



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT

Site: 381 Summer Street, Rosebud Diner (c. 1940)
Case: HPC 2014.018
Applicant Name: Rosebud Restaurant Inc.
Applicant Address: 219 Elm Street, Somerville, MA02144

Date of Application: March 25, 2014
Legal Notice: Revise ADA access
Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: April 15, 2014

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Architectural Description: The Rosebud is a fine example of a streamlined diner produced by Worcester Lunch Car Company. The structure is 8 bays wide and 3 to 4 bays deep. Stylistically it resembles a traditional rail car diner form with a monitor roof and band of clerestory windows. The sloped end walls are considered character-defining features of the modern semi-streamliner form. It has a steel frame, a brick foundation, black porcelain enamel wall panels, and a metal roof. Small entries



381 Summer Street, 2002 photo

are located in the narrow ends of the diner.

Windows have leaded glass in the transoms

above the single-hung metal sash. There are fluted stainless steel jambs between the windows and at the rounded

corners. The clerestory windows incorporate some colored glass, mostly visible on the interior. The prefabricated diner is attached at the rear to Jaunty Jack's, a one-story, side-gabled building (constructed in 1939) with brick veneer walls and two exterior end-wall chimneys and blinded windows. A much larger one-story, flat-roofed rear addition (ca. 1960s) also of covered with brick veneer, sits on the rest of the lot. Both the side-gabled building and the rear addition are visually subservient to the diner.

There are several different signs from the painted signage on the metal panels to the lit neon on the roof. According to the National Register nomination form "The porcelain enamel panels read *Rosebud* in Gothic lettering and *Booth Service* at either end. Somerville artist Albert Lenoir may have executed the pink roses painted onto the panels. Mounted on the roof is a pink neon sign bearing the diner name in cursive lettering, resting on an internally lit box sign that reads *Est. 1941 – Food & Spirits – Est. 1941*. There also is a noncontributing standing sign (ca. 1960s) on

the sidewalk, consisting of a box sign in a neo-colonial frame and an arrow pointing to the entrance of the former alehouse and grill in the rear addition.”

Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel: The Rosebud is located at the east end of the Davis Square commercial area in Cutter Square. It is surrounded by predominantly 1-story commercial buildings to the west, with one very recent 4-story building immediately adjacent to the east; and 2 and 3 family homes to the rear. There are also 2 gas or service stations converted to restaurant use and 2 bank buildings in the near vicinity.

The original restaurant, Jaunty Jack's was in business from approximately 1939-1941 and owned by Charles Gow. It advertized itself as a modern snack bar open for 24 hours. In the early 1940s, Charles Peveloris brought in the Worcester Diner and named it the Rosebud. He ran the business until 1958 when the Nichols Family bought it and ran it until recently. According to the National Register Nomination Form, it is only one of 7 such diners left.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant is undertaking extensive renovations and alterations to the buildings. The exterior of the Rosebud will be fully restored. Blinded windows on the core building will be re-opened. Exits on the west side of the rear building will be redone to allow for access to a deck with portico for outdoor seating. The interior spaces from the original small building to the addition of the Rosebud and the large function room at the rear will be rationalized to work as a modern restaurant. The Rosebud will have new booths and seating areas. The kitchen, bathroom and service areas will be relocated and brought up to modern code. New signage will not alter the form or configuration of the current historic Rosebud signs.

Proposal of Alteration:

Replace non-compliant ADA ramp with a compliant ADA ramp that has a shallower slope, ending at a wheel chair lift, within a covered area and enclosed porch. See photos.

