



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISR 16/17

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, January 24, 2017

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

Board Members Present

Eliza Chan
Stephanie Hsie
Carol Leong
Tiernan Martin, Vice Chair
Miye Moriguchi, Chair
Valerie Tran

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Herman Setijono

012417.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 22, 2016
Deferred.

December 13, 2016
MM/SC/MM/EC 6:0:0 Minutes approved.

012417.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

012417.21 416 7th Ave. S. - Republic
Applicant: Paul Wu

Ms. Frestedt explained the request for fire escape removal on the east (alley) façade. Exhibits included photographs. She reported that the Republic Hotel is a contributing building within the District. The building is located within the Asian Design Character District. She said the fire escape is an original building feature. A Certificate of Approval for installation of a chain link fence along the alley was approved in November 2016. A Certificate of Approval for

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

lighting along the alley was issued in 2011. The fixtures were installed to discourage graffiti and tagging.

Applicant Comment:

Paul Wu explained the graffiti and trash problems they have had in the alley which necessitated installing a fence to prevent access. He said they propose to remove the alley side fire escape to prevent access to the roof where graffiti is a regular occurrence. He said the fire escape is no longer needed as a means of egress and it is not visible from 7th Ave. S. He said as part of a separate application, they plan to renovate the building, including the façade, balcony, canopy. He said the interior will be renovated to housing and they will install a sprinkler system. He explained their exploration of graffiti removal options and spoke about the high cost of removal (he quoted \$100k) due to the location of the tags and the historic masonry. He said they plan to remove the graffiti when the building is renovated, since there will be scaffolding up at the time. He said if they remove it now there are concerns that it will only reappear and then they'd have to do it all over again.

Steve Chan, property owner representative, said people have gained access to the interior via the fire escape; they want to prevent another fire along the lines of the Louisa Hotel (which gutted half of the building).

Public Comment:

Paul Murakami, property owner within the District, said he appreciates what the owners are going through, due to the expense and the process for removal. He commented on the fact that there does not seem to be any enforcement by the City.

Mr. Martin noted the visibility of the alley from S. Jackson St.

Mr. Wu agreed that it is, but if Four Seas is redeveloped it won't be.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the alley is vacated and, therefore, is no longer a public right of way.

Mr. Martin asked for more information about shearing off the bolts and sealing the masonry.

Mr. Wu said they will shear off the connection, grind it smooth to the face of the building, then putty and seal. He said there will be no damage to the brick. He said that it will likely not be visible. He said that they will be doing a complete tuckpoint of the building in the renovation.

Ms. Frestedt cited Preservation Brief #17 which discusses which elements of a building are character-defining features. She said that in many cases fire escapes are considered character-defining architectural features; however, she said this one is on a secondary façade. She noted that there is no wrought iron detail, such as the detail seen on the fire escape on the Milwaukee, fronting 7th, and that it doesn't rise to any real visual prominence, and in this case removal

is not objectionable. She commented on the fact that the Board allowed removal of the fire escape at the Publix, which faces S. King Street.

Mr. Martin said that the difference between this one and others in the neighborhood is that it is not character-defining.

Ms. Moriguchi agreed and said that it is a sound argument. Board members indicated agreement.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for Exterior Alterations.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the January 24, 2017 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

The proposed exterior 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

National Park Service Preservation Brief #17 – Architectural Character - Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards

#2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

MM/SC/VT/EC 6:0:0 Motion carried.

Ms. Frestedt asked how quickly the fire escape would be removed given the graffiti issues.

Mr. Chan said there is no schedule yet but it will be as soon as possible.

012417.3 BOARD BRIEFING

012417.31 312 6th Ave. S. – Jackson Building
Briefing by An Huynh, SCDIPDA, and Michelle Kumata, Wing Luke Asian Museum, on proposed exterior alterations to activate a vacant storefront.

Ms. Chan recused herself and departed.

An Huynh, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority (SCIDPDA), presented via PowerPoint (full report in DON file). She provided an

overview of the community process and said the design came out of that. She noted the collaborative process amongst PDA, Wing Luke Museum and the community. She said the storefront installation will highlight Nihonmachi and the Japanese American story as well as the story of the Murakami family. She said this site is where the store was located during incarceration. She said the intent is to add lighting, text, photos, artifacts that will tell the story and create pedestrian interest. She said the goals are to: 1) convey resilience and strength of the Japanese-American community, 2) restore significance of historic Nihonmachi and 3) to provide a stop on the Wing Luke Asian Museum tours to focus on the family's story. She said the timing is significant due to the anniversary of the Executive Order 9066.

Paul Murakami, building owner, explained that the warehouse closed in 1942 and housed the Higo Store merchandise. He said it appears on the interior the same as it did after the internment. He said they want to keep it as a time capsule but want to add interest and dimension. He said this will become part of the Wing Luke tour. He commented on the significance of artifacts within the warehouse and the desire to preserve them.

Ms. Huynh said Mr. Murakami owns and maintains the space. She said the storefronts will be visible night and day so they will add lighting. She said the simple text panels will tell the story of the family and the building and they will display durable artifacts from the store. She said that they wish to activate the storefront while respecting and screening the historic materials within.

Michelle Kumata, Wing Luke Museum, explained their process, Community Advisory Committee meetings, and goals. She said they hope to begin installation in May. She explained that the south window has a platform but they will have to build one for the north window. She said they will build walls 12" from the front window to encapsulate the viewing space. She said they will put historic photos in the angled area. She said they propose to tell the incarceration story in the north window with window decals that will mimic boarded up windows of Higo Store during incarceration. She said there will be Minidoka photos and the crowbar that the family packed – they were planning ahead for their return – to remove the boards from the windows. She said that an image of Aya and Masa, who operated the shop, will be in door to welcome you. Executive Order 9066 will be printed as a vinyl decal and posted. She said that Aya and Masa taught school at Minidoka and they saved the letters students wrote to them after they left. She said they were able to interview some of the students and got their stories.

Ms. Kumata said the south window will tell the post-WWII story. There will be a large image of the shop. The endurance and resilience of the family will be told in the story as well as the Nihonmachi history, the Murakami family's incarceration, as well as the rebuilding of the community. She noted the efforts to revitalize Nihonmachi now and encourage support of local businesses. She said that only metal, glass or ceramic items can be displayed and will be rotated out. She said that connected to this is Chiyo's Garden and Meet Me at Higo display within KOBO; she said the store was a hub for local Japanese American community.

Ms. Huynh said there are also plans, as part of a separate application, to activate Nihonmachi alley with art on side of Jackson Building and catenary lights. She provided examples of activated storefronts located elsewhere.

Ms. Frestedt noted the unique circumstances related to this storefront and how it fits into the neighborhood story. She said the faux wood decals could be a point of board discussion in light of the Secretary of the Interior Standards. She noted the tension between the code on transparency and nice activation of a closed storefront.

Ms. Kumata provided spec sheets and material samples. She said the wood grain will be an orajet decal back printed with white, the lines of wood opaque but the rest will be sheer. The 9066 will be opaque. She said the decals have a 5-year durability.

Ms. Moriguchi said that this as an artistic endeavor, more than signage.

Ms. Kumata said that with the cutouts people have to come up and engage with the display.

Ms. Moriguchi noted the planes being offset and back provide a depth to it.

There was discussion about illumination and the height of the display.

Ms. Kumata said the walls will stop at the same height as the windows and will prevent visibility into the space behind.

Ms. Hsie asked how they will do the lighting.

Ms. Kumata said they aren't there yet.

Ms. Moriguchi suggested strip lighting from above would not be visible.

Ms. Tran asked about the green frame around the door.

Ms. Kumata said it is a reproduction of the wrapping paper used at the Higo Store.

Ms. Hsie said it is a nice contribution to the community. She asked the current condition of the storefront.

Mr. Murakami said they painted it recently. The adjacent barber shop will be getting a light pole, lighting and graphics. He said they want this to complement other things going on in the building and they don't want this to be an eyesore.

Ms. Kumata said they have to figure out the lighting for each application. Responding to questions she said they will provide tour information – website info, phone number much like the interpretive signage at alley.

Ms. Hsie asked how often the displays will be rotated.

Ms. Kumata said it will be low maintenance for Mr. Murakami – whatever works best for him.

Ms. Frestedt suggested contacting the Rainier Valley Historical Society – they have experience with west-facing windows related to displays.

Mr. Martin said that the distinct difference here is this is an artistic storefront on a non-actively used site versus advertisement on an active business. He said it is basically a

historic time capsule warehouse. He said that they are activating a currently blank space so leeway is allowed. He said to make sure wherever they can to enhance existing architectural features.

Ms. Frestedt noted issues of transparency in storefronts and how this might be differentiated.

Ms. Hsie noted it contributes color, activation, and enhances the cultural landscape. She said it encourages learning about the district and the code and enhances it. She said that this has more depth and is deeply rooted in the history and culture of the neighborhood.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the use and context here are different and all applications are reviewed on a case by case basis.

Ms. Leong said she is excited and noted her family lived next door after WWII; they were also incarcerated.

Mr. Murakami said that there are not many educational displays and more are needed. He noted the stories of Nissei veterans.

012417.4 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt said she is awaiting confirmation of new board member.

Adjourn

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