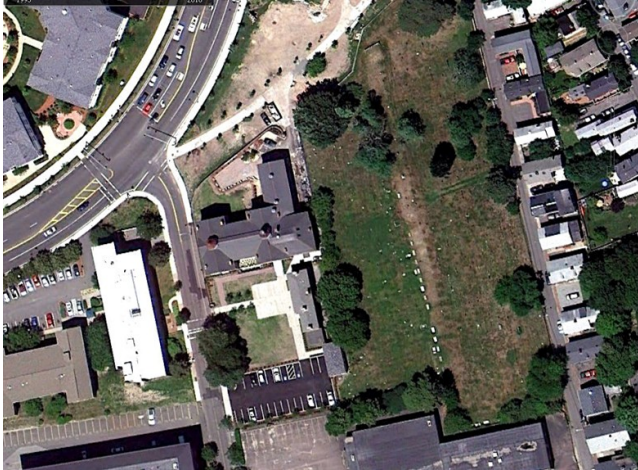
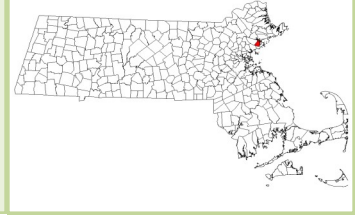


# Salem— Salem Jail Redevelopment



**Site Details:** 23 housing units, 1 affordable unit, 13 additional planned for Phase 2  
**Zoning:** B-5 downtown zoning  
**Funding:** historic tax credit, Private developer

**Date(s):** 2009-2010  
**Goals:** jail reuse, site revitalization, provide housing in downtown district



Aerial view of the Salem Jail site, 2011.

## Background

The former Salem jail complex, which opened in 1813, was one of the oldest operating jail facilities in the nation before closing its doors in 1991. The main reason for the jail's termination was a lawsuit that was filed against the establishment for its inhumane conditions in the early 1990s. Since then the property has been sitting vacant and was finally transferred from the city to the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) to explore possibilities for redevelopment in the early 2000s. The site is important not only because of its designation on the list of National Register of Historic Places since 1976, but also because of its significance to the Salem community who wish to preserve their identity to share for the benefit of the generations to come. The City of Salem continues to prioritize preserving the historical artifacts of its past and the Salem Jail Redevelopment are just one example.

## Site Development

In 2005, the SRA engaged The Cecil Group, a planning and design firm, to look at development feasibility analysis for the redevelopment of the site. There was large public engagement throughout this process in order to capture the values and goals of the community. Many community members voiced opinions for mainly a residential development that would also include mixed use components and public access to the historic site. The City of Salem had unsuccessfully tried to attract developers in 2001, so they wanted to make sure that the proposal resulted in a plan that would add to the livability of the downtown area and enhance the city's economy. There were nine proposals submitted to the Salem Redevelopment Authority and New Boston Ventures was chosen. Their plan for the development was to restore and replicate as closely as possible the three structures on site, the jail, the jail keeper's house, and a barn. They proposed minimal exterior changes to the buildings. The original plan for the development was to build 29 market rate condos, a restaurant, an artist space and small museum dedicated to the jail's history. Because of the soft market the financing mechanism changed and only 23 units were built and the artist space was negotiated into an affordable housing unit. Furthermore, the housing units, which were intended to be for owner-occupied, became rental apartments.

## Development Process

In order for the SRA to move forward with the redevelopment of the old jail house, the city needed to re-zone the



The Residences at 50 St. Peter (right) and the Great Escapes Restaurant (left), 2011.



Inside the jailed themed restaurant, Great Escapes, attached to the housing complex.

boundaries of their plan for the Heritage Plaza East Urban Renewal Area to include the jail site. The new site was zoned B-5, the central zoning district which was the densest and most flexible type of zoning in the city. There was little contention from the city residents in regards to the development plan mainly because the existing site was seemed unsafe, with strangers illegally trespassing during the night. Furthermore, the public demand for public access and historical preservation were answered by developers.

Funding for the development of the project was entirely through the private developer, however state and federal historical-preservation tax credits

were also granted to this project. The developers applied for tax credits because of the poor market and the resulting financing challenges. As a part of the tax credit, the housing units would initially be rental apartments, and in five years the housing units would have the opportunity to be sold and owner-occupied. Within roughly a month of its opening, 21 of the 23 apartment units have been rented and there are plans to have addition to the development that will add 13 more units. Phase two will be constructed when market conditions for housing improve.

## Salem Jail Redevelopment and MetroFuture Goals

### Community Vitality

This development encompasses a diverse mix of amenities for residents and the community and has helped boost the vitality of the downtown area. It has 23 rental apartment components with one affordable housing unit, a local restaurant located in the main building, as well as a museum component to commemorate the jail’s historic past. This redevelopment and its success symbolize the City of Salem’s commitment to preserving its historic past while promoting compact housing in the downtown district.

### Regional Prosperity

Even with the economic downtown, the City of Salem has continued to invest in supporting developments that improve the quality of life for its residents. This development and its success are a testament to the strong market niche in Salem and the city’s vision of creating diverse residential options for its residents.



View of the restored McIntire Keeper’s House, 2011.

### Contact Information

For more information about the Salem Jail Redevelopment contact Salem’s Economic Development Manager, Tom Daniel at tdaniel@Salem.com.

*“This is a very special and unique adaptive reuse of a 19th jail that is one more example of smart growth in Salem. The value of using existing structure and infrastructure resonates throughout this project, and complies with the city’s plan for adaptive reuse and infill developments in the years to come.”* Tom Daniel, Economic Development Manager, Salem