



The City of Seattle

## Ballard Avenue Landmark District Board

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

BLD 66/07

### MINUTES OF THE August 2, 2007 MEETING

TIME: 9:00 A.M.  
PLACE: Ballard Neighborhood Service Center  
5604 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW

#### BOARD MEMBERS

John Bureson  
Steven Mako  
Marnie McGrath  
Jim Riggle  
John Widell  
Elaine Wine, Chair

#### STAFF

Heather McAuliffe

#### Absent:

Linda Day

As a quorum was present, the meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Board Chair, Elaine Wine.

#### 080207.1 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

080207.11 Blackbird  
5410 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW  
Nicole Miller

Application to install signs and paint storefront.

*The applicant's representative was not present and confirmed by phone later during the meeting that he wished to withdraw the application.*

080207.12 5129 Ballard Ave NW  
Charlotte Stokes

Application: Application for approval of exterior stairway and rooftop deck.

Staff Report: Heather McAuliffe distributed exhibits for the Board’s review and provided the following summary information verbally and in writing:

Relevant Information:

- Building is a primary structure in the district.
- Building built in 1897.
- Rooftop deck and stairway are installed.
- Applicant has stated that the stairway is necessary to access the rooftop deck and provide fire egress from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom.

Rooftop deck details:

- Visible from 20<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and Shilshole Ave NW.
- Materials: wood anchored to concrete pier blocks.
- Method of attachment: piers sit on top of roof and are not attached.

Stairway details:

- Visible from 20<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and Shilshole Ave NW
- Partially screened from Ballard Avenue by existing evergreen trees and fence
- Materials: black steel railing; plastic landings and treads.
- Method of attachment: bolted to bricks; bolts anchored with epoxy. Footing of the stair is bolted to concrete at ground level.

Exhibits Reviewed:

- Site plan
- Photos of deck and stairway (show the deck and stairway as they appear in the sun and shade)
- Photos of fire escapes that existing on buildings in the Ballard Avenue Landmark District or have been removed from buildings in the district
- Photos of decorative metal features on buildings in the district.
- Historic photo of 5129 Ballard Ave NW
- Roof plan
- Section drawings
- Elevation drawings
- Specifications for stairway
- Project notes
- Letter from structural engineer confirming that the deck is in conformance with structural building codes

Relevant Guidelines:

Guideline Title	Page #	Citation
2. Secretary of the Interior Standards	5	2. (i.) 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,

	<p>size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.</p> <p>2. (j.) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>
<p>Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation &amp; Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings</p>	<p><b>Building Exterior: <i>Roofs (Page 80)</i></b>  <u>Recommended:</u> Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.</p> <p><b>Building Site (Page 105)</b>  <u>Recommended:</u> Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.  <u>Not Recommended:</u>  Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or of an otherwise inappropriate design.  Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color, and texture; which destroys historic relationships on the site; or which damages or destroys important landscape features.</p> <p><b>Setting (Page 108)</b>  <u>Recommended:</u> Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the setting in terms of size, scale design, material, color, and texture.  <u>Not recommended:</u> Introducing a new building or landscape feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate to the setting’s historic character, e.g., replacing picket fencing with chain link fencing.  Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.</p>

Applicant Comment: Charlotte Stokes told the Board that the property had been in her family since 1942. She said her concern is for the district as a whole.

Public Comment: Gene Morris, a district property owner, stated that the spiral staircase provides egress from a second floor bedroom and that the only other egress was behind a furnace in a utility room. He said the form is not found in the district but that it is similar to other stairways in district in material and color.

Board Discussion:

Elaine Wine asked about the location of the furnace.

Charlotte Stokes answered that it was located in a utility space in the bedroom and that if it were to blow up, there would be no way to get out of the bedroom. She said that she is 66 and cannot use the existing fire escapes (ladders) on the building. In addition, she is not able to get to the fire escapes (from the bedroom), she said. She added that when the building was built, there was an assumption that another building would be built next to it, but that never happened.

Elaine Wine asked if there was any other access to the roof.

Charlotte Stokes answered that there is a trap door in the closet that leads to the roof but it requires climbing up.

Elaine Wine said she understood that the city was requiring a lot line adjustment. Charlotte Stokes confirmed that fact, and said that her understanding was that the boundary would be moved to include both lots. If a new building were to be built, the stairway “would be history”.

Jim Riggle asked if she had obtained a permit for the stairway. Charlotte Stokes responded that the work had been done by a contractor and that she had assumed that he had obtained the necessary permits, which he had not.

Elaine Wine stated that there are no guidelines that specifically address fire escapes or stairways in the district.

Heather McAuliffe stated that like with other changes made to existing historic buildings in the district, the Board should use the Secretary of Interior’s Standards to review the change.

Elaine Wine said that she agreed with Gene Morris’s comment that the materials and color fit the district but was concerned that it would be setting a precedent to allow building owners to install this type of design that is not found in the district. She said that the spiral aspect of the stair is trying to minimize the visual impact of the stair but it also creates an impact with its shape.

Charlotte Stokes said the spiral stair is consistent with 19<sup>th</sup> century ironwork. She explained that the reason for its position to the west of the window was that her father had knocked a hole in the wall at the base for a door, which interferes with installing a stairway vertically below the window. The stair had to be designed to accommodate the door below the window.

John Bureson spoke to the difficulty of reviewing the application retroactively. He said the stairs were attractive but that based on the examples the Board had reviewed of other stairways in the district, a stairway with landings and switchbacks would be appropriate. He said that the stairway jumped out as an extra piece of architecture in the area.

Charlotte Stokes said the stairway would be somewhat difficult to take down because it was epoxied into the brick.

Jim Riggle asked how long ago the stairway was built. Charlotte Stokes answered that it was about two years ago.

Board members concurred that the material and color of the stairway were appropriate but that the form, a spiral, was not appropriate for the district.

The Board next discussed the rooftop deck. Elaine Wine cited Guideline 14. Additions where it states that “Vertical additions that were not original to existing buildings shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the front lot line and shall be evaluated according to the visual impact to the existing building.” She said that it appeared that the deck was set back about 15 feet. She said that the wood railing conformed to the guidelines, although painting or staining it might help to make it less visible.

Steve Mako agreed that the material for the railing was appropriate. He pointed out that the Board had approved a cedar fence for King’s Hardware recently.

John Bureson said he thought if the deck were not as visible, the stairway might read more as a fire escape.

Charlotte Stokes stated that she was open to changing the railing and distributed photos of a metal railing that was more transparent than the existing wood railing.

The Board continued with its discussion of the spiral stairway.

Steve Mako asked if the upper spiral section could be removed. He pointed out that the lower section was not visible because of the fence around the property.

Charlotte Stokes responded that it would be difficult. She explained that the contractor put it up in two sections and that the landing and the upper section are attached.

Jim Riggle asked how much she used the deck. Charlotte Stokes replied that she used it occasionally.

Elaine Wine asked if there was a way to create access to the roof from inside the building.

Charlotte Stokes explained the difficulties of installing an interior stairway. She said that she had replaced an existing skylight with a modern skylight and that there was not enough room to get out. She explained that in addition to issues with accessing it through the skylight, there is 2 ½ feet of ceiling space below it.

John Widell stated that he thought the façade was an important architectural feature of the building and that if the section of the spiral stairway above the landing were replaced with a more linear stairway, less of the brick would be obscured.

Jim Riggle stated that the staircase should be internal.

Charlotte Stokes said that when her parents moved into the building, they did little to it; that it was in the condition that it was built.

Elaine Wine suggested splitting the application into two sections for the purposes of voting.

Charlotte Stokes said that she was willing to pull the deck back. Elaine Wine explained that the Board would need to see the revised plans before it could vote on it.

Board members were sympathetic to the applicant's need for egress from the bedroom but were in agreement that the design of the stairway, with the spirals climbing to the top of the building, was not in keeping with the district, that the stairway was very visible from 20<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and made too great of a visual impact on the building's façade. They suggested that the applicant investigate possible alternatives to the current design.

Elaine Wine explained to the applicant that she could withdraw the application and return before the Board or the Board could vote on the application today.

Charlotte Stokes responded that she would like to withdraw the application at this time and return before the Board.

**080207.2 BOARD BUSINESS**

080207.21 Election of 2007-2008 Board Officers.

The Board re-elected Elaine Wine as Chair and elected Marnie McGrath as Vice Chair.

**080207.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the June 7, 2007 meeting.

Elaine Wine asked for an amendment to the minutes

Motion: Steve Mako made a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

MM/SC/SM/MM

4-0-2 (John Burreson and John Widell abstained)

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the July 5, 2007 meeting.

Motion: John Widell made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

MM/SC/JW/JR

4-0-2 (Elaine Wine, Jim Riggle abstained)

**080207.4 REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** There was no report.

**080207.5 STAFF REPORT:** There was no report.

Steve Mako made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marnie McGrath seconded the motion.

10:37 a.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather McAuliffe  
Board Coordinator