



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

PSB267/25

Staff Report

Board meeting November 5, 2025

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

110525.52 Sidewalk Café and enclosed structure
419 Occidental Ave S

Briefing on proposed sidewalk café including an enclosed structure

Staff report: This proposal is for a sidewalk café that includes an enclosed structure. There are two café areas but most of the discussion will likely be concerning the café on S King St. A wood decking was approved and installed here to extend the sidewalk and was presented as a voluntary street improvement for a public open space.

There are outstanding issues that are unknown including:

How gas and electricity would reach the café and if that would have an impact on the building or require alterations or repairs to the sidewalk,

The location of an SCL vault and if SCL will also a structure over the vault,

Specifics on attachments or freestanding bases,

Features referenced in writing and not shown,

If there is any previous MOAs or bonds for the wood decking in this area being it is on the public right of way but was paid for privately.

The application includes a structure with walls and a roof which is prohibited in the Pioneer Square Preservation District Guidelines.

XIII. SIDEWALK CAFES

Sidewalk cafes may not impede the flow of pedestrian traffic. Movable structural elements that can be brought back against the building wall or elements that can be removed when not in use will generally be required if some structural element is necessary. No walls or roofs of any kind are permitted to enclose sidewalk cafes. Free-standing and table umbrellas are permitted, however, the Board may limit their number and placement to ensure compatibility with transparency and signage regulations. (7/03) Planter boxes are discouraged and will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

Materials for any structural elements on the sidewalk should be of durable, weatherproof, and vandal-proof quality. The Board will consider the compatibility of the color and design of structural elements with the building facade and the character of the District. The maximum allowable height of structural elements, including fencing, is 42". (7/03)

The Board previously considered an exception for this at the Gridiron where there was proposed a freestanding canopy type of structure that was freestanding because the building could not structurally accommodate the addition of an attached canopy. The Board considered the reason it was needed, the context in which it was proposed and how it affected the character of the building. The applicant ended up putting the proposal on hold and applied for and received approval for a sidewalk café that complies with the guidelines. In discussing proposed changes to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Guidelines between 2019 and 2023, the Board discussed the prohibition of roof and wall but recommended retaining the guideline. Many years ago, pre guidelines discussion and pre COVID, there was a proposal for an enclosed addition to a storefront for an enclosed sidewalk café that was not approved. Both of these proposals were different from each other and different than what is proposed now for example what is proposed now is separated from the building. While the Board is considering exceptions for an roof and walls in this situation the Board is also affectively considering how the guidelines will be applied forward. So if the roof and walls are supported, the Board would need to identify if this applies to all future sidewalk café applications, if there are certain conditions that make it appropriate here and not other locations such as the separation from the building, height of the storefront, etc., consideration on how the structure affects the appearance of the building and affects to the character of the District, anything about the design, materials, any considerations of modifications to the structure such as removing walls, other items or reducing the height.

Other considerations:

The sidewalk café requires an SDOT permit in addition to any Certificate of Approval.

SDOT has previously not approved an outdoor dining space in another area that was enclosed with 4 walls, a roof and doors as they considered over-privatization of the right of way.

Similarly SDOT does not allow gates on sidewalk cafes, they have to remain open to the public.

Sidewalk cafes are not allowed to be more than half the width of the public right of way. The sidewalk café is more than half the sidewalk. Note that the wood decking is more than half the sidewalk but because it was proposed as an extension of the sidewalk for public open space, the width for the wood decking was not considered for compliance with the requirements for a sidewalk café.

Penetrations were not allowed on the wood decking on Washington Street, The decking is part of the public right of way and not private property though it was privately funded, so knowing if there were agreements with SDOT about maintenance of the decking when the decking was approved would be important concerning attachments and replacements.

Sidewalk cafes can use planters instead of railings so both may not be necessary.

The clear path of travel is measured between any object in the right of way. In this case the path of travel should be measured between the proposed planters.

The applicant has been advised to reach out to SDOT to discuss these issues and revise the application accordingly.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

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Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

Guidelines for Setting

Issued:

Nov 13, 2025

Genna Nashem

Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator