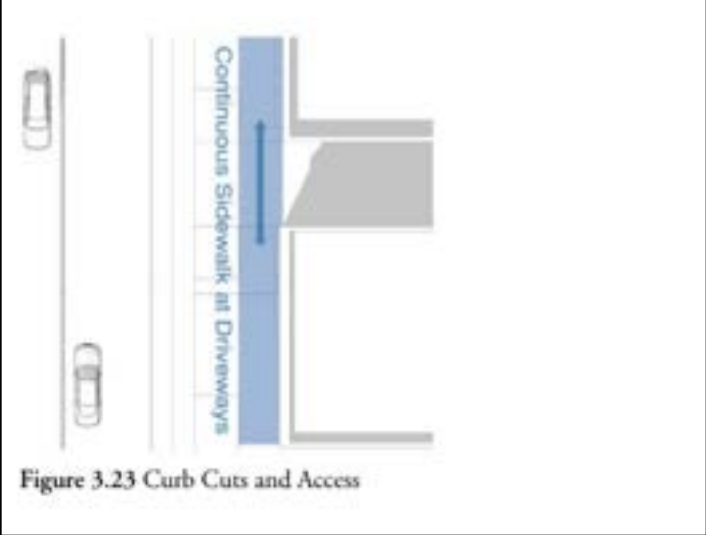
Trees, shrubs, and groundcover shall be selected to be appropriate to the conditions of a particular site and the climate of Salem. Street tree species selection shall ensure compatibility with neighboring conditions so as to ensure continuity of the street edge and public realm identity.

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**F. Parking**

See [Downtown Renewal Plan page 3-16 and 3-17](#) for discussion of:  
1. Parking Placement, 2. Parking Orientation, 3. Structured Parking, 4. Parking Landscape, 5. Landscaping of Pre-existing Parking Lots, 6. Curb Cuts, 7. Parking Details (including use of granite curbs).

Diagrams taken from Downtown Renewal Plan



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## G. Guidelines for Historic Buildings

“For buildings that were constructed at least 50 years prior to the date of application for Design Review, the basis of DRB review and SRA approval or findings shall be the:

[Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1995](#)

[\(Here are the c2017 guidelines\)](#)

[Salem Historical Commission Guidelines](#)

...both of these documents will serve as guidelines (not standards).” [\(SDRP pg. 3-4\)](#)

### The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

Guidelines used by the SRA are from 1995, here are links to the current c2017 requirements:

