



The City of Seattle

## International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649  
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ISRD 132/08

### MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, May 27, 2008

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

#### Board Members Present

Jerry Chihara  
Misun Chung Gerrick  
Robert Ha  
Joshua Osborne-Klein  
Amalia Gonzalez-Kahn  
Hoa Tan

#### Staff

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

#### Absent

Weng Chan

Board Chair Gonzalez-Kahn called the meeting to order at 4:40 pm.

#### **052708.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*April 8, 2008*

MM/SC/RH/MCG

3:0:2 Minutes approved.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn and Mr. Osborn-Klein abstained.

#### **052708.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

052708.21

##### New Central Building

409 Maynard Ave. S.

Bob Hale, Kovalenko Hale Architects

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn recused herself as her employer is a tenant in this building. She left the room during the Board's consideration of this application.

Ms. Frestedt summarized the proposed changes for the installation of individual Dibond composite sign panels. She said they will be attached to a plywood backer, within the existing approved signage frame. She said the application included installation of a Dibond blade sign above the Maynard Avenue entrance and retroactive approval to remove the Ho Ho Restaurant

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awning and distributed drawings. She distributed photographs and material samples to the Board.

Ms. Frestedt provided the relevant background and said the applicant received a Certificate of Approval in March 2007 for Design and Street Use. The Certificate of Approval included the existing sign frame, but not the individual panels or the blade sign's design details. The applicant received a Certificate of Approval in November 2005 for Exterior Design. She said that the New Central Hotel is a contributing building within the Asian Design Character District.

Applicant Comments:

Bob Hale, Kovalenko Hale Architects, provided before and existing photos of the building and summarized some of the rehabilitation work that had been completed under an earlier Certificate of Approval. Mr. Hale reiterated that the Board had approved the sign frame and said that the building owner is providing sign panels for current building tenants. Mr. Hale distributed additional sketches of the proposed sign panels. He said that lettering will be installed above the frame that says, "New Central Building". He said the blade sign panel will consist of aluminum letters on a black painted metal background, bonded to plastic core. The original approval was for a painted wood sign; the painted metal bonded to plastic core is more durable. He said the approved sign frame will include 16 individual panels. He explained the configuration of the building and stated that many of the businesses and offices lack street frontage.

Paul Mar, from Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority (SCIDPDA) said it is like an arcade; tenants don't have street front access into their individual offices. He said tenants with storefronts have installed their signs in front of their business.

Mr. Hale said that the goal of the sign frame was to consolidate signage since most tenants don't have individual storefronts.

Mr. Hale said there will be a blade sign above the main entrance as per the sketch; it will display "The New Central Building" and include the address. He said panels will be mounted on both sides of the blade sign. He said that the blade sign frame was approved as part of an earlier application, but the proposed materials have since changed. He said the proposed material has changed from wood to Dibond.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said the tuckpointing and the new cornice work looked great.

Mr. Hale said it is a representative building in the International District, not fancy but representative.

There was discussion about the location of residential and commercial entrances.

Mr. Ha liked the consolidation of signage in one panel and asked how they will determine the order of the signs, if it was alphabetical or by level.

Mr. Hale said it is random; they tried to balance panels out since there are some blank panels.

Mr. Mar stated there is a directory inside the building.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked SCIDPDA to encourage the tenants to use Asian characters in their signage.

Mr. Hale said they have tried to encourage the tenants but for the most part they wanted their logos used (as presented).

Mr. Mar said sign composition wasn't dictated by the PDA; the language on each sign is what the tenant wanted to have.

Mr. Tang asked if signage will be for all offices or will each tenant have to seek individual approval.

Ms. Frestedt said as part of this renovation all existing signage is being removed and this is a proposal to replace them in one consolidated element. If a tenant changes or if there is a new tenant they will be required to apply for a Certificate of Approval on individual basis.

