



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 311/23

Staff Report

for Board meeting December 20, 2023

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.

122023.41 505 1st Ave S
Applicant: National Sign

Proposed changes to an existing building name sign

Staff report: The proposal is to change the lettering on the building name sign and to change the color. The sign was originally approved as an exception for a building name sign and included a sign plan for the building. The color was grey to integrate with the building colors (windows). The lettering on the sign was subsequently changed to lettering seen today. That proposal had included a proposal to change the color from grey to blue. The Board thought the blue made the sign stand out too much and was no longer integrated with the building colors and because the sign is a building name sign nor a business sign the brand color was irrelevant. The Board approved the amended lettering with a revised all grey color consistent with the original approval. This proposal includes changing the color from grey to white. The Board should consider if the white color is integrated or related with the building or if the white color for the building name sign is not consistent with or detracts from the historic district. The letter size is reduced and the overall square footage of the sign is slightly reduced. I do not recall the lighting being part of the original proposal, but will research it prior to the meeting.

Draft Motion: I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for: changes to the lettering of the existing building name sign (with lettering to remain the same color grey rather than the proposed white)

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

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as presented.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the December 20, 2023 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

SMC

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

- A. 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.

23.66.160 Signs

- B. To ensure that flags, banners and signs are of a scale, color, shape and type compatible with the Pioneer Square Preservation District objectives stated in Section 23.66.100 and with the character of the District and the buildings in the District, to reduce driver distraction and visual blight, to ensure that the messages of signs are not lost through undue proliferation, and to enhance views and sight lines into and down streets, the overall design of a sign, flag, or banner, including size, shape, typeface, texture, method of attachment, color, graphics and lighting, and the number and location of signs, flags, and banners, shall be reviewed by the Board and are regulated as set out in this Section 23.66.160. Building owners are encouraged to develop an overall signage plan for their buildings.
- C. In determining the appropriateness of signs, including flags and banners used as signs as defined in Section 23.84A.036, the Preservation Board shall consider the following:
 1. Signs Attached or Applied to Structures.
 - a. The relationship of the shape of the proposed sign to the architecture of the building and with the shape of other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
 - b. The relationship of the texture of the proposed sign to the building for which it is proposed, and with other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;

- c. The possibility of physical damage to the structure and the degree to which the method of attachment would conceal or disfigure desirable architectural features or details of the structure (the method of attachment shall be approved by the Director);
 - d. The relationship of the proposed colors and graphics with the colors of the building and with other approved signs on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
 - e. The relationship of the proposed sign with existing lights and lighting standards, and with the architectural and design motifs of the building;
 - f. Whether the proposed sign lighting will detract from the character of the building; and
 - g. The compatibility of the colors and graphics of the proposed sign with the character of the District.
2. Wall signs painted on or affixed to a building shall not exceed ten percent of the total area of the façade or 240 square feet, whichever is less. Area of original building finish visible within the exterior dimensions of the sign (e.g., unpainted brick) shall not be considered when computing the sign's area.
 4. When determining the appropriate size of a sign the Board and the Director of Neighborhoods shall also consider the function of the sign and the character and scale of buildings in the immediate vicinity, the character and scale of the building for which the sign is proposed, the proposed location of the sign on the building's exterior, and the total number and size of signs proposed or existing on the building.

RULES FOR THE PIONEER SQUARE PRESERVATION DISTRICT

XX. RULES FOR TRANSPARENCY, SIGNS, AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

The Pioneer Square Preservation Ordinance reflects a policy to focus on structures, individually and collectively, so that they can be seen and appreciated. Sign proliferation or inconsistent paint colors, for example, are incompatible with this focus, and are expressly to be avoided. (8/93)

B. General Signage Regulations

All signs on or hanging from buildings, in windows, or applied to windows, are subject to review and approval by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board. (8/93) Locations for signs shall be in accordance with all other regulations for signage. (12/94)

The intent of sign regulations is to ensure that signs relate physically and visually to their location; that signs not hide, damage or obscure the architectural elements of the building; that signs be oriented toward and

promote a pedestrian environment; and that the products or services offered be the focus, rather than signs. (8/93)

C. Specific Signage Regulations

6. Upper Floor Signage. Upper floor signage is not permitted, except for temporary signage as per SMC 23.66.160D or when it is proposed as part of an overall integrated sign plan for the building. (7/99) When permitted, the preferred location for temporary signs is in windows, rather than attached to the building. (8/93)

8. Wall Signs. The Board recommends that wall signs be painted on a wood or metal backing and attached in such a manner that the building surface is not damaged. Colors and graphics of wall signs shall be compatible with the character of the District, and letter sizes shall be appropriately scaled to fit the overall design and dimensions of the sign. (7/99, 7/03)

Issued: December 13, 2023

Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator