



The City of Seattle

## Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649  
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PSB 4/10

MINUTES for Wednesday January 6, 2010

### Board Members

Lorne McConachie  
Ann Brown  
Erin Doherty  
Ryan Hester  
Elizabeth Read  
Jeremie Lipton  
Willie Parish

### Staff

Genna Nashem  
Melinda Bloom

### Absent

Catherine Person  
Doug Ito  
Adam Hasson

Vice Chair Lorne McConachie called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

#### **010609.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Dec 16, 2009

MM/SC/AB/RH 5:0:2 Minutes approved as amended. Ms. Doherty and Mr. Lipton abstained.

#### **010609.2 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

##### **010609.21 Alley Art**

Alley between 314 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and 311 Occidental Ave  
Nord Building/ Occidental Building, Waltham Block

Ms. Nashem introduced the application for proposed extension of installation time and revision to attachments of the Bali poles.

Applicant Comment:

Nikki Summers requested an extension of installation time to the first Thursday in March. She further noted that the Bali pole is attached to the bars over the window and not to the actual window instead of on a platform. She said the bars are attached to old shutter brackets and that there would be no damage to the historic fabric.

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program  
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Upon removal of the Bali poles the bar will be sautered off and the sauter point painted so as not to rust.

Ms. Brown said the installation was nice and she appreciated the explanatory plaque.

**Action:** I move to approve extension of art installation at the Nord Building to the first Thursday in March. After removal of the Bali poles the grates of the windows will be repaired and painted so as not to rust.

**MM/SC/ED/AB 7:0:0 Motion carried.**

**010609.22**

**505 First Ave**

Installation of signage for parking garage

Ms. Nashem introduced the application for installation of signage for a parking garage. She introduced Asayo Shioiri.

Mr. McConachie said ARC reviewed the application and had an extensive discussion about size. He said that ARC thought the color and design of the sign was in keeping with the character of the District and they thought that the sign was of high quality. ARC member acknowledged that the district rules limit letter height on a neon blade sign to 8 inches and limits the size of a neon blade sign size to 6 square feet while the sign proposed is 36 square feet and the letter size is 18 inches. Members discussed that the District Rules do not specifically address parking signs and that the rules say that signs should be oriented to a pedestrian environment but a parking sign is auto oriented by nature. Although the rules say a blade sign should be below the intermediate cornice or the second floor, the members thought that this sign looked more appropriate and compatible with historic placement of parking signs where it is proposed. The applicant showed the ARC what signs had already been approved for the building, however ARC asked for more information about what other signage would go on the building in order to determine if it is part of a reduced sign package. ARC discussed that they would like to have more information about the possibility of using LED. The ARC sited that it would be more environmentally friendly and may be less glare however they would like to see another sign that has used it to further understand if the character of the lighting is compatible with the historic district. Some members sited that there were circumstances that should be considered while determining the size of the sign such as the scale of the building, the placement is currently the back of the building and that parking is an amenity for Pioneer Square. The Applicant confirmed that there will be some public parking. ARC members expressed that the applicant will need to make a case why the District Rules for letter size and square footage should not apply to this sign. Mr. McConachie reminded Board members to cite the guidelines as appropriate and be aware of precedent and appropriateness for the district. He said ARC did not make a recommendation knowing that the size issue needed critical discussion.

Applicant Comment:

Asayo Shioiri explained that the building was almost complete and the parking garage was almost ready to open. She said the parking garage will provide parking for tenants and for event parking. She noted the entry for the parking will be on the Railroad Ave. side of the building – the back side - and that the requested signage was oversized non-compliant. She said the First Avenue side of the building is about 380 feet long and the Railroad Avenue side is over 400 feet long. She said the proposed sign is 32 square feet. She explained if they had four addresses/entries: main building entry, parking garage entry, loading dock and retail tenant entry and each had an eight square foot non-illuminated sign each, the total would be 32 square feet, equivalent to what they are requesting. She said on the First Avenue side there could be one building sign and four tenant signs. She noted the possibility of a tenant on the corner space that might want a sign on First Ave and Railroad Way. She said it could reduce the size of the “park” sign but at this time there isn’t any tenant.

Ms. Shioiri went over the drawing details with the Board and noted retail signage was indicated in pink with the proposed “park” sign in orange. She went over photos, pointing out the proposed sign locations and said a substantial “Park” sign was needed for visibility. She said the sign would be 2’ x 4’ aluminum cabinet, painted, with LED lights outlining the letters and lighting at the perimeter of the cabinet. She said the signage color was in keeping with the guidelines. She said parking would be open to the public and would benefit the district. There will be 450 spaces.

Ms. Doherty asked how many spaces will be available to the public.

Laura Lohman, Seneca Group, owner’s representative said that she was not sure but Starbucks was interested in making parking available to the public and that monthly parkers would not have 24-hour access. She said the number of stalls equates to approximately one stall per 1000 square feet of 83 King and 505 First Ave. buildings.

Ms. Doherty asked if parking would be provided to ING.

Ms. Lohman said parking could be provided for them since the building is commonly owned and there is a connection between the buildings.

Mr. Hester asked for clarification on what the Board would be voting on and Mr. McConachie explained that just the parking sign would be voted on. Other signage was being shown because a larger sign was being requested and could potentially be approved with a reduced overall sign package. Mr. McConachie further pointed out the need for the Board to discuss whether LED and neon are the same thing since LED did not exist at the time the Ordinance was written. He also noted the danger of setting precedent.

Ms. Nashem said the Board needs to be clear about why this might be different because not only could other parking garages want a 32 square foot sign but other businesses might as well. She noted other oversized signs in the district were allowed when a business is the major tenant or only tenant in a building; a

12' tall, 27 square foot sign was allowed on a 7-story building; A 9 foot 10 inch, 19.6 square feet was allowed on a 5 story building.

Ms. Doherty asked if the calculation proposed with 4 addresses proposed on the west façade is consistent. (380 feet on First Ave. and 411 feet on Railroad Avenue.)

Ms. Nashem said the number of neon signs is calculated on linear feet: 1 sign for each 10 linear feet of business frontage. She said District Rules say there can be only one projecting element/ blade sign allowed per address so each address could have had a blade sign.

Mr. McConachie asked about the loading dock having an address and wondered if that was just a subset of the building entry address.

Ms. Nashem noted she had never seen a sign proposed for a dock address.

Mr. McConachie said that it may be a stretch to consider not having a sign at the loading dock a reduced sign package.

Ms. Nashem asked if in the calculation they are proposing the 32 square foot sign in lieu of all the other signs.

Jeanne Iannucci explained how they came up with four addresses: main building entrance; retail space at other end; parking garage and loading dock. She went over the rationale for illuminated signs. She said they have not yet applied for the separate addresses but this was their rationale for 32 square feet of signage.

Ms. Doherty said the District Rules have criteria for size and the Board must be able to justify if a larger sign is approved. She said one could make an argument for the importance of parking but not all parking facilities are the same. She said the Board is trying to achieve a balance. She said it is important to recognize the entrance to the parking garage and reiterated the question "how much of the parking would be public" and asked if once space was leased in the building less parking would be available. She asked if there was a way to make the sign smaller in terms of the color panels to get closer to the allowed size.

Ms. Iannucci asked if it would make a difference if Starbucks came back and promised not to put a blade sign on a retail address on the Railroad Ave. side.

Ms. Doherty went over the calculations and assumed that neon and LED are similar so the calculation for neon should be used – 6 square feet; times 4 equals 24 square feet and the proposed sign is 32 square feet. She noted that Starbucks wants to preserve the right to put an additional blade sign on the retail side.

Mr. Hester said if the sign format changed to letters only it would reduce the square footage and would come down strictly to letter height limitations.

Mr. Parish suggested a "P" with an arrow.

Mr. McConachie said the Ordinance says to “ensure that signs relate physically and visually to their location” and he said he thought this sign did that scale-wise and color-wise to attract people to an alley or backside location.

Ms. Nashem asked Board members to clarify if they considered scale length or height of the building (a 7-story building) and Board members agreed they were considering at the whole building – length and height.

Mr. McConachie went over guidelines noting that this is a new building so there wasn't the concern with damaging historic fabric. Guidelines state that signage should be oriented toward and promote a pedestrian environment which he said was tricky because the proposed sign would be vehicular oriented. He pointed out that there is the size issue and then reiterated the issue of LED/neon and asked for Board input.

Ms. Doherty stated she thought LED and neon are the same thing: both are an exposed lighting element and both are tubes – one filled with gas, one filled with lighting filament although LED is not as intense as neon. Board members generally agreed that LED and neon should be considered the same and the same rules applied to both.

