



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, MA 02144

Date of Application: April 30, 2014

Legal Notice: *Alterations to the Rosebud, Jaunty Jack and the Surrey Room including awnings, windows, handrails and doors.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: May 20, 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 are located in the narrow ends of the diner.



381 Summer Street, 2002 photo

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.” The pole sign was removed during sidewalk repairs and has not been

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:

1. *Replace wood door on east side of the Rosebud Diner to match the historic door on the west side.*
2. *Install a new service door on the western wall between the Jaunty Jack and Surrey Room to the exterior.*
3. *Remove hand rails on west side of Rosebud Diner.*
4. *Install new handrails to the reconstructed landing to the Surrey Room entry.*
5. *Remove awning on west side of Rosebud Diner*
6. *Install new awnings on side of the Rosebud Diner as seen in 1970 photograph.*
7. *Install barrel awning with signage on entry to the Surrey Room to the east of the Diner.*
8. *Restore and install replacement windows in the blinded window openings on the Jaunty Jack.*

The building consists of three sections with small alterations proposed for each one.

Rosebud Diner (1941)

The Applicant would like to replace the existing door on the east side of the Diner with one that matches to one on the west. The door will be inoperable due to the drop-off onto the access to the rear building. Neither door is original to the building. He would also like to remove the railings on the west side of the Diner where an unattached deck and pergola will be located. The deck and pergola will be constructed on the adjacent lot and overhang the corner of the property. Retractable awnings which overhang the street are shown in a circa 1970 photo of the building. The Applicant would like to reinstate them.

Considerations of the Commission:

1. *Replace wood door on east side of the Rosebud Diner to match the existing door on the west side.*
2. *Remove hand rails on west side of Rosebud Diner.*
3. *Remove awning on west side of Rosebud Diner.*
4. *Install new awnings on side of the Rosebud Diner as seen in 1970 photograph..*

See discussion below regarding awnings.

Jaunty Jack (1939)

The Applicant would like to re-open the windows that have been blinded on the west side and covered over on the east side of the building. These have been partially hidden by an extension on the side of the Rosebud. He proposes

to install 4/4 double-hung insulated tempered glass sash and new casings. He would also like install a new service door on the west side where the building joins with the Surrey Room.

Considerations of the Commission:

1. *Install a new service door on the western wall between the Jaunty Jack and Surrey Room to the exterior.*
2. *Restore and install replacement windows in the blinded window openings on the Jaunty Jack.*

Surrey Room (1963)

He would also like to install a barrel awning leading to the street with signage over the entry passage to the Surrey Room portion of the building next to the ADA access approved last month. He also needs to add new handrails to the entry stairs on that side of the building. See photos and plans.

Considerations of the Commission:

1. *Install new handrails to the reconstructed landing to the Surrey Room entry.*
2. *Install barrel awning with signage on entry to the Surrey Room to the east of the Diner.*

II. FINDINGS

Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

1996.006	Nicholas Evangelos	C/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Evangelos	C/NA	1. Restore and repair pole sign and other existing signage.
2014.018	Rosebud Restaurant Inc.	C/A, C/NA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existing ramp shall be removed and a new walkway to the entry at grade will be installed. 2. A new doorway allowing access to a wheel chair lift shall be constructed on the west side of the existing doorway to the rear addition as shown on First Floor Construction Plan A-1.0 dated 3/5/2014. 1. The baked porcelain enamel panels shall be removed, cleaned,

repaired and/or replicated 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 replaced in the same locations.

2. The panels shall be reinstalled with metal stainless steel trim work, fasteners, and joint molding to match in size, shape, color, material, and detail those found on the diner.
3. New flashing shall be installed as needed to match the existing.
4. The roof and wood cornice shall be painted.
5. The signage on the diner shall be cleaned and repaired as needed to match existing.
6. The foundation shall be repointed with mortar to match the existing in texture, hardness, point style.
7. Interior energy panels may be installed on the windows of the diner.
8. Lighting fixtures may also be installed.

Precedence:

Are there similar properties / proposals?

1. *Replace wood door on east side of the Rosebud Diner to match the door on the west side of the Diner.*
2. *Install a new service door on the western wall between the Jaunty Jack and Surrey Room to the exterior.*

There are only three diners in Somerville; two of them are designated as Local Historic Districts. Historically appropriate replacement doors were approved for the Rosebud in 1996 but were never constructed or installed. It is not known whether documentation was found regarding the historic appearance of the doors. New front doors on houses were granted Certificates of Appropriateness on 384 Washington Street (2001) and 23 Porter Street (2012).

New doors on the sides and rears of several buildings that were minimally visible from the public rights of way have also received Certificates of Appropriateness.

3. *Remove hand rails on west side of Rosebud Diner*
4. *Remove and install new handrails to the reconstructed landing to the Surrey Room entry.*

No Certificates were found for the removal of railings or handrails on either of the diners. There have been several cases of railing replacement on houses. Only one case of railing removal was found on a Greek Revival, 25 Russell Street (2003).

5. *Remove awning on west side of Rosebud Diner.*
6. *Install barrel awning with signage on entry to the Surrey Room to the east of the Diner.*
7. *Install new awnings on side of the Rosebud Diner as seen in 1970 photograph*

Certificates of Appropriateness were granted for the installation of rigid awnings with signage above the businesses at 58-68 Bow Street, 365-377 Somerville Avenue (2001). No Certificates were found for the removal or addition of barrel awnings. No Certificates were found for the removal or addition of awnings to either of the diners. ***It may be that awnings without signage fall under the list of appurtenances exempt from Commission review.*** There have been several cases of houses returned to an earlier condition based on photographs.

8. *Install replacement windows in the blinded window openings on the Jaunty Jack*

There have been several cases of houses returned to an earlier condition based on physical evidence. (See photos.)

Considerations:

What is the visibility of the proposal?

- All the proposed alterations are visible from Summer Street. Many of the changes are located between two properties, visible at an angle growing narrower with the depth of the lot on the west side of the building or from Summer Street as one walks from Cutter Square toward Davis Square.

What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?

- The door on the east side of the Diner appears to be a hollow core wood door. The door on the west is also wood but has an arched window that is reminiscent of the stream-lined esthetic of the Diner. Neither door is original.
- There are currently 2 service doors on the west side of the building toward the rear.
- The existing Jaunty Jack windows are 4/4 iron or steel double hung windows with a deep putty profile set within a metal casing. They are located behind an added ell to the diner and the chimney on the west side of the building and are covered by a woven white painted iron security screen.
- The hand rails on the entry to the west side of the diner appear to be from the late 20th century and are not original to the building. There are no handrails to the Surrey Room entry but they will be needed with the new steps that have been added as result of last month's approval of the ADA access alterations.
- The awning on the west is not part of the original building and serves as a shelter to the Diner entry.

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 original 1988 Form B for the Rosebud Diner is minimal and does not discuss the other sections of the building. The 1999 National Register Nomination Form which describes the diner in great detail states that the older and newer sections of the building are non-contributing as they are 'unobtrusive'.

- B. Changes and additions to the property and its environment that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected (LATER IMPORTANT FEATURES will be the term used hereafter to convey this concept).*

Since the time of these survey forms, more information has been found about the 1939 Jaunty Jack portion of the building. It was intended to be the flagship of a local chain according to a contemporary news article in the Somerville Journal. The 1961 Surrey Room is now more than 50 years old. While this section may not be of architectural merit as a concrete block structure, the Surrey Room has achieved a certain mythic quality in local lore for numerous illegal activities in 1960s-1970s.

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

The owner intends to replace wood door on east side of the Rosebud Diner to match the existing door on the west side. Neither door is historic. No photograph or documentation has been found of the original diner doors. New windows on the east side of the Jaunty Jack section would be similar to those found on the west. All windows would have tempered glass to meet building code. He would also like to install awnings along the sidewalk side of the Rosebud. This would require approval from the Board of Aldermen.

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

Some of the proposed alterations are based on physical and documentary evidence such as changes to the windows, and diner doors.

- 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 new windows and doors should match the existing windows and doors respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The proposed new awnings on the diner should be retractable with a similar mechanism to the original awnings and made of woven stuff. The proposed barrel awning with signage should also be constructed of woven fabric and mounted in such a way that the buildings are not obscured.

- 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.*

All the proposed alterations are visible from the public right of way.

C. 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.*

Original openings will be retained or re-opened. A new door opening on the west side is proposed for better circulation within the restaurant.

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. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence. If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.*

The existing 4/4 sash windows in the Jaunty Jack are iron. The replacement windows to be replicated on the east side of the building should be constructed with a similar sharp and deep putty line and casings.

D. Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements

1. *Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old. Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.*

The iron railings on the Diner are not original to the building and do not appear in the circa 1970 photographs of the building.

Exclusions. *The authority of the Commission shall not extend to the review of the following categories of buildings, structures or exterior architectural features of the historic district and, in this event, the buildings, structures or exterior architectural features so excluded may be constructed or altered within the historic district without review by the Commission:*

2. *storm doors and windows, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae, lawn statuary **and similar appurtenances**, or any one or more of them;*

There is discussion as to whether awnings are considered appurtenances or if they are character-defining features such as shutters. If so they considered appurtenances they are exempt from Commission review however since some of the proposed new awnings overhang the sidewalk they will still require approval from the Board of Aldermen.

3. *signs of one foot square or less in area in connection with use of a residence for a customary home occupation or for professional purposes, provided only one such sign is displayed in connection with each residence and if illuminated is illuminated only indirectly; and one sign in connection with the non-residential use of each building or structure which is not more than twelve square feet in area, is appropriately located and consists of letters and/or symbol or trademark compatible with the character of the area and if illuminated only indirectly; or either of them;*

One of the awnings proposed will have signage. As such, the total signage on the building s needs to be assessed. The new signage and awning may need to be approved by both the Commission and the Special Permit Granting Authority. There is insufficient information regarding the size, scale and materials of the signage.

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 a 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

1. Replace wood door on east side of the Rosebud Diner to match the existing door with angled arched window and etched glass on the west side as per plans A-3.2 dated 4/23/2014 by Souza Design Architects.
2. Install a new metal and glass service door as per plans A-3.2 dated 4/23/2014 by Souza Design Architects on the western wall between the Jaunty Jack and Surrey Room to the exterior.
3. Remove hand rails on west side of Rosebud Diner.
4. Install new handrails to the reconstructed landing to the Surrey Room entry as per plans A-3.2 dated 4/23/2014 by Souza Design Architects.
5. Remove red woven fabric awning on west side of Rosebud Diner as per plans A-3.1 dated 4/23/2014 by Souza Design Architects.
6. Install new black woven fabric awnings on side of the Rosebud Diner with the same structural framing and design as seen in 1970 photograph which includes the scallops on the condition that they are also approved by the Board of Aldermen.
7. Restore existing metal windows on west side and install replacement windows in the blinded window openings on the east side of the Jaunty Jack on the condition that they match the existing windows with 4/4 sash in form, measurements and style as per detailed plans A-3.2 dated 4/23/2014 by Souza Design Architects.

8. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, Staff shall sign off that all items have completed according to the Approved Plans and Certificates.
9. The barrel awning with signage needs further information as discussed above and should return to the Commission for approval once all the questions have been resolved.





