

The FEDERALIST

The Federal Street Neighborhood Association is a registered, non-profit group which serves the residents of the Federal Street Neighborhood

Vol. 5 September 2002

Cooperation between neighborhoods and developer results in better design

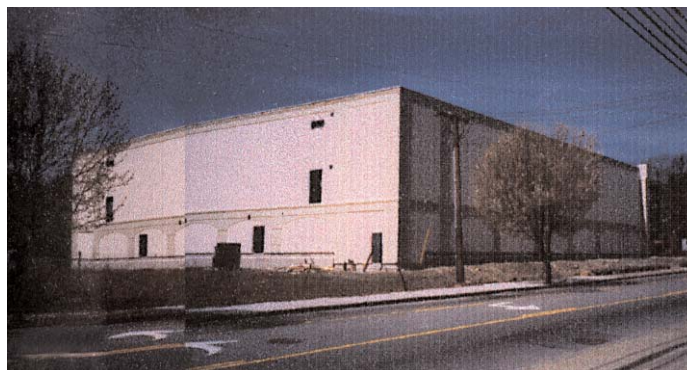
By David Hart

The development of the Public Storage facility on Bridge Street is an illustration of the concept that the willingness of a developer to accommodate neighborhood concerns results in a better design for Salem. When the developer of Public Storage, Inc., a large corporation with hundreds of facilities scattered across the United States, approached the City in early spring of 2001 with a proposal to build a facility on Bridge Street, they were advised to first contact the local neighborhood groups for input. The Mayor's office, Planning Department and City Counselors Lenny O'Leary and Regina Flynn all told the developer that they should consult with the local groups before formally presenting their plans.

Specifically, the developer was considering a parcel of land at the corner of Bridge Street and Goodhue Streets – the parcel was zoned for "Business Park Development" – and the proposal for a storage facility was apparently a "use by right" within the zoning definition. The location is very



Above, the self-storage building planned for the corner of Bridge and Goodhue streets has windows, column details and brick, more in tune with our local architecture. The design is the result of neighborhood vigilance. Why is this vigilance relevant? A look (below) at the facility built this spring in Waltham, presumably one of the "standard designs," requires no further explanation.



prominent as it sits on a major entrance corridor to Salem.

In April 2001 the developer approached the Gallow's Hill and Federal Street Neighborhood groups. The reaction to the presentation was that the colors were too garish, and the building, set back from the street at 50

feet, was too far from the street, and allowed parking at the street and side lot. It did not fit into the urban context of closeness to street; it was looking like a suburban type building. The developer's explanation was that this was a standard design that the company used

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SPECIAL EVENTS

FSNA Meeting set for tomorrow night!

The next meeting of the Federal Street Neighborhood Association is scheduled for 7:30 at the Grace Church, Essex St. We hope you can make the meeting and apologize for the short notice.

FSNA yard sale set for the 21st

The yard sale to benefit the many FSNA projects will be held Saturday, Sept. 21, at Pat Durkee's garage (25 Beckford Street.) So get those irresistible items packed up! Jane Arlander, Jane Stauffer, Rita Markunas and Stan Szwartz can help people who need to move their "stuff" to Pat Durkee's garage on the special drop-off date of Wednesday 9/18 between 5 and 7 pm. People can call Rita at (978) 745-9867 if they would like to contribute or help out in any way.

Toot your horn

Let your neighbors know who you are by advertising your business, skills or service in this neighborhood newsletter. Contact Stan Szwartz, *The Federalist* editor, at szwartz@us.ibm.com

Neighborhood vigilance results in better design

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across the country.

The use of the parcel was also discussed, as many people felt that the city deserved better than a self-storage facility in such a prominent location within an entrance corridor. However, it was acknowledged that the use was "by right," and efforts to persuade the developer to move the facility to a more appropriate site (such as Swampscott Road) later proved to be futile.

The developer listened to the concerns and presented a new rendering in May of 2001, which showed the building with new subdued colors. While the new colors were better than the originals, there were still issues regarding set backs and "breaking up the façade" with materials, penetrations, etc. At this point Historic Salem also became involved and made recommendations regarding the appearance and siting of the facility, and also provided a meeting forum for representatives of the parties concerned.

Further work was done on the part

of the developer, including the hiring of regionally located architect and engineers to enhance the design. In November 2001, the developer, architect and site engineer presented the latest design. This design addressed four issues:

1. Moved the building up to the lot line on Bridge Street. (Since the moving of the building up to the street violated the zoning for the parcel (a 50-foot setback was required) the developer had to later obtain a zoning variance from the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals).

2. Moved the loading activity to the rear, away from the street and side of the building.

3. Modified the exterior to emulate an industrial look, and added brick and split faced concrete block to the majority of the facade.

4. Moved the lights off the building facade and designed them to be on the site itself.

At this meeting the newly elected Counselor Ward 6, Michael Bencal, reiterated the concerns of some of his constituents.

At a meeting held December 3,

2001 the developers met with the neighborhood groups and HSI and presented elevations that modified the windows to make more "openings", and a three story look with heavy cornices and belt courses. The only concern not addressed was the garish colors of the sign (which the Planning Board also objected to, to no avail).

In December 2001 the ZBA granted a dimensional variance to allow a set back closer to the street. In January 2002 the Planning Board approved the project. Representatives of the neighborhoods, HSI and City Councilors supported the project at both public hearings.

We understand that an adjacent property owner challenged the issuance of a variance as of February 2002. After negotiations with the adjacent owner, the parties evidently reached a compromise, which resulted in a minor change in the site configuration. The Planning Board approved this in June 2002. The remaining issue is the environmental considerations that apply to the site; contamination, if any, will have to be mitigated.

PEM exhibit of French maritime art

— C'est magnifique!

by Michaeline Laroche

The "Rendezvous with the Sea" exhibit at the Peabody Essex Museum is truly a delight! This showing of the French maritime art and culture includes exceptional artwork, navigational artifacts, ship-construction devices, and a large variety of ship models.

The marvelous 1800s oil paintings, in extravagant frames, bring you back in time with their "huge" depictions of

celebration and battleship scenes. Amazingly intricate ship models of all sizes — made from wood, copper, and bronze — are a great show of the difficult workmanship that went into building these glorious, hand-carved ships. Some of the other artifacts include medical kits, uniforms, old navigational tools etc.

This wonderful collection is one to admire and reflect upon especially as a Salemite. I would give a rating of a 10!



A gilded, carved figurehead, an example of the fine craftsmanship on view in PEM's latest exhibition.

Congratulations are in order

We have three new baby girls in our neighborhood!

Baby Caroline has blessed the lives of Meg and Mark Dufour, 4 Federal Court; Rob and Susan Haywood, 20 Beckford St., are the new proud parents of Baby Willa Grace; and Baby Isabel has been born to Brenda and Adam Schultz, 105 Federal St.

Best wishes to all!