Ms. Brown pointed out when considering LED the Board should consider the ING signage review and installation and think ahead to the North Lot development where LED will likely come up.

Ms. Read agreed and pointed out this is an historic district where LED would not have occurred years ago.

Mr. Lipton said Ms. Doherty's position could be consistent with the language of the District Rules providing rules for two categories of signs, neon sign and non-illuminated signs. The language indicates that all illuminated signs are covered under the rules applying to neon.

Mr. McConachie stated that consensus indicated that LED and neon were considered to be the same. He said the next issue was of general size because the rules are clear that neon is not permitted unless specific conditions are met. He said the Board has already allowed the neon ING sign which is larger than the conditions. He said the Board was supportive of a single tenant because it was good for the vitality of the district and allowed for relaxed thinking about the specific scale of the neon sign. He said the District Rules specifies a 6 square foot pedestrian oriented sign.

Ms. Doherty pointed out that ING demonstrated a significant reduction in the overall signage package that they could apply to the building.

Mr. McConachie agreed and noted it was part of the rationale for how the Board looked at an increase in the sign.

Mr. Lipton cited District Rules XX C1 noting that it provides an exception for three letters to be over the height of ten inches when there is a reduced sign

package. He noted that he was not aware of a similar exception for “sign” size and asked the Board if they were aware of any exception for an oversized sign with a reduced sign package.

Ms. Nashem noted the District Rules set “reduced signage” as a condition for a neon sign.

Mr. Lipton said that showing a reduced sign package could get the exception of the letter size but he didn’t see how that gets the exception to the dimension of the sign itself. He said the sign – P A R K – is 36 square feet and under requirement # 4 a neon blade sign shall be limited to 6 square feet. He noted that the sign package was a requirement to qualify for the exception to the prohibition against neon signs and that there was no exception to the limitation on the size of the neon sign itself. He said the reduced sign package provides for an increased letter size but not to increase the sign dimension from 6 square feet to 32 square feet with a reduced sign package.

Ms. Nashem said if the Board thinks some of the District Rules do not apply, it state a reason why specific rules to not apply but also to refer to the Code SMC 23.66.160 C4 which talks about determining the appropriate size of a sign. She said the District Rules did not provide a exception for size.

Mr. Lipton questioned if SMC 23.66.160 must be consistent with District Rules and read # 6 which states “*only if the Board determines that all other criteria for permitted signs are met*”.

Ms. Read was not supportive of an exception to the rule stating a lack of information on who parking will be used for. She said that tenants can direct their visitors to the parking garage. She said the Code is clear that the building owner should be encouraged to develop an overall sign plan for entire building. She said approving the sign as is could set a precedent or create limitations for the rest of the building.

Ms. Iannucci agreed and said if parking is for the owners then no sign would be needed but the building is being repurposed and the purpose of the sign is to attract people to parking.

Ms. Brown agreed with Ms. Read and said that other means could be used to direct the public to the parking. She suggested a reduction in the size of the sign and trying other marketing techniques. She said that parking is its own magnet.

Board members went over details of proposed size versus what is allowed under the Code and noted that the Board needs a rationale for why this sign is bigger than the 6 square foot allowed.

Mr. McConachie pointed out one rational is that the proposed sign is not on the First Avenue façade, it is the Railroad Ave. façade - the back of the building.

Mr. Lipton said we need an understanding that this would be the only illuminated neon sign on that façade.

Mr. McConachie noted the large façade and pointed out the overall scale of the building which supports larger sign.

Mr. Lipton cited SMT 23.66.160 – that it be consistent with scale.

There was discussion about the three proposed canopies and if they would be taken into consideration as projecting elements when looking at signage. Some Board members considered them to be an element of the building and noted that our District Rules list awnings, but not canopies as projecting elements.

Ms. Doherty asked if the applicant would come back with an alternative.

Mr. McConachie noted the scale of the façade and that while it could handle large letters it still goes against the tenets of the code. He also noted that it would be inappropriate for a large sign to be used on a smaller storefront stating it was a contextual issue.

Ms. Iannucci said they prefer to come back. She discuss with the owner if they would commit to no extra blade sign on this façade - that they would be using the allowance of illuminated blade signage on this sign and the maximum size allowed would be 24 square feet. She asked if the number of letters was a problem.

Ms. Doherty advised that the applicant would need make the argument of what they think is most appropriate.

