



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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

ISRD 34/08

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, February 12, 2008

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

Board Members Present

Jerry Chihara
Misun Chung
Robert Ha
Amalia Gonzalez-Kahn
Hoa Tang

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Any member of the public is welcome to attend and provide comment. This agenda is for public notice purposes only; complete applications are included in the International Special Review District records available to the public BY APPOINTMENT at 700 Fifth Avenue, Seattle Municipal Tower, Suite 1700. Staff reserves the right to alter the order of the agenda. The assigned time is approximate.

021208.1 CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

021208.11 Homestyle Hong Kong Cuisine (Lai Lai)
615 S. King Street

Summary of proposed changes: Ms. Frestedt said that the applicant, Alex Chen of Envision Signs, has requested retroactive approval of a blue fabric replacement awning cover, including text and graphics, located at 615 S. King Street. Ms. Frestedt noted that the total proposed signage is will within the guidelines for the District. She said that the owners received a Certificate of Approval for an alternate replacement canopy cover in February 2007, and that the Certificate was conditioned on the Board's receipt of additional attachment details. However, the approved cover was never installed.

Applicant comment: Ms. Frestedt presented on behalf of the applicants who were not in attendance.

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Board questions: Mr. Chihara asked why the applicants did not follow through with the earlier process.

Ms. Frestedt said she believed that the installation of the new awning was the result of a misunderstanding on the part of the business owner, Mr. Kuen Kau Chim. She explained that the owner does not speak English and thought that the Certificate of Approval that was issued in 2007 gave him permission to install a new awning cover.

Ms. Frestedt summarized her site visit and her attempts to meet with Mr. Chim to discuss the status of the application with Mr. Chim. She said she was accompanied during her site visit by a Cantonese-speaking employee of the Department of Planning and Development who provided interpretation. She said they were unable to speak to the business owner at length because he was in the kitchen at the time.

Mr. Ha said the replacement is an improvement over the initial proposal. He asked if the attachment is the same as had been proposed with the previous application.

Ms. Frestedt said the attachment is different and that the new awning was specifically designed for this frame.

The information provided by the applicants indicates that the Chinese characters on the sign include the following words and phrases: “welcome”, “tasty drinks” and “special rice”. Mr. Chihara commented that there was a lot of text on the awning and that he considered it excessive; however, he said that the inclusion of Asian characters was appealing. He said that text should be limited to business identification.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the signage also includes the name of the advertisement company on the side panels and that this is a violation of the off-premises advertising clause of the Code. Mr. Chihara asked if it can be removed or covered. Ms. Frestedt said that it could be easily covered. Mr. Chihara said that would be preferred and suggested that the Board ask that it be removed. The Board decided to include it as a condition of approval.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion: There was no further discussion.

Action:

I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for the exterior alterations with the condition that the sign company identifiers be removed from the side panels. This action is based on the following:

The proposed awning cover meets the following sections of the Code and Guidelines:

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes

B. Asian Design Character District

2. Colors

5. Awnings

SMC 23.66.338 – Business identification signs

ISR Design Guidelines

Section I: Awnings and Canopies

A. Permitted elements

MM/SC/JC/RH 5/0/0

021208.2 BOARD BRIEFINGS

021208.21 Freedman Building
616 S. Weller St.

Paul Wu, Wu Architects, and David Chow, property owner, briefed the Board on a proposal to convert an existing vacant lot (1,800 sq. ft.) abutting the alley into an outdoor vendor/sales area. The conversion would require a Certificate of Approval for a change of use.

Ms. Frestedt said that she recommended that the applicants brief the Board on the proposal prior in order to determine the level of support for the application and to address any potential Board concerns regarding this use, since the Code does not clearly address this type of proposal.

Ms. Frestedt said that the lot is currently used as surface parking for seven vehicles. She said the proposal would require future site improvements, including: the addition of a concrete retaining wall, ornamental fence, and basement level openings into the building. She explained that this briefing would focus specifically on the proposed use. She said that the proposal may include a request to convert the basement area (7,200 sq. ft.) from parking back to retail and convert approximately 500 sq. ft of the southwest corner of the basement into residential for the addition of a small studio dwelling unit.

Ms. Frestedt said that Mr. Wu had received a Certificate of Approval in August 2007 to convert the basement level from retail to parking. She added that the building is located within the retail core where street level uses are typically required. She said that the majority of the floor space is located below grade, currently accessible by stairs off of Weller Street. She said that the basement level space was previously home to the 1,2,3 Dollar Store and the Ritz Dance Studio.

Ms. Frestedt handed out photos and proposed floor and site plans.

Mr. Wu said that the surface lot is currently used for parking from employees and business owners near by. He said that the area underneath the canopy attracts homeless who use it as a shelter at night. He proposes to maintain this site as retail and to bring people down to the basement level by opening area up and redefining it with walls, steps, and landscaping in garden-like settings. He said the lot would include stalls for outdoor retail vending and sales.

Mr. Wu said the basement has high ceilings and would accommodate two efficiency units at the mezzanine level which would act as visual surveillance. Ms. Frestedt said that one unit has already received approval.

Ms. Chung Gerrick asked about the grade from the alley to the surface lot and basement. Mr. Wu said the basement level is about four feet below alley level. He said they would install ADA accessible ramps which would eliminate the need for elevators. He said he would install a decorative wall with wrought iron fencing that would allow transparency. They may also propose ornamental pillars with see-through decorative fencing at the entrance so the area facing the street could be closed off at night.

Ms. Frestedt asked if there were Board questions.

Mr. Wu said that the District ordinance encourages street level vendors and said this proposal is designed to address this. Ms. Frestedt said that the existing section of the Guidelines for display carts does not pertain to this type of use and is focused on public right-of-way.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn asked if there would be any permanent or semi-permanent structures or vending carts added to the outdoor sales space. Mr. Wu said no, just potted plants and landscaping. It is proposed as an open area that could complement the night market.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said she liked the concept and that it is an improvement over parking. She said the creation of a more pedestrian friendly development is a plus. She is not sure about sunken plaza area and would prefer to see the edge of the lot match the grade of the street. Mr. Wu said that is workable, that the stairway can be pulled back to accommodate that design.

Mr. Tang asked about the proposed height and material choices for the wall along alley.

Mr. Wu said for the structural portion the material would be concrete; on the alley side it would be two feet tall, just enough to prevent cars from bumping into the fence; it would be taller on outside edge with pillars, decorative tile and open fencing.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said it is difficult to imagine the proposal without seeing schematic drawings and knowing more about proposed lighting and wall design details. She would like to see these before voting on a change of use.

Ms. Frestedt said that she has advised applicant to submit as complete package.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn noted that the outdoor sales space is next to an alley and commented on the neighborhood's efforts to clean up the alley and make them usable. She expressed concern about creating a wall against the alley. Mr. Wu said he is limited in what he can propose along the alley due to the Code related to the public right-of-way. Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn asked if there was any way to open up more so alley is not closed off. Mr. Wu said they need some kind of barrier for safety's sake.

Ms. Frestedt said there are efforts to initiate a dumpster-free alley program.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Mr. Wu said he would prepare drawings to present to the Board since the Board is more concerned with form and design than use. He said he was pleased that the Board supported the use proposal and that he didn't want to spend too much time and effort on design if use was unlikely to be approved.

021208.22

Wing Luke Asian Museum
719 S. King Street (Kong Yick East Building)

Matt Martell, Project Manager, Homesight, and Cassie Chinn, Deputy Director for Programs at Wing Luke presented a briefing on the proposed signage plan for the new Wing Luke Asian Museum.

Ms. Chinn said the purpose of the briefing is to gather feedback on the general direction of the sign plan and to ask the Board if they would be willing to grant an exception on the size of a corner blade sign before the museum meets with the signage designers.

She walked the board through the packet and said the goal is to visually tie in all sides of the building. She said that the museum will occupy the whole building, with exception of one retail space on the corner of King St. and 7th Ave. S. She said that the exterior signage has been designed to complement the historic aesthetic of the building and bring visibility to the museum at street level. The museum selected a dominant color as a visual clue and a contemporary signage design to differentiate it from historic signage. The signage will include a Pan Asian textiles texture.

Ms. Chinn said that sign at the corner of 8th and King is at a major intersection and will be a highly prominent sign. It will be located on the upper level, aligned with architectural elements, including the top band of building and the lower band of mezzanine area. Despite its large size, it will have a slim profile so as not to overpower the building.

Ms. Chinn described the additional proposed signage, as identified on materials distributed to the Board. Proposed signs include wayfinding signs on the east and south façades and vinyl window and door signs. A main entrance sign will be located to the right off the main entry door below the canopy. It is a simple window facing sign that abuts King St. and lists the names of partner organizations, including Chinatown Tours and the Cambodian Killing Field Museum.

Board questions: Mr. Chihara asked if the blue banding on drawing indicated glass. Ms. Chinn said yes that darker blue has some display case work in that space, behind the glass. Ms. Frestedt asked if the backs of the cases would be facing the street or will the cases be displaying materials. Ms. Chinn said that the display cases would be positioned to face the street.

She said the museum will be moving the entire Yick Fung store into the building as an exhibit in the east store. In previous application they received approval to remove the windows from the Kong Yick West building. The museum will preserve the original windows in their collection and then redo windows for the new space. The new windows will feature hand painted signs based on historic sign; there will be vinyl lettering in lower part of window clarifying that the space is an interpretive exhibit and not an actual store.

Ms. Chung-Gerrick asked if the street address type signage (“705”) was a reference to the old building. Ms. Chinn said that number is from the old building and that while it may be confusing for the mail carrier, they want to keep the 705 and include interpretive text.

Ms. Chinn said the building wrap provides a way to tie in and connect throughout building. The building wrap will be a simple stripe of vinyl right below mezzanine windows around building. It will be carried around the whole building to communicate this is one building. It won’t be at Yick Fung window, the museum store or where canopy is but will be around rest of building.

Ms. Chinn said that they are proposing wayfinding signs on the south façade which would include an alternating historic quote that would change seasonally for dynamism. The quote would emphasize historic roots honoring and showing tribute to the neighborhood.

Mr. Chihara said he would like to see photos of existing building as it is hard to identify architectural features of the building in the submittals and in relationship to the location of the proposed signage. Ms. Chinn said she would provide photos and emphasized that they want the signs to integrate well with the architecture.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said that the building has strong horizontal element and she doesn't know that the wrap is necessary.

Mr. Chihara said that he likes how the building is being developed and agrees that the building has strong horizontal elements would not want to add anything that would detract from that. He asked about the texture featured on the signs.

Ms. Chinn said the color and texture ties in with the main entry sign and the color is repeated in other signs. It provides a subtle hint that contemporary things going on in the building.

Ms. Chinn said that they plan to ask for Code exceptions regarding the size of signage when they submit their application. First, as proposed the double sided corner sign is 120 square feet (60 each side); code says it can only be 80 square feet; they are proposing larger sign for prominence of corner and the readability of Wing Luke Asian Museum.

Ms. Frestedt read from section of code SMC23 66. 338 D section 4 and said they would need an exception by the board as it is significantly larger than code allows.

Ms. Chinn said the sign is proportionate to the scale of the building.

Mr. Chihara said his primary concern was the preservation of existing building features and making sure the lines of features are preserved and care taken not to break any of the architectural features. He is concerned about portion of sign that overlaps architectural features. He liked design and said that based on existing lines of building this sign appears to be floating. He would be open to looking at granting the exception for size especially taking into consideration lines of the building. He stated the importance of aligning signs with existing building lines. He referenced the sign on Canton Alley and he asked if it overlays an architectural feature. He said it seems to be partially on the brick and partially on vertical columnar feature.

Ms. Chinn said they can reexamine the sight line from the alley and reposition the sign on the brick. She said she would pay attention to where the top and bottom lines of corner sign rest, and would request an exception if it results in a sign that exceeds the Code requirement.

Mr. Chihara said the proposed element on the top of the blade sign straddles traditional and contemporary design. He finds it confusing to mimic traditional while trying to be contemporary. He wondered if it should be simpler. Ms. Chinn said they are trying to strike a balance that is sit well with the building yet still be contemporary, modern. Mr. Chihara said it could be less "fussy".

Ms. Chung Gerrick said colors stand out, therefore they may not need elaborate framing around signage. She asked if corner sign is the only one with lights. Ms. Chinn said the corner and way-finding signs will be raised illuminated letters with down lights.

Mr. Chihara said it was a good way to add lighting and is a discrete solution.

021208.23

Vision 2030 community visioning project

Tom Im, Inter*Im Community Development Association & *Vision 2030* facilitator, presented a briefing on a community-driven visioning process developed by Chinatown/International

District's neighborhood stakeholders in response to the City's Livable South Downtown land use study.

He explained that stakeholder collaboration (representing property owners, business owners, non-profits, and tenant advocacy groups) resulted in *Vision 2030*, a document and set of recommendations. *Vision 2030* focuses on the integration of balanced land use and housing development, open spaces, public benefits, support for small businesses, and economic revitalization.

Applicant Comments: Tom Im passed out a Vision 2030 document outlining the group's neighborhood goals. He said that it has been a long process with the primary driver of the study has been an initiative from the Mayor's office to look at the center of the city to see how it can be more a livable, cosmopolitan area. The City is looking at its retail core, business district and how to densify the neighborhood to increase livability.

Mr. Im said that the neighborhood has been interested in a land use study to see where there may be opportunities to add density. Livable South Downtown study, lead by the City's Department of Planning and Development, is comprehensive planning effort that has included public outreach within the city. Vision 2030 calls for a more holistic planning effort. He said that community stakeholders have "created a story" of what they want the community to look like in 2030.

Mr. Im said the group's goals as stated in Vision 2030 document include new subsidies for low to median income housing, rehabilitation of substandard housing and vacant buildings; creation of safe and vibrant public streets and spaces; and maintaining a strong small business community. These goals could be achieved with financial resources and through legislative action. Mr. Im said financial resources could be gained from the City via incentive zoning, Transfer of Development Rights and growth related fund. He said Vision 2030 encourages legislative actions such as zoning to limit size of retail businesses and the creation of limitations that for big box development and increased support small business. Mr. Im said they would like to see additional processes in place to keep chain stores from proliferating here. He said they would like to see expanding the International Special Review District's purview to the area east of 12th and south of Dearborn.

Ms. Frestedt said there have been preliminary discussions between DPD and the Board regarding the boundaries of the International Special Review District. She said that changes to the boundaries would require a legislative process and City Council approval.

Mr. Im said the Vision 2030 group saw opportunities for improving the work of the Review Board by including increased review of proposed new construction and streamlining the application process for simple applications (through an administrative review board rather than a lengthier process). The Vision 2030 group supports height increases when public benefits are involved, such as: incentives for rehabilitating underutilized property, increased opportunities for the pedestrian environment, public safety, and economic development. Mr. Im said the group also supports the inclusion of incentive zoning which could generate funding for affordable housing projects and rehabilitation. The group, however, is concerned about related increased land values which make it more difficult for non profits to acquire various parcels and harder for small businesses to locate new construction dollars.

Mr. Im wondered how increased heights would fit in with the scale of historic buildings and expressed concerns about view obstruction and shadow impacts might affect the character of

community. He said the group would like to see resources that could be developed from a transfer of development rights (TDR) program and contribute to the rehabilitation of substandard buildings.

Ms. Frestedt said this issue of potential height increases has been discussed by Historic Preservation Program and DPD staff to determine whether increases in the core of the District would have implications for the National Register listing or the overall integrity of the district.

Mr. Chihara asked where there might be opportunities to mutually enforce the ordinance to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. He said that both Livable South Downtown and Vision 2030 seem to be moving toward the same goal of using different tools to rehabilitate vacant and underutilized buildings. He expressed concern that raising heights in the core could run counter to preserving the character of the core. He said he wanted to be sure that what is stated on the 2030 mission statement is mutually reinforcing of Review Board mission.

Mr. Im said height increases are a controversial issue. There is some interest in keeping height suppressed to appease different groups. The general purpose of a TDR program is to raise money to rehabilitate vacant and substandard buildings. He would like to discuss creative ways of circumventing issues, for example variable height zones (like in Pioneer Square)

021208.3

BOARD BUSINESS

There was no Board business

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 PM.

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