[Preservation](#) focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

[Rehabilitation](#) acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

[Restoration](#) depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

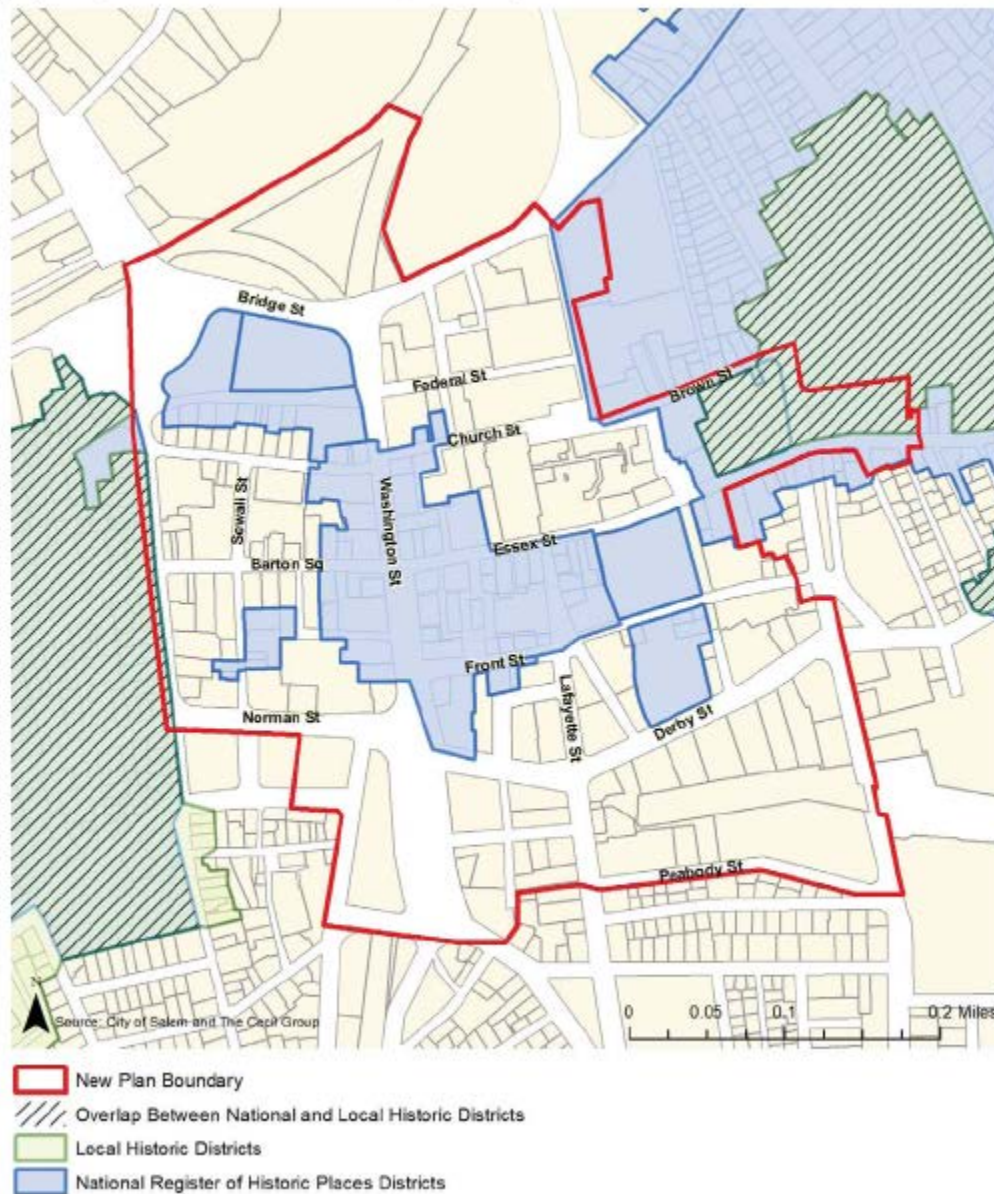
[Reconstruction](#) re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

### Demolition Review [\(SDRP pg. 3-6\)](#)

Demolition proposals are subject to the Design Review process by the SRA. The SRA has the right to prohibit demolition if the proposed demolition is determined to have a negative impact on the Project Area. Proponents may apply for permission to demolish a building or portions of a building in a state of disrepair which represents a health, safety and welfare issue in the Project Area as an appropriate means to revitalization. Partial demolition of a building to preserve a sound portion of that building may be acceptable. However, building elements that contribute to the character of the district, such as chimneys, should be restored or rehabilitated. A new structure or open space shall be developed in the location of demolition immediately after demolition occurs. No vacant lots created through new demolition shall be left untended in the Project Area. As part of its review process, the SRA may require the preparation of independent professional evaluations of pertinent conditions.

## Local Historic and National Register Districts [\(SDRP pg.1-13\)](#)

Figure 1.5: Local Historic District and National Register Districts



## Guidelines, Ordinances and Applicable Regulations include:

[City of Salem Zoning Ordinance](#)

[\(Key Zoning Guidelines\)](#)

[City of Salem Sign Ordinance](#)

[Salem Redevelopment Authority Sign Manual](#)

[Building Code](#)

[City of Salem Commercial Design Guidelines](#)

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## H. Compliance Alternatives [\(SDRP pg 3-5\)](#)

“This approval method does not apply to buildings constructed at least 50 years prior to the date of application...” You can find those [here](#).

