



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

PSB 167/24

ARC/Staff Report

Board meeting June 26, 2024

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.

062624.23 600 Alaskan

Applicant: Ron Wright, architect

Proposed: Placement of waste dumpsters and construction of screening

ARC/ Staff report: The proposed location of the waste dumpsters for the Western and Polson Buildings is on private property that is adjacent to those buildings and owned by the same property owner. The site is on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way and is across from the entry and exit for the Seattle Ferry. The waste dumpsters are not used by the hotel as the hotel has their own garbage room off of Western Ave. The Board previously saw a presentation on the project on May 8, 2024. The Office of the Waterfront was at the meeting to clarify that they did not dictate where the garbage would be stored but they provided access to accommodate garbage pick. The Office of the Waterfront explained they installed a ramp at a location based on where the garbage was stored next to the Western building and provided staff with a site plan showing that location. Google images also show that is where waste dumpsters were stored before being located to this proposed location on the corner.

Staff had originally reported the use of the vacant parcel on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way for a notice of violation last year for using the site for garbage and recycling storage without a Certificate of Approval, and which is prohibited as a street level use in the preservation district. In addition, code requires garbage to be stored on the lot in which it is produced. After the Notice of Violation was issued by Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), the property owner asked for violation to be reconsidered. SDCI determined that because the parcels were all owned by the same property owner that the garbage was an accessory use rather than a primary use and that together the parcels were a lot. They determined that locating the garbage on the parcel was not a violation but not

screening the garbage was a violation. In follow up with the SDCI staff person who reviewed the Notice of Violation she said “Even though we’ve said they can remain if permitted and screened, another location could be proposed instead if one is available and more appropriate...The bins still aren’t approved in their current location, so perhaps a more satisfactory solution can be reached through the permitting and Certificate of Approval processes.”

Following the May 8 presentation the applicant has submitted plans to screen the waste dumpsters from all sides instead of leaving one side open and have provided landscape information as the ARC had requested. They have provided a narrative responding to requests to explore alternative locations and a diagram showing waste dumpsters where previously stored but are proposing to have the waste dumpster location remain at the corner of Alaskan Way and Yesler.

Historic Preservation Program Staff was able to meet with SPU and SDCI planner as well as Office of the Waterfront to better understand if the code requirements limited the locations, given that the garbage regulations are in the underlying code and not the Pioneer Square Preservation District legislation. What staff found out is that any location is going to require an exception to the code. It is correct that garbage cannot be picked up in a bus stop but pick up is also not supposed to be along a bus only lane. There is a bus only lane where the ramp was installed. The existing ramp is an exception to that regulation whether the garbage storage is at the proposed location or in front of the Western building loading dock on Alaskan Way and is mitigated by being picked up at night. Garbage is also not supposed to be stored between a street and a building, so both locations require exceptions to that regulation. Garbage storage is expected to be interior and that is now required for new construction and rehabilitated buildings. While there are regulations for the slope of a ramp, pallet jacks and other lifts have been used by buildings that store dumpsters in the basement. SPU says that they do not determine how many dumpsters a building needs, that is a choice of the building owner/manager, but any dumpsters cannot be larger than 2 yards if they need to be moved by the worker who picks them up. SPU says that it is common for the dumpsters to need to be maneuvered in and out and they do not require the screening to have room for that. SPU does not mandate if the garbage is picked up daily or weekly, that is a choice of the building owner/manager, but SPU said that daily service is slightly more costly than weekly but did not have specific costs. Properties that have bag service in Pioneer Square are picked up three times a day.

Draft Motions:

Motion to Approve: I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval placement of waste dumpsters and screening of the dumpster on four (4) sides. All per the applicant’s submittal.

The area of the dumpsters, inside the screening and out must be maintained free of litter and spills and free of odor and pests. Any graffiti on the screening must be removed immediately. If dumpsters are no longer stored in this location, the vacant screening must

be removed and not used for storage of other items. The planting area is to be maintained free of weeds and maintained with living plants.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the *June 26, 2024* public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

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

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

In addition to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance and Rules, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the complete series of Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs developed by the National Park Service shall serve as guidelines for proposed exterior alterations and treatments, rehabilitation projects, and new construction. (7/99)

New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District. (7/99)

Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

The following architectural elements are typical throughout the District and will be used by the Board in the evaluation of requests for design approval:

A. Site. The property line is the line of the building mass. Street facades are uniformly located at the front property lines, thus there is a strong street edge definition. Building cornices, bay windows and ornament project beyond the main wall surface of some facades.

B. Design. Building design is generally typified by horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels. Facades may also be divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays. Street facades

are also distinguished by heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement.

C. Building materials. The most common facing materials are brick masonry and cut or rusticated sandstone, with limited use of terra cotta and tile. Wooden window sash, ornamental sheet metal, carved stone and wooden or cast iron storefronts are also typically used throughout the District. Synthetic stucco siding materials are generally not permitted. (7/99)

D. Color. Building facades are primarily composed of varied tones of red brick masonry or gray sandstone. Unfinished brick, stone, or concrete masonry unit surfaces may not be painted. Painted color is typically applied to wooden window sash, sheet metal ornament and wooden or cast iron storefronts. Paint colors shall be appropriate to ensure compatibility within the District. (7/99)

Motion to Deny: I move to recommend denial of placement of the waste dumpsters on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way.

The placement of waste dumpsters, even when screened, is not consistent with the goals of the preservation district as outlined in the code. The location is on a corner in a highly visible and pedestrian oriented area along the new Alaskan Way Waterfront Park, across the street from Colmon Dock ferry loading, and across from the new waterfront habitat beach. Yesler Way is also in construction of pedestrian improvements. The location on the corner is a primary entrance to Pioneer Square. Storing garbage dumpsters in this visually prominent location visually detracts from the historical, cultural and architectural significance of the district, discourages visitors to the city, particularly pedestrians. The waste dumpster storage detracts from visual and urban relationships of the district, which was otherwise improved with the Alaskan Way viaduct removal. The dumpsters even when screened will be visible and do not provide a welcoming atmosphere and may cause odor, a deterrent from visitors entering the District, negatively affecting the business environment. The dumpsters were previously located in a less prominent location and could be accommodated there with a reduction in the number of dumpsters and increase of service, if needed, that is still less than the typical service of the Clear Alleys program that most of Pioneer Square participates in.

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.

23.66.100 Creation of district, legislative findings and purpose

A. During the City of Seattle's relatively brief history, it has had little time in which to develop areas of consistent historical or architectural character. It is recognized that the Pioneer Square area of Seattle contains many of these rare attributes and consequently is an area of great historical and cultural significance. Further, the regional sports stadiums, constructed in and near the Pioneer Square area, and the traffic and activities that they generate have resulted in adverse impacts upon the social, cultural, historic and ethnic values of the Pioneer Square area. To preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the Pioneer Square area and the buildings therein; to return unproductive structures to useful purposes; to attract visitors to the City; to avoid a proliferation of vehicular parking and vehicular-oriented uses; to provide regulations for existing on-street and off-street parking; to stabilize existing housing, and encourage a variety of new and rehabilitated housing types for all income groups; to encourage the use of transportation modes other than the private automobile; to protect existing commercial vehicle access; to improve visual and urban relationships between existing and future buildings and structures, parking spaces and public improvements within the area; and to encourage pedestrian uses, there is established as a special review district, the Pioneer Square Preservation District. The boundaries of the District are shown on Map A for 23.66.100¹ and on the Official Land Use Map.

C. Reasons for Designating the Pioneer Square Preservation District.

1. Historic Significance. The Pioneer Square Preservation District is unique because it is the site of the beginning of The City of Seattle. The area also retains much of the original architecture and artifacts of its early history. The District has played a significant role in the development of Seattle, the Puget Sound region and The State of Washington. It was the first location of industry, business and homes in early Seattle and the focus of commerce and transportation for more than a half century.
 2. Architectural Significance. As a collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings of similar materials, construction techniques and architectural style, the District is unique, not only to the City but to the country as well. Most of the buildings within the District embody the distinctive characteristics of the Late Victorian style. Many buildings are the work of one architect, Elmer H. Fisher. For these and other reasons, the buildings combine
-

to create an outstanding example of an area that is distinguishable in style, form, character and construction representative of its era.

3. **Social Diversity.** The District represents an area of unique social diversity where people from many income levels and social strata live, shop and work. It is an area in which social services, including missions, low-income housing and service agencies exist.
4. **Business Environment.** The District is an area of remarkable business diversity. The street level of the area north of S. King Street is pedestrian-oriented, with its storefronts occupied primarily by specialty retail shops, art galleries, restaurants and taverns. The upper floors of buildings in the historic core are occupied by professional offices, various types of light manufacturing, and housing for persons of many income groups. The area south of S. King Street includes the stadium's north parking lot, a number of structures occupied by light manufacturing and warehousing use, and several structures converted to office, residential and mixed use. The stadium's north parking lot may be redeveloped to accommodate a mix of uses, including a substantial amount of housing. The ongoing restoration and sensitive rehabilitation of many District structures, combined with proposed compatible new construction, will continue to enhance the District's economic climate.
5. **Educational Value.** The restoration and preservation of the District will yield information of educational significance regarding the way of life and the architecture of the late nineteenth-century as well as adding interest and color to the City. Restoration of the District will preserve the environment that was characteristic of an important era of Seattle's history.
6. **Geographic Location.** The District is uniquely situated adjacent to Seattle's waterfront, the central business district, the International District, and sports stadium and exhibition center facilities.

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

In addition to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance and Rules, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the complete series of Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs developed by the National Park Service shall serve as guidelines for proposed exterior alterations and treatments, rehabilitation projects, and new construction. (7/99)

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

(7/99) In considering rehabilitation projects, what is critical is the stabilization of significant historical detailing, respect for the original architectural style, and compatibility of scale and materials.

New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District. (7/99)
Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

The following architectural elements are typical throughout the District and will be used by the Board in the evaluation of requests for design approval:

E. Site. The property line is the line of the building mass. Street facades are uniformly located at the front property lines, thus there is a strong street edge definition. Building cornices, bay windows and ornament project beyond the main wall surface of some facades.

F. Design. Building design is generally typified by horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels. Facades may also be divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays. Street facades are also distinguished by heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement.

G. Building materials. The most common facing materials are brick masonry and cut or rusticated sandstone, with limited use of terra cotta and tile. Wooden window sash, ornamental sheet metal, carved stone and wooden or cast iron storefronts are also typically used throughout the District. Synthetic stucco siding materials are generally not permitted. (7/99)

H. Color. Building facades are primarily composed of varied tones of red brick masonry or gray sandstone. Unfinished brick, stone, or concrete masonry unit surfaces may not be painted. Painted color is typically applied to wooden window sash, sheet metal ornament and wooden or cast iron storefronts. Paint colors shall be appropriate to ensure compatibility within the District. (7/99)

Issued: June 20, 2024
Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator