



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 206/21

MINUTES for Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Board Members

Lynda Collie
Kianoush Curran
Maureen Elenga
Audrey Hoyt
Lauren Kush
Jose Lorenzo-Torres
Lindsay Pflugrath
Alex Rolluda, Chair
Felicia Salcedo

Staff

Genna Nashem
Melinda Bloom

Chair Alex Rolluda called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation is limited to access by the WebEx meeting link or the telephone call-in line provided on agenda.

Roll Call

120121.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 18, 2021

MM/SC/LC/AH

2:4:0 Minutes approved. Mr. Rolluda, Mmes. Curran, Elenga, Pflugrath abstained.

September 1, 2021

MM/SC/LC/KC

4:2:0 Minutes approved. Mmes. Elenga and Pflugrath abstained.

120121.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

120121.3 APPLICATION

120121.31 **Gridiron/ Johnson Plumbing Building**
590 1st Ave S

Change of use from retail/ restaurant to office for 3, 135 square foot space

Henry Walters presented the request for change of use for 3,135 square foot space. He proposed office use and noted the street elevation is heavily opaque with not high visibility in. He said the elevation is heavy brick with punched openings with not a lot of light transmission and office use is a better fit for the space. He said the use is well below the 50% threshold as required in SMC 23.66.130 C. He proposed window displays as remedy to provide pedestrian interest. He said window displays would be open-backed – almost a shadowbox; artists with interest in participating have been confirmed. He proposed approval of placeholder with specific artwork coming back for review.

He provided activation plans for the restaurant side of the space and noted sidewalk seating wraps around the building. He said most windows face the stadium and there is lots of room to activate with seating, festooning with lights.

Mr. Walters said the low visibility character of the building makes it suitable for office use which takes up less than 50% of the lineal feet along Railway Avenue. He noted the devastation suffered by restaurants and retail and said 10,000 square foot space is difficult to activate. He hoped the board would see the benefits of two occupants in the space and noted 5,000 square feet is more reasonable for a restaurant at this time.

Staff Report: Ms. Nashem said the Board reviewed this project at a briefing on Nov 3, 2021. The Board asked the applicant to demonstrate how the space would be compatible with preferred uses, to be highly visible and pedestrian oriented and suggested that they consider a way to display, something, or otherwise contribute to the character of the district, such as displaying art in the windows as they considered the long history of artist in Pioneer Square to have contributed to the character of the district. The Board also wanted to understand the potential for the remaining restaurant to activate the area. The Code separates uses into preferred uses and discouraged uses. According to the calculations provided this use falls into the discouraged category because it would put office use slightly over the 20 percent of square footage of the block front. The Board can approve discouraged use if an applicant demonstrates that the proposed use is compatible with uses preferred at street level as long as the use is less than 50% of street frontage of the block.

Ms. Elenga asked if the shadow box concept would block light and visibility into space.

Mr. Walters said it would be open backed. He noted 3-D piece with light filtering around and through it. He said there would be no physical barrier behind it.

Responding to clarifying questions he said they have a listing sheet for restaurant search.

Ms. Hoyt asked about plan for parking lot.

Mr. Walters said the parking lot is part of the Waterfront project.

Ms. Nashem said it will be part of the Waterfront Promenade.

Ms. Hoyt noted the reluctance to change restaurant to office use. She said in this case, it is not highly visible frontage, and the site has not historically been pedestrian friendly. She said less than 50% of the block front would be office. She said activation is very important in the district and noted getting more people in the neighborhood is a benefit.

Mr. Walters said the building has not been occupied since redeveloped. 10,000 square foot restaurant was permitted but never used.

Ms. Hoyt said she hoped an operator would be found and said the majority of use of the space would be restaurant.

Mr. Walters said even if not one, a couple smaller operators could set up, such as a bar and a restaurant.

Action: I move to approve change of use from retail/restaurant to office for 3,135 square foot space at the Gridiron / Johnson Plumbing Building, 590 1st Avenue as presented, per

Code Citations:

SMC 23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

SMC 23.66.130 - Street-level uses

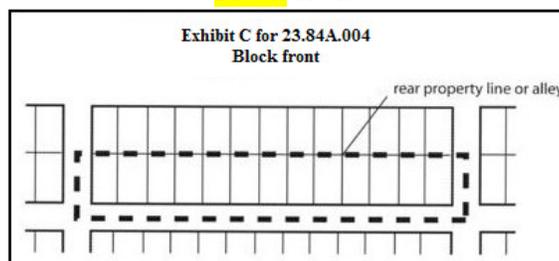
- A. 1. Uses at street level in the area designated on Map B for 23.66.130 require the approval of the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board.
- B. Preferred Street-level Uses.
 1. Preferred uses at street level must be highly visible and pedestrian oriented. Preferred street-level uses either display merchandise in a manner that contributes to the character and activity of the area, and/or promote residential uses, including but not limited to the following uses:
 - a. Any of the following uses under 3,000 square feet in size: art galleries and other general sales and service uses, restaurants and other eating and drinking establishment uses, and lodging uses;
 - b. Theaters.
 2. Accessory parking garages that serve preferred street-level uses on streets or malls, parks or alleys designed for pedestrian uses are also preferred.

- C. Discouraged Street-level Uses.
1. The following are discouraged at street level in the area designated on Map B for 23.66.130:
 - a. Any use occupying more than 50 percent of any block front;
 - b. Any of the following with gross floor area over 3,000 square feet: general sales and services uses, eating and drinking establishment uses, and lodging uses;
 - c. All other uses with gross floor area over 10,000 square feet;
 - d. Professional services establishments or offices that occupy more than 20 percent of any block front; and
 - e. Parking garages that are not accessory to preferred uses.
 2. Discouraged uses may be approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board if an applicant demonstrates that the proposed use is compatible with uses preferred at street level.
- D. Conditions on Street-level Uses. Approved street level uses in the area designated on Map B for 23.66.130 are subject to the following conditions:
1. No use may occupy more than 50 percent of the street-level frontage of a block that is 20,000 square feet or more in area;
 2. Human service uses and personal service establishments, such as hair cutting and tanning salons, may not exceed 25 percent of the total street-level frontage of any block front.

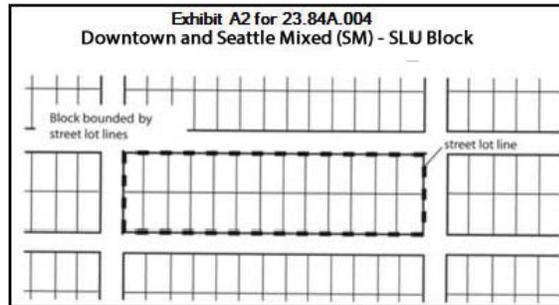
"**Block** front" means the land area along one side of a street bound on three sides by the centerline of platted streets and on the fourth side by an alley, rear lot lines, or another lot's side lot lines (Exhibit C for [23.84A.004](#)). For **blocks** in Downtown zones and all Seattle Mixed (SM) zones within specific geographic areas set forth in Table A to [23.48.002](#), if there is no alley or rear lot line, a line that approximates the centerline of the **block** shall be used to establish the line dividing the two **block** fronts of the **block**, taking into consideration the location of vacated alleys on the **block**, if any, and the location and orientation of alleys and rear lot lines on surrounding **blocks**.

Exhibit C for [23.84A.004](#)

Block front



Downtown **block and **block** in Seattle Mixed (SM) zones within specific geographic areas**



MM/SC/ME/LP 6:0:0 Motion carried.

120121.32

Pioneer Square Storm Drain Art and Rain Garden Project

Sara Pizzo, Alliance for Pioneer Square

520 Occidental Ave S

Planting a rain garden and protective railings to 4 tree pits, bark to a 5th tree pit provide a street mural and provide educational signage on rain gardens and storm water runoff on Occidental Ave S, and to provide storm drain stencils throughout the district

Sara Pizzo, Alliance for Pioneer Square proposed public realm improvements:

plant robust, majority native vegetation to four tree pits along the east side of Occidental Ave S, south of S King St. The fifth tree pit is more isolated to the south and is slated for cedar chip infill, a more modest improvement. With the help of Stewardship Partners, we have strategically selected plants that will attract pollinators and filter stormwater runoff before reaching the Puget Sound. The plant species were also chosen to withstand a harsh urban environment. We would like to install tree pit fencing around the perimeter of the four northernmost tree pits to protect newly planted vegetation, if budget allows.