Mr. Mar said as part of any lease agreement tenants will be encouraged to follow this motif. He said that this makes it more standard and uniform and 10 years from now it will still look nice.

Board Discussion: The Board determined they had enough information to make a decision.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

**Action:** I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for a Signage, as proposed. This action is based on the following:

**SMC 23.66.338 – Business identification signs  
Section D. Permitted sign area, Parts 3 & 4**

**IRSD Design Guidelines  
II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines**

**Design Guidelines for Signs**

**II. A. Buildings with Multiple Tenants**

The following design guidelines apply to buildings with multiple tenants:

1. All signs on a single building shall be coordinated as to size, shape, color and location. They shall be of shapes, colors, and textures compatible with each other and with the architecture and exterior finish materials of the building.

**MM/SC/MCG/JOK                      4:0:0    Motion approved.**

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn rejoined the meeting.

052708.22

Pacific Café Hong Kong Style Kitchen  
416 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

Ms. Frestedt summarized the proposed storefront alterations and signage from the staff report. She said the application includes: replacement of existing awning fabric; removal of existing storefront cladding (including the decorative rock column) and replacement with new cedar paneling; repainting the storefront exterior; replacing the existing windows with new windows

that expand the amount of glazing; replacement of front door (enlarged opening to meet building Code); and addition of business identification signage above the awning. Signage will consist of plastic painted letters with a foam core backing. Drawings, photographs and material samples were provided.

Ms. Frestedt said the building is located within the within the Asian Design Character District. She said the existing rock trim was added in 1958 and is not original. She said the existing storefront redesign appears to have been done prior to the designation of the District. She confirmed that the proposed signage meets the allowance, per SMC 23.66.338.

Applicant comment:

Selina Fitch, Top Construction, said the new name of the business is “Pacific Café”. She said the proposal is to leave the existing awning but to replace it with a new cover. The new color will be solid green. She said they propose widening the entry door and moving it over slightly and adding windows to give more transitional space between the street and the customers. She summarized the proposed signage, which will include five Chinese letters which translate roughly to “Pacific Café” and underneath will read “and Hong Kong Kitchen”.

Ms. Fitch referred the Board to the detail of the rock column to be removed and said that there is no associated structural removal. She said the rock is just 5” deep and purely decorative. She said she understood the Board disapproves of vinyl windows and doors. She noted that there is currently a bronze aluminum window and a bronze aluminum door. The client chose to keep those elements. She said vinyl windows require less upkeep than wood and keep their thermal properties longer. She requested Board approval for the addition of an aluminum clad vinyl window. She said upon rejection she is prepared to provide an alternative.

Ms. Frestedt said she and Ms. Fitch have discussed the vinyl window proposal and while there isn’t a specific prohibition in the guidelines related to vinyl windows she directed the Board to SMC.23.66 Exterior Building Finishes; under materials, “building facades shall be limited to earthen materials such as brick, concrete, stucco and wood; other materials, such as anodized aluminum may be used if approved by the Board.” She said that vinyl, while not called out, does fall into that category of “other materials” but it does specifically state that earthen materials are preferred and it is reiterated under the ISRD Guidelines Section II, Storefront and building design guidelines, Item B.

Regarding the alterations, Ms. Frestedt said the addition of larger windows is consistent with storefronts in the surrounding District. She said the proposal is sympathetic to the storefront form elsewhere even though the design is not the original configuration. She said she has no concern about the window size, just the type.

Board Questions:

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked the applicant if the proposed alternative was wood windows.

Ms. Fitch said yes, that wood windows would be considered as an alternative.

Mr. Osborne-Klein expressed concern about the space in general. He said there is a lot of vagrancy and loitering in front of the restaurant. He asked if the applicant would consider no awning to discourage loitering.

Ms. Fitch said no, since the awning was existing they didn't consider removing it.

Ms. Frestedt said awnings are an encouraged element. She noted that there are other ways the business owner can address safety concerns, such as adding lighting and maintaining eyes on the street.

Ms. Fitch said the awning is not wide enough to really provide shelter.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn appreciated the addition more windows in the space and about the location of the signage on the adjacent business.

Ms. Fitch wasn't sure but thought they just had neon signs in the windows. She said they don't have awnings or perpendicular signage.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said the signage is a little out of character for the street; most of the signs tend to be on the awnings and asked why they chose the signage they did.

Ms. Fitch said it was the client's decision, that it would be a cleaner looking awning. Awnings wear out over time; this would prevent the letters from chipping off in the future.

Ms. Frestedt said lettering on an awning is allowed. She said the placement of signage seemed appropriate. She added that the adjacent bar has signage on window film which is less characteristic of the District.

Ms. Chung Gerrick thought the proposal to remove the rock feature and cleaning the elevation and adding windows were all improvements. She expressed concern about the vinyl windows and wants to see the alternative.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Osborne-Klein preferred wood windows. He said knowing there is a possibility for wood he would like applicant to come back.

Mr. Ha didn't have a comment on the window and liked the effort to create more windows; he is OK with vinyl.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn asked the color of the proposed vinyl windows.

Ms. Fitch stated they would be bronze aluminum on the outside to match existing and on the interior they are white.

*Jerry Chihara arrived at 5:20 pm.*

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn was more open to supporting if the window matches existing; the bronze aluminum doesn't feel so plastic. Considering what a bit improvement this will be she would likely vote to approve.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked if the budget was an issue; there are a lot of great improvements. Her preference is wood windows.

Ms. Frestedt said that the Board should not consider cost in the decision making.

Ms. Fitch said another reason for the vinyl interior is the elevation on the interior is 20” off the ground. The windows go down below the knees so the windows on the interior would be damaged a lot more quickly by customers.

Ms. Frestedt clarified that the glazing would still be glass with just the frame being vinyl.

Ms. Fitch concurred.

Ms. Chung Gerrick supported the aluminum windows because it would be an improvement.

Mr. Tang supported aluminum windows as they are compatible with existing.

**Action:** I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for the Exterior alterations, Awning, and Signage, as proposed. This action is based on the following:

**SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes**  
**SMC 23.66.338 – Business identification signs**

**IRSD Design Guidelines**

**I. Awnings and Canopies**

**II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines**

**MM/SC/RH/HT**

**4:1:1 Motion approved.**

**Mr. Osborn-Klein opposed; Mr. Chihara abstained.**

Ms. Frestedt stated that the decision about window type is a critical element in upholding the character defining features of a building. The fact that it isn't an original storefront is an important part of the decision; this should not set a precedent for other decisions going forward. The window type is a really critical issue in terms of the overall character of the District.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said her decision was based entirely on this particular case and this particular store front.

**052708.3**

**BOARD BUSINESS**

There was no Board Business.

**052708.4**

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

052708.41

Milwaukee Hotel

672 S. King St.

Paul Wu, Wu Architects

Briefing on proposed rehabilitation and exterior alterations. Proposed work includes: masonry restoration, removal of two (2) exterior fire escapes, window repair/replacement, and repainting. The exterior alterations on the alley façade include a proposal to infill an old storefront with a brick veneer and a proposal to install a sliding metal gate in place of an altered storefront (leading into an interior parking garage).

The Milwaukee Hotel is a contributing building to the historic district and is located with the Asian Character Design district. In January 2008, the Board approved a change of use in on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to convert office space into additional residential units. In 2006, the Board approved a change of use from storage to parking on the basement level. The proposal would add 20 stalls of available parking space within the basement. At that time the board had said they would want additional details about how the entrance to the garage would impact the building; this is a continuation of that proposal. Ms. Frestedt introduced Paul Wu, the architect on this project.

Mr. Wu described the scope of work. He said the proposal would include rehabilitation on the interior and exterior. The upper levels will be restored for housing. The exterior work includes cleaning the masonry and tuckpointing where needed. Mr. Wu distributed photos of the existing conditions. He said they are proposing to remove the two fire escapes which are not functional. He said the fire escape in the alley is damaged, inoperable and poses safety concerns. He said they don't intend to use the fire escape on 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. He proposed to remove and cleaning the façade underneath. He said removal will provide a more desirable appearance, however he was receptive to the Board's suggestions.

Mr. Wu described damage to the cornice following the Nisqually earthquake. He said the cornice has been covered with a bronze material and no additional changes are proposed. He said the parapet has already been reinforced and structurally braced. He said they propose to replace the sash and the frames and that most of the sashes will be repainted. He indicated that a window survey was conducted when the project was first initiated. He said they propose repaint the frames the original color, white. He identified the entrance to the basement area and said that they propose to use sliding metal gate at the former Hong Kong building, as shown in one of the exhibits.

Mr. Wu said there is a mismatch of poorly constructed framed openings along the alley. He said they intend to clean up this area and replace damaged doors and in-fill unused openings with masonry.

Ms. Frestedt commented that the request for approval for the cornice trim and parapet repairs would be retroactive since the work was completed, but was never approved by the Board. She asked the applicants to submit additional details about the type of cleaning solution that would be applied to the brick. The intent is to make sure the solution and proposed water pressure doesn't inadvertently damage the masonry.

Ms. Frestedt said the proposal to remove the fire escapes is a larger issue. She said wasn't aware of many instances in the International Districts where this type of request has come before the Board. She said the removal of fire escapes has been a significant issue in the Pioneer Square Historic District. She said Pioneer Square added language about preservation of fire escapes within their guidelines and that is something this District should do as well. She stated that fire escapes are a character-defining feature for historic buildings and they say a lot about the construction and the use of the buildings at the time they were built. She said some could argue that removal of fire escapes may negatively impact the historic integrity of the building. She noted that in some instances where fire escape removal has been requested there have been compromises that have allowed the retention of platforms or other elements and removal of the steps for life-safety purposes.

Ms. Frestedt commented on the proposed gate and proposed infill of the openings on the alley facade. She suggested that Committee discuss the applicant's request for both. She said she is

not wholly opposed to the brick infill but there may be some other alternatives that have not yet been explored.

Mr. Wu said he did not know if the opening in the alley was an original storefront.

Ms. Frestedt said she thought the proposed gate is very tasteful and her concerns had more to do with the functionality of the gate. She expressed concern about the operations of the gate and whether or not it would block the door when open. She said that additional information is needed about the attachment of the gate to ensure that it does not damage historic material.

Mr. Chihara asked about the severity of the deterioration and whether or not the fire escape was load bearing.

Mr. Wu said the stairway is in the right of way. He believed DPD would like to see it removed. He said he was not sure if the attachment to the building is sound since it is attached to the face brick and has deteriorated.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if there were existing tenants in the building.

Chris Koh, Property owner representative, said there is no one currently living on the upper floors.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if the fire escapes posed a safety concern to current tenants and if they provide access to burglars.

Mr. C. Koh said that is possible but his greater worry is that tenants will go out on to the fire escape.

Ms. Frestedt suggested that the applicant explore whether or not DPD is able to grant exceptions to the Code in order to retain the fire escapes while addressing safety concerns by preventing access to the platforms, adding additional bracing or another approach (that has not yet been identified).

Mr. Wu expressed concerns about the liability to the building owner if the platforms are used as a balcony and unable to bear weight.

Mr. Chihara agreed. He said the stairs were designed only for escape from the building; it would not be legitimate use to leave the platform there to be used as exterior deck. He thought that Pioneer Square raised a valid issue with it being a character defining element of historic buildings and agreed that it is an issue that the ISRD needs to look at. He recognized there are two different faces that the existing fire escapes are on, one being the primary façade, the other being on a secondary façade.

There was discussion about the proximity of the fire escapes to the windows and methods for preventing access.

Mr. Chihara suggested modifying windows to allow limited opening in certain locations.

Mr. Wu said it would be difficult with the double hung windows.

James Koh, property owner, stated that the removal of the fire escapes on the Alps (another of the Koh properties) was approved.

Mr. Chihara asked which face of the Mar and the Alps buildings the fire escapes were on.

Mr. C. Koh said they were located on the alley side.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked about the feasibility of shoring the fire escapes up so they could be used for deck space or some kind of out door access.

Mr. Wu said it is on the City right of way so they would have to get agreement from the City to use it.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said there is significant history related to the community organizing around fire watches in this building. She said the fire escape may have not only structural importance but also social importance in the history of this neighborhood. She said it would be nice to try to save the one on the front. She said she would prefer to see it stay in one form or another.

Mr. J. Koh said the Mar Hotel was vacant before they started; people slept on the fire escapes.

Mr. C. Koh said they would be willing to explore options to retain the fire escapes as long as the Board realizes some modifications might have to be made to make it structurally sound so it doesn't pose a liability for someone below or someone actually climbing out there.

Ms. Frestedt said the intent is to retain the aesthetic character and not necessarily the functionality.

Mr. Wu said they can make it look right and keep the same profile; their task will be to prevent people from getting on to it.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked the applicants if the Code required a fire escape.

Mr. Wu said the building will meet all the current Fire Code requirements. He added that they have constructed internal fire enclosures and will add a sprinkler system. He said that they are also doing seismic upgrades.

Mr. Chihara asked if the proposed infill will be flush with existing face or set back.

Mr. Wu said it could be set back about 4". He said the goal for the infill is to construct something that is durable and vandal-proof.

Mr. Chihara said at the minimum it should be set back because if they are proposing to weave it into the existing brick it would be difficult to match. He said that another low-maintenance material on that face instead of brick it might be more desirable; it would still be recessed so you could still read the opening.

Mr. Wu now it is a storage area so they don't want people to see into the space.

Mr. Chihara recommended setting the material back and using a different material, such as a different color of brick.

Mr. Wu said he thought of using CMU, but CMU doesn't keep with the era. He said he considered stucco but that would be introducing a different material on the project. He is trying to keep it simple. He said he chose brick because it was a permanent durable material that already exists on the building. He said a simple solution would be a curtain wall but in that area it would be looking for trouble, breakage.

Ms. Chung Gerrick agreed that having it recessed keeps the integrity of the building.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked what the original use of the space was.

Mr. Wu said different retail over time; there were activities such as gambling. He said there were commercial uses on the street.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if the uses on the alley could be restored.

Mr. C. Koh said there are existing businesses using those spaces; the whole first floor space is used.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said the alleyway uses is unique in this neighborhood; she would hate to see that go away or at least the sense that there is something different going on there. She preferred something other than brick infill that would show that there is something different going on with that space.

Mr. C. Koh said the businesses facing the street are currently using the alley space as storage.

Mr. Wu said they will be asking to take the dumpsters away from the alleys which will make it more habitable.

Ms. Frestedt reminded the Board about DPD's Dumpster Free Alley proposal. She said there is a pilot underway in Pioneer Square and Gary Johnson from DPD has before the Board and other entities in the neighborhood to brief them about the proposal.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if the revitalization of the alleys part of the Mayor's Liveable South Downtown project.

Ms. Frestedt stated it was part of a broader intent to create a more positive use in the alleys and to potential move toward something more functional; at this point it is more of a concept than a proposal.

Mr. Chihara generally supported the gate and thought it was a nice, simple infill proposal. He said the Board has consistently discouraged accordion gates that fold across storefronts. He said the current proposal is preferable since this is a full sliding gate. He stated that it is as functional and attractive as you can get with that type element.

Mr. Wu said they might elect to do an overhead gate.

Mr. Chihara said if they are thinking of doing that he would like to see what they would propose and recommended holding off discussion until they know what they are going to do.

Ms. Chung Gerrick suggested that that a gate that would swing into the space rather than out might be a workable option.

Mr. Osborne-Klein said he was less concerned with the mechanism of the gate than he was with its aesthetic; he preferred a stark steel rather than a wire or solid.

Mr. C. Koh said they will keep that in mind and if they decide to make a change they will bring that before the Board.

Mr. Wu thought it would be good to keep the gate open for ventilation and also it is good for the visibility of business activity inside.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said it was nice to see so much renovation of buildings going on in the area.

Mr. Wu summarized his understanding of the meeting: that the Board supports removal of the fire escape on the alley side and that they need to retain the fire escape on the primary façade (7<sup>th</sup> Avenue).

Mr. Chihara said that was his opinion and didn't know if it was reflective of the rest of the Board.

Mr. Wu said they will propose to remove the one in the alley and to keep and refinish for decorative purposes only the one on the primary façade. He said the current cornice treatment will remain. They will submit information about cleaning methods for approval; the building will be tuckpointed and they will provide a window survey by floor; the number of units. He said their main goal will be to repair as much as they can. He said in the event something needs replacement, it would mainly be the sash portion and not the frame itself. On the alley side, he said he will propose infill with brick, set off by about 4" to give look of different color instead of trying to match existing. They will look to replacing the sliding gate with bi-open pair of gates. They will clean up a lot of the stuff that has been abandoned such as conduits; holes will be plugged so there will be a general facelift.

Ms. Frestedt asked about the proposal to remove the sign panel that is in the alley.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked if the main "Milwaukee Hotel" sign would be retained.

Mr. Wu said yes.

There was discussion about hotel signage and the fact that it can be misleading to visitors who do not know that the building is not a functioning hotel. Ms. Frestedt said the Eastern Hotel have added small lettering to their front windows saying, something to the effect "this is not a hotel"; that would be a reasonable compromise.

Ms. Frestedt said that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards encourage repair of original signs and features. In response to the panel sign on the side of the building, she said restoration of the sign would be supported. She said the Board should consider if it was something they wanted to enforce.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if it would be consistent to ask them to restore the panel sign but have it say something other than hotel.

Ms. Frestedt said no; the Secretary of Interior and National Parks would actually discourage that because it would be creating a false sense of history; that would not have been the sign that was originally there.

Mr. Wu asked what the recommendation is for the panel sign: remove, leave as is or refurbish.

Mr. Chihara said he is interested to hear what the Preservation Officer (Karen Gordon) will say but given the existing condition and it not being intact, he would be more supportive of not trying to recreate it and would support removal if there are not other issues. He wants to hear what Ms. Gordon will say so doesn't want to make decisions before hearing.

Ms. Frestedt said if removal was approved and the owners do not want to keep it she would recommend donating the sign to the Wing Luke Museum.

Mr. Chihara thought it would be different if it was the main sign on the primary façade; this is just secondary in his opinion.

Mr. Wu said in that case he will keep removal of the sign in his proposal.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn stated her preference would be to restore it in a way that is consistent the Secretary of Interior standards.

Mr. Chihara asked if the panels that had been removed were store anywhere.

Mr. C. Koh said no, they were gone before they took ownership of the building. They will take some photographs to their sign person to examine; they can provide feedback on what they find out.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said that was her preference and asked them to check into it; if there is not a good direction to go because it is a secondary sign she could be more open to supporting removal.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said since it is on the secondary façade it isn't as important but she would like to see some effort to restore.

Mr. Osborne-Klein mentioned the lettering on the top on the alley side.

Ms. Frestedt recommended keeping ghost signage. She said cleaning and treatment of that face should minimize any negative impact to the existing sign versus painting over it is the preferred approach. She encouraged the applicant to not pressure wash it and to treat it in a way that will remove it entirely.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM.