



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 52/11

MINUTES for Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Board Members

Ann Brown
Erin Doherty, Vice Chair
Adam Hasson
Ryan Hester
Lorne McConachie, Chair
Jessica Miller
Willie Parish
Catherine Person

Staff

Genna Nashem
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Vice Chair Erin Doherty called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

030211.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

February 16, 2011

MM/SC/AB/CP

4:0:2 Minutes approved. Messrs. Parish and Hasson abstained.

Mr. Hester arrived at 9:05 a.m.

030211.2 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

Applications and briefings were reviewed out of agenda order.

030211.23 Footworks

122 S Jackson St

Change of use to retail/medical services

ARC Report: Application for use not reviewed at ARC

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Staff Report: The business will be both physical therapy and a bike store. Code says that all uses that are not prohibited are allowed. Code divides street level uses into preferred and discouraged and lists conditions on discouraged uses. The use does not appear to be a discouraged use but meet these conditions anyway. The space is not more than 3,000 square feet on the street level, and appears to be less than 20 % of the black front. In addition it has a retail component and bikes will be displayed.

Owner Neal Boulder and attorney Jeremy Lipton represented the applicant.

Mr. Boulder explained that he was taking over the lease for Tether. He noted the correct address for the space is 323 Occidental and not 122 S. Jackson as noted on the agenda. He said he planned to move his physical therapy and bike retail into the space for the next 14 months. He explained it has 2000 square feet on the first floor and a 1000 square foot loft. He reiterated the use would be a mix of physical therapy, a fit studio and high end custom bike sales. He said that retail would be in the forefront with the physical therapy component behind. He noted his desire for a street presence rather than the 5th floor space he is currently using.

Responding to questions Mr. Boulder explained that signage would be presented next month and that there would be no structural changes to the space.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion:

Action: I move to approve a Certificate of Approval for change of use from retail to retail/medical services

Code Citations:

SMC 23.66. 120 Permitted Uses

SMC 23.66.122 Prohibited Uses

SMC23.66.130 Street level Uses

MM/SC/CP/JM 6:0:1 Motion carried. Mr. Hasson abstained.

030211.21

Storefronts Seattle

115 Prefontaine Place

Tashiro Kaplan

Staff Report: This application is to continue the signage at a Storefronts Seattle location that was originally approved for temporary approval.

In the applicant's absence Ms. Nashem explained that the Tashiro Kaplan building is already part of this project, but the project originally applied for temporary use and signage and this application is a request to make it more permanent. She said that lettering would be added for the artist's name and the logo would be put in the window.

Mr. McConachie arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Ms. Brown commented that the whole program is wonderful to have in Pioneer Square.

Ms. Doherty said the proposed signage is graphically thoughtful, properly scaled and meets the transparency requirement. She said it is appropriate.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board members determined they had enough information to make a decision.

Action: I move to approve installation of signage as presented

Code Citations:

District Rules XX Rules for Transparency, Signs, Awnings and Canopies

- A. Transparency Regulations
- B. General Signage Regulations
- C. Specific Signage Regulations
 - 1. Letter Size

MM/SC/AB/JM 5:0:2 Motion carried. Messrs. McConachie and Hasson abstained. Ms. Person was out of the room.

030211.22

King Street Station
300 S Jackson St

Alterations to stairway

ARC Report: Mr. McConachie said that ARC reviewed the drawings, photos and samples provided. The applicants explained that they needed to seal the stairs to prevent water leaking inside. ARC members thought that the best solution was the terrazzo option as it coordinated with material found elsewhere, it was durable and a high quality finish compared with the Aqua Thin waterproofing option. ARC members suggested that they not match the existing terrazzo exactly but let it have some subtle differences to read as a new addition.

Tim Williams, ZGF, explained that it was discovered that once the enclosure covering the escalator and the historic stairs was removed, leakage into the building began. It was determined that the edges of the stair allowed water penetration.

Mr. Williams explained the precast terrazzo would be installed on the treads and risers on top of a typical waterproofing product. He said that the terrazzo will come close to the tones and colors being used already and it will complement the plaza paver. He said that this would add several inches to the top of the steps but the new handrail and the existing handrail will be compliant with codes.

Mr. Hester asked if the structural barrel vault would have the capacity to support the terrazzo.

Mr. Williams said that the stairs have the capacity to support it but that it might need some supplementing which would be concealed. He said that a metal edge can be put onto the terrazzo with non-slip elements. The terrazzo would be precast in an “L” shape. He said that no historic fabric would be removed, just encapsulated. He said that the terrazzo will be a darker metric than the existing terrazzo and they may vary the texture a bit by using finer pieces.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board discussion:

Ms. Doherty said the terrazzo is appropriate and is a better option than using the Aqua Thin. She commented on the thoroughness of consideration of the color palette.

Mr. McConachie noted the terrazzo option offered a more permanent solution.

Ms. Miller noted the longevity of the terrazzo and agreed it was a good solution.

Action: I move to approve a Certificate of Approval for alterations to add a precast terrazzo on top of the stairs as presented.

Code Citations:

District Rules: III General Guidelines for Rehabilitation and New Construction

SMC 23.66.180 Exterior Design

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation 9

MM/SC/AB/ED 8:0:0 Motion carried

030211.3 PRELIMINARY PROJECT REVIEW

030211.32 King Street Station Multimodal Transportation Hub Study Darby Watson

Briefing regarding planning for the King Street Station Transportation Hub

Darby Watson, SDOT, presented the information that was gathered about transportation to and from the King Street Station for the study and the recommendations that have been generated to increase the functionality of the area.

Ms. Miller asked about the logistics of the future site development over the railroad tracks.

Ms. Watson said that it would be part of a public/private partnership.

Ms. Doherty commented on the good coordination with other groups. She pointed out the different way finding signage currently employed in the district and suggested a comprehensive, thoughtful strategy that encompasses all into a collective project. She also noted the traffic implications of the tunnel project.

Ms. Watson said they are looking into traffic implications of the tunnel. Responding to clarifying questions about potentially closing off 2nd Avenue S. extension she explained that in another area downtown Westlake Ave. was closed at McGraw Square. She explained the planned green street on 3rd Ave. and said the 2nd Avenue Extension would be a walk-way into the City from King Street Station. She said that when the viaduct is down walking on the waterfront will be a primary corridor.

Mr. Hasson stated the need for loading areas and parking for customers of retail spaces along 2nd Ave Extension.

Ms. Person agreed and noted that retail businesses use the paid parking in that area.

Mr. McConachie said that the alleys are degrading and noted that the brick pavers are being replaced by asphalt patches and he noted that the texture and fabric of the district is being lost. He said that 'iconic' was used to describe the district and he noted that they should reinforce the existing icons.

Ms. Watson explained that she was thinking of King Street Station tower as a reference point for guiding people to the transportation hub rather than adding a feature. She explained the preference for Main St. over Washington Street for a connection between Pioneer Square and Chinatown/International District noting the better grade and better connection to Japantown. She explained the intent to move the bus layover out of Pioneer Square and away from retail.

Public Comment:

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw commended Ms. Watson for the good job and asked that information be sent to her.

Liz Stenning, Alliance for Pioneer Square, commented that there would be a public meeting at the Klondike at 5:00 pm on Monday March 14.

030211.41

Discussion on Pioneer Square Heights

John Skoles, downtown Seattle Association, explained his group's focus on the health and vibrancy of downtown. He went on to explain what they see as a need for market rate housing and the need to incentivize it. He said that there are more subsidized low income units in Pioneer Square compared to other neighborhoods. He said that higher building heights are needed to encourage development of market rate housing and noted the challenge of Pioneer Square's small lots and the water table. He thought that heights at 130' are difficult to pencil out for developers and that Pioneer Square may miss the development boom.

Greg Smith, Urban Visions, said that he doesn't want to change Pioneer Square but that he wants it to thrive. He agreed with Mr. Skoles that additional height would encourage development of more market rate housing and the value market rate residential would bring to the district. He reiterated Mr. Skoles' comments that heights of 130' and above are needed in order to pencil out for developers. He noted the increased structural cost of going above 75'.

Laura Bachman, Lakeside Capital, said that she thought "every tool in the toolkit" needs to be used to create development where there has been none; she noted the multi-family tax exemption and increased heights. She said that mathematically it has to pencil out to help get development off the ground.

Board Questions:

Mr. McConachie said he appreciated the Downtown Seattle Association's goals noting they were parallel to those of the Board: preserve character of the district and increase neighborhood viability. He acknowledged from a development standpoint Pioneer Square is a challenge. He asked if there was precedent in applying increased height in a National Register Historic District. He pointed out that the historic district is important and attracts people to the community.

Mr. Smith pointed out that a historic district in San Diego, California increased heights and he described the community as "vibrant". He noted the higher heights allowed near Qwest Field.

Mr. Skoles said that the Pearl District in Portland, Oregon can't be compared to Pioneer Square but he noted that they had done a good job of integrating old and new.

Mr. McConachie expressed concern about the coherency of the historic district and noted the significant impact of increased heights in San Diego and he thought their historic district was hurting. He also noted that there would be a new development on the North lot, on the edge of the district and he wondered if that would bring about change.

Mr. Bachman said that new versus adaptive reuse projects have different impacts on the pedestrian experience. She said that pedestrians won't notice changes above 13 – 15' above street level. She noted the Pike Pine overlay as an example of development that has kept the pedestrian human scale in mind.

Mr. Smith said that the North Lot will be a good catalyst and that as properties are developed adaptive reuse of old buildings will start.

Ms. Doherty said that the character of Pioneer Square is more than just the pedestrian experience – that it is a collective group of buildings, or fabric. She noted that Belltown is an example of a neighborhood that has lost its character over time. She said she fears that the same thing will happen to Pioneer Square and it will cease to be a historic district. She said that a lot of Pioneer Square is made up of smaller buildings and she said that those will end up next to really tall buildings. She said that there was already a huge increase in height going from existing height to the 120, 130 and 150. She said that the map shows only three sites greater than 7700 square feet.

Mr. Smith said there are 15 sites within the historic district that are parking lots that could be developed. He agreed with Ms. Doherty's comments about Belltown.

Ms. Doherty noted that the core is not just First Avenue.

Mr. McConachie said that dividing Pioneer Square is dangerous and noted that the district is coherent. He said that some of the best buildings are outside of First Avenue. He expressed concern that allowing increased heights would encourage demolition by neglect. He noted that there is a clause in the code that says incentives do not apply to a site where a building has been torn down in the last ten years, but he wondered if that was enough. He suggested contract rezones of specific pieces of property rather than increased heights in the entire district.

Mr. Smith said that the way things are today incentivizes neglect and said that if things changed, the old buildings would turn into little jewels. He noted the value of preserving the small buildings. He encouraged incentive zoning to encourage owners to develop.

Ms. Bachman said that the Stadium Lofts project is currently not financially feasible and communities need assistance to pull everything together to bring in the first wave of development and vitality.

Ms. Miller commented on “parceling out the district” to focus on parking lots and said that uniformly raising heights will negatively impact smaller structures. She suggested looking at incentivizing individual parcels or doing contract rezone and looking at properties on a case by case basis citing the North Lot as an example where great care was used in the process.

Mr. Smith said that contract rezone is expensive and not affordable for small properties. He suggested incentivizing parking lots.

Public Comment:

Sean O’Meara sent a letter to the Board (available in DON file) and said that increased heights impacts National Landmarks noting the pergola, totem pole, and the Pioneer Building. He noted that putting taller buildings in will overshadow landmarks and will change how one experiences the district. He noted the importance of preserving the historic feel of the district.

Chris Moore, Washington Trust, said that he had concern about increased heights in the district. He noted DPD’s multi-year study which required a compromise by the board to increase heights. He said that the request for a larger increase in heights now seems arbitrary after having just gone through such a long process. He said that building height is not a magic bullet for revitalization, it is not “all tools in the toolbox” and increasing height to the utmost won’t increase revitalization. He noted the increased height would have an impact on the National Register designation of the district and would cause the loss of the 20% tax credit for rehabilitation; this would incentivize neglect and take away existing incentives for revitalization. He commented that the taller buildings in the Pearl District in Portland do impact historic structures and that only a small strip remains as a historic district.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Hasson said that zoning changes are coming and that the bar is being raised. He said that Pioneer Square will miss the next development cycle if not flexible. He said that the heights being proposed are not adequate.

Ms. Person noted the trolley barn project and how the height kept inching up with elements such as the elevator over-run and the community space.

Ms. Miller said that it is because Pioneer Square missed development cycles that it is still so intact. She thought that a slow and calculated development process was best. She was concerned about how to protect the smaller scale structures.

Mr. Hasson said that he thought the vacant lots are bringing down investment in the area. He said that increased heights will help the district.

Ms. Doherty said the Board just agreed to increased height from 75' to 120'; she pointed out that 180' is double what it was. She said that the transition zone should happen around the district and not within the district.

Ms. Miller suggested that focus be on the empty parcels and to limit the rezone to those parcels.

Ms. Doherty said that there needs to be a way to look at specific sites rather than a broad overlay.

Mr. McConachie expressed concern that there was no economic study contradicting the economic studies the Board has seen, no empirical evidence saying there is precedent for this extreme height increase in historic districts and that focusing on increasing the height is not seeing all the critical issues. He said that he appreciates the need for growth and vibrancy but he is not sure that the DSA proposal is there.

030211.31

201 S King Street

Briefing regarding proposed development on the North Lot

Alan Cornell went over the phased development of the west block and explained that they would start with the entire four story base; it will house retail, parking, and 50 housing units and will be the structural support for the towers. This initial phase will be followed by two residential towers.

John Chau, ZGF, went through a PowerPoint presentation. He provided a brief history of the project. He went over their approach to design possibilities of each building. He said that they are required to get to LEED Silver but that they are trying for LEED Gold. He went over the model and showed their attempt to proportionately follow the structural bays of the historic buildings. He said that the west building will read as one building; it will have set backs and will engage with the ground.

Ms. Miller said she appreciated the analysis of the neighborhood. She said the materiality choices are appropriate as was the break-up of the block. The modulation of mass of building shown in the renderings is good.

Ms. Doherty said the architectural character, scale and proportion of the podium and west tower are successful as well as how it responds to warehouse typology and other historic buildings. She expressed concern that if they don't complete the 4th story along the podium it will look awkward. She said she appreciated the intent toward a lighter feel on the north and southeast towers. She said she understood the desire for different character and language but was not yet sure about what was shown.

Mr. McConachie said he likes the articulation and the idea of brick, stone and terracotta elements. He suggested pushing for more articulation; granular aspect to how Pioneer Square is put together. He thinks the setback of the towers are good. He suggested pushing for more differentiation of the façade character as each bay still looks pretty much the same.

Mr. Hasson thought the fenestration on the two examples was interesting but noted it was different from model versus drawing.

Mr. Chau said that the model had not been fully developed and the two variations in the drawings provided came about from listening to Board comments.

Mr. McConachie said that symmetry is an important characteristic of a building in Pioneer Square but there is more variety when you look at a whole block. Asymmetry gets to granularity. He questioned how does a building that is a whole block, adjacent to smaller buildings, get that granularity.

Ms. Person left at 11:35 a.m.

Mr. Chau noted that there would be operable windows on Occidental.

Ms. Miller said that she favored the first rendering – more polished quality; playfulness and seems to be continuity of material from bottom to top but it differentiates itself, but she noted that she was comparing it to a less detailed drawing. Ms. Miller asked about the green wall and she thought that if it was a solid wall of green it would still read as a blank wall.

Mr. Chau said that they may also experiment with an urban farm.

Ms. Doherty left at 11:37 a.m.

Mr. Hasson commended the team for the attention to detail on the project and to adjacent properties. He expressed concern about how the construction of the final tower would impact the tenants that are already there.

Mr. Hasson and Ms. Brown left at 11:39 a.m.

Ms. Nashem said that it is helpful to have close up views of store fronts and asked that future iterations not include people and trees so the building details are clearly visible.

030211.4 BOARD BUSINESS

030211.5 REPORT OF THE CHAIR: Lorne McConachie, Chair

030211.6 STAFF REPORT: Genna Nashem

Genna Nashem
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