Mr. Lipton said it could potentially limit the letter size to 10” and advised the applicant to look at the Code – specifically Code Rules XX to see if there were exceptions that might allow them increased size.

Mr. McConachie advised the applicant to show the sign that is 24’ total with 10” letters as opposed to the scale that is shown now so there is a reference.

Ms. Iannucci noted that the owner would likely go with neon because it is brighter.

Ms. Brown suggested the applicant look at the Jimmy’s sign at the Silver Cloud to see their sign as a good visual comparison.

Ms. Doherty cited XX C 3 noting that it is “projecting elements” and that it applies to other projecting elements besides blade signs as well. She said that the calculations shown address the west elevation but that it may make more sense to look at the whole perimeter of building rather than one façade. She said it is more consistent with the rules to look at the whole building rather than a façade.

With agreement from the applicant the application was tabled.

Ms. Brown noted a comment in the ARC report about the attachment method.

Ms. Iannucci said they asked the sign company to space the attachments points so they fall on the mortar joints. The bricks are a panelized system which is attached into the concrete.

Mr. McConachie requested the attachment method be clearly noted on the drawings.

**010609.23**

**Interurban Building**

157 Yesler Way

Ms. Nashem introduced the application for Change of Use from grocery/deli to food service for a 1000 square foot space and installation of restaurant ventilation on the alley façade including alterations to the alley façade.

ARC Report: Mr. McConachie said ARC had an extensive discussion about the new vent being inset into the building. He said that concern was that by inseting it a couple wifes of brick would have to be removed which is damage to the historic character of the building. The challenge to leaving it on the outside of the building is that SDOT has regulations regarding overhanging elements in alleys. ARC reviewed the drawings provided and noted there were other protruding elements in the alley. ARC asked staff to inquire if SDOT could relax their requirements regarding overhang.

Applicant Comment:

Steve Bull went over the drawings with the Board and then proceeded to explain the change of use from a deli to a restaurant. He pointed out that other locations created odor issues and noted the air handling equipment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level. Mr. Bull went over options for duct work to exit the building on the alley side and explained why the best choice would be to put a hole in the building and remove a few bricks noting the bricks would be saved for reinstallation should the duct be removed. He worked with SDOT to come to this solution which he said minimized impact to the building. He said the air handling equipment would be concealed behind the parapet. The duct will be painted black and attachment will be at the mortar joints.

Mr. Hester noted this building has a secondary façade and that is where the duct is located. Mr. McConachie agreed and noted that it was already an encumbered alley.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Brown said since this is the only option, removal of the brick would be acceptable following guideline #9.

Mr. Bull said it is just brick and not stone and noted that the lintels are more significant.

Ms. Doherty said the brick removal is more appropriate than marring the windows and she understood the contamination issues of other locations. She advised the applicant to keep the bricks on site and labeled.

Mr. McConachie said given the need, the solution is reasonable and he appreciated the applicant's work with SDOT to come up with a workable solution. He said there is minimal historic disruption, the brick will be saved and the proposal is reasonable and repairable.

Mr. Hester said it is in a preferred location in accordance with District Standards, on a secondary façade.

Board members indicated support for the Change of Use.

**Action:** I move to approve a Certificate of Approval for change of use from grocery deli to food service per:

Code Citations:  
SMC 23.66.120 Permitted uses  
SMC 23.66.130 Street Level uses

As well as a Certificate of Approval for installation of venting

Code Citations:  
District Rules VIII Mechanical systems  
SMC 23.66.140 Height  
Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation 1, 5 and 9

**MM/SC/ER/WP 7:0:0 Motion carried.**

### **010609.3 BOARD BUSINESS**

Ms. Nashem reminded the Board that Mr. Ito had announced he would be resigning the Board to take a position on another board. She said he is on the Board until March and then advised the Board would be electing new Chair and Vice Chair. She asked their preference of either having one Chair preside over the full board and the ARC or having separate chairs for each noting that if separate chairs were preferred the chair presiding over ARC should be an architect. The Board discussed the merits of each noting that having two chairs lessens the impact to one person's schedule while one chair provides consistency between the full board and ARC. Ms. Nashem requested Board members send nominations to her.

**010609.4 REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** Doug Ito, Chair  
**010609.6 STAFF REPORT:** Genna Nashem

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Genna Nashem  
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator  
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