II. FINDINGS

Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

1996.006	Nicholas Evangelos	C/A	1) Replace existing aluminum double door on the east side of the rear addition with a new single door with sidelight; 2) Move existing door on the southwest corner of the addition approximately 4' towards Summer Street and infill opening with block to match existing; and 3) Replace existing double door on the northwest corner of the addition with a new single door and infill opening to match existing.
1996.025	Nicholas Evangelos	C/NA	Repair exterior and replace in-kind when necessary.
1996.025	Nicholas Evangelos	C/A	Replace existing entrance doors with new wood, steel, and glass reproduction doors identical to original 1940's design.
1997.036	Nicholas Evangelos	C/A	1. Removal of the masonry curtain wall along the east (Cutter Avenue) facade of the Rosebud Diner for the purpose of restoring the facade to its original 1941 appearance through the completion of the following exterior changes that have also received Certificates of Appropriateness. 2. The installation on the east (Cutter Avenue) facade of replicated porcelain panels to match in size, shape, color, material, and detail the porcelain panels originally in place at the same location of the structure at the time of the diners placement on the site in 1941 and currently found on the south (Summer Street) facade of the diner. 3. The re-installation of two (2) original window units (including main sashes, and any and all component transoms, stained glass, etc.) in their original positions in the east (Cutter Avenue) facade of the diner.

4. The installation on the east (Cutter Avenue) facade of a replicated cornice to match in size, shape, color, material, and detail the cornice that runs along the south (Summer Street) facade of the diner.

2011.080 Nicholas C/NA 1. Restore and repair pole sign and other existing signage.
Evangelos

Precedence:

Are there similar properties / proposals?

- The Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness in 2012 to alter the side porch on the Somerville Museum to allow for the installation of a chairlift. The design was consistent with the architecture of the building.

Considerations:

What is the visibility of the proposal?

- Walking west along Summer Street, the new entry to the chairlift will be visible from the public right of way.

What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?

- A steep ramp leads to a brick herring-bone patterned landing just behind the diner then 2 steps up to an entry landing to the back modern portion of the building. See photos.

Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?

GENERAL APPROACH

The primary purpose of Somerville's Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Somerville's Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the City's architectural heritage. The following guidelines ensure that rehabilitation efforts, alterations, and new construction all respect the design fabric of the districts and do not adversely effect their present architectural integrity.

- A. *The design approach to each property should begin with the premise that the features of historic and architectural significance described in the Study Committee report must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.*

The ramp was constructed sometime between 2002 and the present. It does not appear on the Form B or the National Register Nomination Form.

- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*

This is not historic material. The ramp will be constructed at a shallower pitch than the existing. The lift and doors will be new. The diner will be repaired with in-kind materials where necessary.

- D. *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*

There will be no replacement of architectural features beyond those necessary to restore the diner and other portions of the building. There will be no change to the rear entry roof shelter.

- E. *Whenever possible, new materials should match the material being replaced with respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.*

The ramp will be constructed with concrete. The landing area will lead to a new door to the chairlift set into the rear building.

- F. *The Commission will give design review priority to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or those portions which it can be reasonably inferred may be visible in the future.*

The ramp, landing stairs and doors will be visible from the public right of way.

Windows and Doors

1. *Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.*

The new door will be inserted into the wall of the 1960s portion of the building. The diner doors will be repaired or replaced in-kind as needed.

2. *Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, sill, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware.*

No important window or door elements will be removed or altered. Replacement materials where needed will match the historic fabric in material, form, color and shape. The new door and opening will be modern but not compete with the style of the diner.

Landscape Features and Paving

1. *The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*

There are no alterations to the essential landscape features.

4. *The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

There are no changes to the layout of the walkway to the rear building.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features of buildings and structures in the area, in accordance with the required findings that are considered by the Somerville Historic District Ordinance for a Historic District Certificate. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendation or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through more in depth research conducted during the public hearing process.

Staff determines that the alteration for which an application for a Historic Certificate has been filed is appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Rosebud Diner Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Rosebud Restaurant Inc. a Certificate of Appropriateness** for revisions to the ADA access with a new ramp, landing stairs and entry doors as shown on Sheet A-3.1 "Proposed Exterior Elevation" dated 3/12/2014 and Sheet A-1.0 "First Floor Construction Plan" dated 3/5/2014 at 381 Summer Street. A Certificate of Non-Applicability should be issued for the restoration and in-kind repairs of the diner.



