



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 300/24

### Staff Report

Board meeting Nov 20, 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.

#### 112024.41 **Prefontaine Fountain and City Hall Park**

Briefing on proposed demolition of Prefontaine Fountain, retaining side panels and sign and construction of a new feature and redesign of City Hall Park

Staff report: The briefing covers two Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) projects but discussion around the demolition of the Prefontaine Fountain is a priority as it is the priority project for Parks. DON staff have asked the applicant to be clear in this presentation about what portions of the Prefontaine fountain will remain and what portions are proposed to be demolished as staff did not think that it was clear in previous presentations. Both the Prefontaine Fountain and City Hall Park are listed as Historic Contributing to the Pioneer Square Skid Row National Historic District. The historical report provided by Parks finds that the fountain and surrounding site of Prefontaine Place (Park) still retains integrity in its unmaintained state and that it continues to be considered contributing to both the National Register District and the local Pioneer Square Preservation District. In addition, it finds that the Prefontaine Place could be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Washington Historic Register as a stand-alone resource and that it could qualify as independently as a Seattle City Landmark. Included in that significance is that the Prefontaine Place and the Fountain were designed by prominent Seattle Architect Carl F. Gould. Likewise, the report indicates that City Hall Park continue to contribute to the National Register District and the Local Preservation District but that the changes over time have affected the integrity that would be needed to qualify independently for the National Register or a City Landmark.

Though no decisions are to be made at the briefing today the Board should weigh in on the proposed demolition of the fountain and indicate what additional information they may need before coming to a conclusion.

The fountain has been in a state of disrepair for more than 18 years. Over the years Parks staff have approached DON staff about demolishing the fountain however no historic assessment, condition assessment or specific proposal has been put forth until now.

The SMC23.66.115A prohibits the demolition of a structure unless the Board finds that the structure has no architectural or historic significance. Historic Preservation Standards would be to maintain the historic resource, and then repair the historic resource.

The Board should discuss if they have enough information about why the fountain is not working and what it would take to repair the fountain without replacing it. Does the Board have enough information to agree that it cannot be repaired?

The Board should discuss if they agree with the National Register listing and the provided historic report that Prefontaine Place including the fountain, has architectural and historic significance.

The Board might specify if there are any features of the fountain that the Board finds does not have significance or if they find that the entire site has significance. Are there parts of the structure that could be demolished without the structure losing its significance? For example, the blue tiles that were installed in 1967, does the Board find that they have gained significance over time or, because the tile is not original is it not significant?

SMC23.66.115 Section B of the demolition code that says when demolition or removal is essential to protect the public health, safety and welfare the Board may recommend demolition whether the other prerequisites are satisfied or not. There have not been to my knowledge a historic structure approved for demolition under this section. There was another non-historic, non-contributing park structure removed under this section. Does the Board have enough information to determine that despite the fountain's historic status, that even if repaired or modified it would be a health, safety and welfare concern?

While Parks is proposing to maintain the side panels and a portion of the paving and to modify and reuse the carved sign does the design including the new items and what is salvaged from the fountain mitigate the loss of the historic structure?

If the fountain is replaced by a new structure, is water important to the mitigation of the loss of the fountain.

## 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.

#### 23.66.115 Demolition approval

A. Demolition or removal of buildings or other structures in the District is prohibited unless approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director. Except as provided in subsection B below, no approval shall be given for building demolition or removal unless the following prerequisites are met:

1. The Director of Neighborhoods, following a recommendation by the Preservation Board, determines that the building or structure has no architectural or historic significance; and
2. Use and design of the replacement structure has been approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director; and
3. Proof acceptable to the Department of Neighborhoods Director of a valid commitment for interim and long-term financing for the replacement structure has been secured. In addition to other proof, the Department of Neighborhoods Director may accept a bond, letter of credit or cash deposit as a demonstration that the project has adequate financial backing to ensure completion; and
4. Satisfactory arrangements have been made for retention of any part of the structure's facade which the Department of Neighborhoods Director, following a recommendation by the Preservation Board, determines to be significant; and
5. Satisfactory assurance is provided that new construction will be completed within two (2) years of demolition.

B. When demolition or removal of a building or other structure in the District is essential to protect the public health, safety and welfare or when the purposes of this ordinance will be furthered by the demolition or removal, then the Director of Neighborhoods, following review and recommendation by the Board, may authorize such demolition or removal whether the prerequisites of this Section 23.66.115 are satisfied or not.

## **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 Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation**

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new

feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures pages 77 - 87

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/secretary-standards-treatment-historic-properties.htm>

Issued: Nov 13, 2024  
Genna Nashem  
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator