



The City of Seattle

## International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649  
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

ISR 59/09

### MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, January 27, 2009

Time: 4:30pm  
Place: Bush Asia Center  
409 Maynard Avenue S.  
Basement meeting room

#### Board Members Present

Robert Ha  
Misun Chung Gerrick  
Weng Chan  
Joshua Osborne-Klein  
Jerry Chihara  
Bill Lee  
John Bisbee

#### Staff

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

Chair Robert Ha called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

#### **012709.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*December 9, 2008*

Adopted, with a correction for clarification requested by Mr. Chihara.

MM/SC/JC/MCG 7/0/0

#### **012709.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

012709.21

#### HTK Building

513 S. Main St.

*Applicant:* Jerry Chihara, Chihara Architect

*Mr. Chihara recused himself because he was the applicant for the application.*

**Exterior alterations:** Proposed work includes: rehabilitation of the six (6) storefronts on the north façade; installation of a canopy over a reconfigured center entrance on the north façade; removal of the wood framed exit stairs, wooden catwalk and metal ductwork on the south façade; removal of the neon noodle bowl sign and sign cabinets on the northeast corner; and alterations to the existing openings on the south façade second story.

Ms. Frestedt elaborated on the proposed work as outlined in the staff report. She said the proposal includes: replacement of existing storefront materials with site built wooden storefront

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

systems and filling in the walls on the northeast corner to bring the storefront to the sidewalk. Storefronts will be aligned with one another and feature recessed entries; restoration of the original central stairway on S. Main Street and the addition of a steel canopy overhanging the entrance; removal of the neon noodle bowl sign and abandoned sign boxes at the NE corner; removal of the existing exterior wood framed catwalk, exit stairs, and exterior exit doors on the upper level of the south façade. The openings will be modified and the concrete wall will be saw-cut to match the adjacent existing window openings. New wood windows will be added to match originals; removal of the sheet metal exhaust ductwork on the south façade; windows on the upper level will be repaired and restored, as needed. Exhibits included drawings, photographs, specification sheets, and structural engineer's report. She explained that the HTK Building was constructed in 1924. The building is located within the Asian Character Design District and listed as a contributing building within the National Register District. She said the ISRD Board approved a Change of Use from restaurant to office in August 2008. Modifications to the existing storefronts appear to be the result of alterations made in the 1950s and 1970s. The proposed work includes seismic upgrades that will result in the addition of a steel frame seismic brace, which will be visible through the storefront on the north façade (second bay from the east).

Ms. Frestedt explained that the neon noodle bowl sign has been modified over time and is not original to the building. She said staff supports the request for removal on the basis that the sign is not an original feature and its integrity has been compromised. If removal is approved, she recommends that the sign be retained within the community, if possible. She stated that exterior paint colors and tenant signage will be proposed in a separate application at a later date.

#### Applicant Comment:

Jerry Chihara referred to the planning documents and provided an orientation of the building. He said it has an L-shaped configuration and includes parking in back. He said the existing storefronts have compromised the character of the original design; he proposed to bring it back to the original intent. He provided a Photoshop rendering of the new design. The upstairs use will change from restaurant to office; the original design was for office space.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the National Register listing indicates that this building was built as a hotel that included office and retail space.

Mr. Chihara stated the storefronts will be rebuilt with wood frames with paneled sills and feature signage bands that will appear at different heights due to the slope of the street. The sign band will reveal upper transom light in store front assembly. He said he plans to reactivate the original entry to the upper floor. He proposed a simple three-sided canopy to define the entry; it will have two visible plates over the canopy with steel rods fixed to building diagonally. Plates will bolt into building. He proposed to remove the neon Noodle Bowl sign and sign boxes. Mr. Chihara recognized that the sign is unique element at the corner, but reconfirmed that it is not original to the building; it does not appear in the 1920 photos but it is in the 1940-1950s photo. He reiterated that the sign has been altered – steam elements are gone and with a change in use of the building the sign bears no relationship to the building. Mr. Chihara has not talked to the building owner about disposition of the sign but thought that Wing Luke Asian Museum (WLAM) might be an option for retaining the sign in the community.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked whether or not guidelines would support removal of sign to use elsewhere.

Ms. Frestedt said that she did not believe that the Board can mandate how the sign is used or that it must be relocated if approval is granted. She said that she spoke with Mr. Chihara about potential recipients including the WLAM or the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), which maintains a collection of regional neon signs.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if it would be more consistent to move the sign to another building or to keep it where its associated use no longer exists.

Ms. Frestedt stated that the Secretary of Interior Standards indicate that the relocation of historic signs within a District may be appropriate in some cases and that this should be considered as part of the Boards decision-making.

Mr. Chihara explained the proposal to remove the wood frame stairs on the south façade. He stated that they are not visible from the primary façade and in his option they do not rise to the quality of iron fire escape elements elsewhere in the District. He said the staircase is not structurally sound. The stairs will be removed along with a catwalk that had been used as a secondary egress from the restaurant. He said the egress is no longer needed and a new internal means of egress will be built as part of the interior renovations. The window and door configurations are compromised and some are covered with plywood. He proposed replacing the windows in the existing openings and creating new saw cut window openings where the doors were. The new windows would match the character and rhythm of the original fenestration. He proposed wood frame Marvin windows and said if the frame is intact he will only replace the sash. He provided spec sheets on proposed window product.

Ms. Frestedt stated that in her opinion the request to replace the current doors with new saw cut window openings is appropriate because the work is proposed on a secondary façade and does not diminish the integrity of the building. She added that this proposal may not be appropriate on a primary facade.

Mr. Chihara said that the ductwork that was installed on the south façade for the former restaurant will be removed. He explained that the primary façade windows are intact; they will be repaired and painted as needed. Where transoms are compromised he said he will repair or replace frames with single pane glass. He said the glazing on the upper floors will consist of insulated glass.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked Mr. Chihara about the condition of the façade behind the storefronts and if structural repair would be needed.

Mr. Chihara said he wasn't sure about the condition of the structural supports. He said the building is concrete structure with a coat of plaster veneer. In most cases the storefronts have been modified. He said none of the existing storefronts will be retained. He said this proposal is not intended as a historic restoration. Instead, the intent is to honor what might have been there originally while respecting the rhythm of the building. In response to a question about the columns Mr. Chihara said that some of the columns have been changed. He stated they will have to replicate the stucco finish over the concrete substrate. Mr. Chihara explained that DPD considers this proposal a substantial alteration which will trigger the need for seismic upgrades. As a result, he said a seismic brace will be added, visible in a portion of a storefront window on the east side of the north façade. He confirmed that the proposed work will not require a Master Use Permit (MUP).

Board Questions:

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked for the staff opinion of the proposed storefront remodel in light of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Ms. Frestedt explained that little of the original architectural or historical integrity remains. She said she believes it will be obvious the storefronts are not original to the building. She said the Board could consider asking the applicant to incorporate interpretive elements, such as photographs that honor the building's original appearance.

The Board discussed the proposal to remove the neon noodle bowl sign and the character defining elements of the sign. Members of the Board asked Ms. Frestedt if the Design Guidelines and District ordinance would support removal of the sign. Members of the Board expressed desire to see the sign restored and retained on site. Mr. Bisbee recalled the original design of the sign and said he appreciated the fact that real steam used to emit from the sign.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked Mr. Chihara whether or not the owner had considered options for relocation. She said she equates the sign with the historic ghost signs around the District and see it as a character-defining feature of the District. She stated that she supports the other aspects of the proposal and sees the renovations as positive for the District, but she did not support removal of the noodle bowl sign.

Mr. Ha said he supports the application. He said he considers the sign specific to the associated business and is supportive of the request for removal if the business is no longer there. He would like to see the sign retained within the District.

Mr. Lee agreed with Mr. Ha. He recommended finding a home for it that is located within the District.

Mr. Bisbee stated that the sign has taken on landmark status and serves as a wayfinding feature within the District, similar to the Chinatown Gate. He noted that he often sees tourists taking photos of it. He encouraged finding a visible home for the sign elsewhere in the District.

Mr. Osborne-Klein would like to see the sign restored in its current location.

Mr. Chan agreed with Mr. Ha and would support removal.

Ms. Frestedt distributed a summary of community feedback on the proposed removal that was provided by Mr. Chihara upon staff's request. She asked Mr. Chihara to summarize his conversations with community members.

Mr. Chihara explained that community members' comments have been pretty diverse. He said some individuals supported removal but others felt strongly about retention, noting that it was a recognizable feature that rises to the level of public art. He stated he was supportive of talking with the building owner regarding the future of the sign and thought that it seemed reasonable for the Board to place a condition on the removal of the sign (to remain in the District), if staff determined that it was feasible to do so.

Public Comment:

Thomas Kelly, from Nichiren Buddhist Temple, said the signage should refer to the building it is located on; if it is irrelevant to the building it should be moved because it is confusing to the public.

Mr. Osborne-Klein disagreed with Mr. Kelly and said the sign can be more than just an indicator it also provides historic context and relevance.

There was no further Board discussion.

Ms. Frestedt suggested deferring action on the sign until clarification about the Board's authority to place conditions on the sign's relocation could be determined.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for exterior alterations at 513 S. Main St., as stated, to defer sign removal until Board obtains more information on legal ability to condition that sign remain in neighborhood in visible or prominent location.

The proposed alterations meet the following sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance and applicable Design Guidelines**:

**SMC 23.66.030 – Certificates of approval – Application, review and appeals**

**SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes**

**A. General requirements**

**B. Asian Character Design District**

**ISRD Design Guidelines**

**II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines**

**Secretary of the Interior's Standards**

**#2.** The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

**#5.** Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

**#6.** Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

**#9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

MM/SC/JOK/WC

6:0:1 Motion carried. Mr. Chihara recused himself.



Mr. Wu said yes; it will not be visible from pedestrian view.

There was a discussion about the location and installation of the gate. Mr. Wu confirmed that the gate's housing would be placed in such a way that the roll down option is the least visually disruptive to the storefront.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if they had considered alternative security methods such as cameras and alarm systems.

Mr. Wu said they had only considered gate options at this point.

Mr. Osborne-Klein referred to the guidelines and encouraged exploration of alternatives. He said he would like information about alternatives before he could take action on a gate system.

The Committee discussed the revised configuration of the vestibule and optional modifications that may eliminate the need for a gate. One of the issues raised by Mr. Wu involved with ADA accessibility requirements and increased costs associated with alternatives, such as adding a sliding door system.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said she would support grill design over sliding scissor gate. She suggested adding landscaping or seating elements to activate the space.

Mr. Bisbee sympathized with the need for enclosure. He doesn't want to see barricading – he said the design should be inviting. He said the design of the grill is acceptable because it is hidden. He would be opposed to solid or opaque design. He agreed with Ms. Chung Gerrick regarding the need to enliven the space and suggested additional lighting.

Mr. Wu said that would be feasible.

Mr. Chihara generally agreed with comments. He said security gates are generally discouraged in the district due to connotation with lock down mentality – discourages visitors. The more that they creep into the vocabulary of buildings, the greater the negative impact on the neighborhood. He agreed with Mr. Bisbee and Mr. Osborne-Klein that alternatives should be explored and those findings brought to the Board. As far as the gate design – this is the best alternative and has less impact.

The Committee discussed finish options and asked Mr. Wu to return to the Board with alternative security options, along with his preferred option (the roll down grill).

Mr. Wu said he would provide information about a lighting plan and alternatives and gate options. He will talk with the owner, Ms. Josepha Chu, regarding beautifying space.

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator  
206-684-0226  
rebecca.frestedt@seattle.gov