“Projects for which the Design Standards are the basis of Design Review may also be approved if they provide design solutions that vary from the Design Standards, but meet the broader objectives of the Salem Downtown Renewal Plan...The SRA, with input from the DRB, must determine that the proposed Compliance Alternative meets the applicable Design Criteria. The SRA and the project proponent must both agree to the alternative approach.

As part of any approval of a Compliance Alternative, the SRA must provide a written determination and finding that the alternative approach meets the requirements of the [Design Criteria](#). Such determination should state the applicable standard(s), the reason for granting an alternative, the applicable Design Criteria, and how the alternative meets the Design Criteria.”

**Design Criteria** “...will be the basis for review and decisions regarding proposed Compliance Alternatives.” [\(SDRP pg 3-5\)](#)

1. Revitalization approaches shall be used selectively as is most beneficial to achieve the Plan's objectives. Development and redevelopment proposals shall consider the full range of revitalization approaches available and justify the approach undertaken.
2. Buildings and sites shall be designed to define and activate adjacent street edges, open spaces and public spaces through the placement of the building on the site, location and configuration of entrances and active ground floor uses.
3. Building façades shall be designed to provide a consistent and legible organization of uses that address street frontage(s), identify entrance(s), and create an active and visually interesting ground floor.
4. Building massing and form shall ensure the preservation and enhancement of historic and architectural assets through context sensitive design.
5. Building façade elements shall contribute to human-scaled streets and public spaces by articulating ground floor levels with architectural components that relate to the scale of a human.
6. Parking and landscape shall provide unobtrusive parking and loading areas, appropriately screened to blend with the historic character of the area.
7. Public and private open spaces shall provide for the proper allocation and dimensioning of open space in relation to new buildings and existing buildings which remain.
8. Streetscape and sidewalks shall be designed to enhance circulation and provide a pleasant environment for multiple modes of travel that will anchor the historical and walkable core of an urban downtown environment.
9. Lighting shall be designed to create a functional and comfortable night environment that reinforces the active use of sites and buildings.
10. No Design Standard shall be interpreted in a manner that would adversely impact the historic character, historic design integrity or historic quality of existing buildings.

# Zoning Guidelines

*These zoning guidelines regulate the Plan Boundary and limits the size and scale of any proposed building and associated parking within the Boundary Area.*

TABLE OF B5 DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

	Nonresidential Uses – Existing Building	Nonresidential Uses – New Construction	Residential Uses or Mixed Use – Existing Buildings; See note 1	Residential Uses or Mixed Use – New Construction; See note 1
Minimum lot area (square feet)	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Minimum lot area per dwelling unit (square feet)	-	-	-	500
Minimum lot width (feet)	30	30	30	30
Maximum lot coverage by all buildings (percent)	100	50	100	50
Minimum width of side yard (feet)	-	5	-	5
Maximum height of buildings (feet)	70	70	70	70
Maximum height of buildings (stories)	6	6	6	6
Maximum height of fences and bordering walls	10	10	6	6
Minimum distance between buildings if more than 1 on a lot	See note 2	See note 2	See note 2	See note 2
Floor area ratio	6 to 1	3 to 1; See note 3	36 to 1	3 to 1

NOTES

1. Where residential use comprises twenty-five (25) percent or less of the total building area, the regulations for nonresidential uses shall apply.
2. Distance shall be equal to the height of the taller building. This distance may be reduced to a distance which is sufficient to provide adequate light, air and access, subject to the approval of the Planning Board. There shall be no requirement for individual row houses sharing a party wall.
3. May be increased up to 6 to 1 for the buildings predominantly characterized as fifty (50%) percent open automobile parking structures.

Source: *City of Salem Zoning Ordinance*, September 10, 2009

[\(SDRP pg. 1-9\)](#)

Salem Downtown Renewal Plan, B5, Boundary, ([SDRP pg 1-3](#))

Figure 1.1: Salem Downtown Renewal Plan: New Plan Boundary



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