



April 22, 2021

Christine Madore, Council President
Salem City Council
93 Washington Street
Salem, MA 01970

Dear Ms. Madore,

Salem's Demolition Delay Ordinance has been an important tool for preservation since it was adopted in 1986. However, recent projects that have dramatically altered historic structures have demonstrated several weaknesses in the Ordinance. After 35 years it is imperative that this Ordinance be updated in order to improve its effectiveness and meet best practices found throughout the state.

For over 18 months we have been discussing the needs of our historic city with the Planning Department staff. We thank Patti Kelleher for her work in researching and preparing the draft Ordinance submitted to the City Council. Our original recommendations (attached) align closely with the draft Ordinance submitted to you for consideration and we feel this Ordinance will help ensure preservation of a broad range of historic buildings in the city.

The two most urgent changes we have advocated for are that the length of the demolition delay period be extended, and that the definition of demolition be expanded to include removal of 50% or more of the building. This ordinance addresses these important concerns.

We also have some additional recommendations which we outlined in a letter to the Salem Historical Commission (also attached). The most significant of these are to:

- (1) Consider an additional tier of protection by increasing the demolition delay period to 18 months for buildings 100 years or older; and
- (2) Add additional clarity to the definition of Demolition.

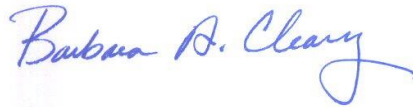
We are pleased that the Salem Historical Commission in their review at their meeting last night supported these additional recommendations.

We thank the City Council for their careful consideration of this matter and encourage the Council to send this draft Ordinance to the Committee on Ordinances, Licenses and Legal Affairs to recommendations and make final edits. As always, we are available to offer expertise and support as the Council considers this important document.

Respectfully,



Caroline Watson-Felt
President



Barbara Cleary
Chair, Preservation Committee

CC: Mayor Kimberly Driscoll
Ilene Simmons, City Clerk

Attachments: HSI Letter to Salem Historical Commission dated April 20, 2021
HSI Recommendations for Demolition Delay