The second project component is to install a permanent street mural around the storm drain, also located on the east side of Occidental Ave S, south of S King St. The storm drain mural project is a high-visibility way to beautify the area and raise public consciousness about stormwater emptying directly into the Puget Sound. The artist who was commissioned to design the storm drain mural has also created a custom Pioneer Square storm drain stencil design that can be applied to storm drains throughout the neighborhood by community volunteers. The unique stencil design will further Pioneer Square's identity as a distinct neighborhood and will spread awareness about the importance of not dumping waste into storm drains neighborhood wide.

The final component is the installation of educational signage into the sidewalk overlooking the newly planted tree pits. The educational signage has user-friendly

information about stormwater runoff and how rain gardens function. This signage is intended to educate the public and link the storm drain art with the new plantings.

The Public Realm Work Group, which consists of Pioneer Square residents, business owners, employees, and property representatives, provided direction for this project. This community stakeholder group chose to prioritize a green space improvement project for the neighborhood. The group was adamant the project should also have an ecological benefit, in addition to simply improving curb appeal. Adjacent property owner, Stewardship Partners is a non-profit organization located in Pioneer Square. A work group member suggested we bring them on board to help with the rain garden project given their expertise and commitment to community-led environmental stewardship projects. The Work Group invited artists from the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture artist roster, and artists they've worked with in the past, to apply for the storm drain mural and stencil project. The work group selected Tommy Segundo, a local Indigenous artist, for the project. Community members will be invited to plant the new vegetation and stencil storm drains throughout the neighborhood on a volunteer workday.

Ms. Pizzo said the adjacent building was constructed in 2014, curb and sidewalk were installed at same time; no historic material will be impacted. She said thermoplastic paint will be used for the street material; it is the same material used for crosswalks, etc. She said they have not yet decided on design for tree pit fencing and provided three options, with Option 3 the SDOT standard preferred. She said signage will be single pedestal design similar the Trails to Treasure signage. She said the panel graphic for signage has been customized for the neighborhood. She said maintenance plan will involve adjacent building owner, Stewardship Partners.

Staff report: Ms. Nashem said the existing guidelines do not have much guidance on art and educational installations. Usually, the Board has looked to assure that the installations avoid harm or obstruction of historic material, are durable and maintained as well as generally compatible with the district. In this case no historic materials are expected to be affected.

Mr. Rolluda asked about Corten versus powder coated finish for fencing.

Ms. Pizzo said the property owner is more interested in powder coated because it is more durable.

Mr. Rolluda asked what is being used at the building to the east.

Ms. Pizzo said it is powder coated.

Mr. Rolluda said a pet area was created in Belltown by Amazon; he asked if that was considered here.

Ms. Pizzo said that is why they are leaving tree pit # 5 without fencing; there is an accessible green patch.

Ms. Elenga said the plantings are a nice choice.

Action: I move to approve Planting a rain garden with protective railings as mandatory element to 4 tree pits, bark to a 5th tree pit provide a street mural and provide educational signage on rain gardens and storm water runoff on Occidental Ave S, and to provide storm drain stencils throughout the district at 520 Occidental Ave S. as presented, per

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.

Pioneer Square Preservation District Rules

XIV. STREET TREES AND VEGETATION

Median strips and permanent plant beds shall contain plants approved for urban conditions, combining evergreen shrubs with ground cover and, where appropriate, flowers.

Secretary of Interior's Standards

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.

MM/SC/KC/LC 6:0:0 Motion carried.

Mr. Rolluda left at 10:00 am.

120121.4 BOARD BUSINESS

120121.41 Worksession

Discussion of revisions to Design Guidelines

John Owens went over discussion agenda:

- Revisit height and bulk of new structures
- Signs
- Organization and status update
- Path forward & schedule

Guidelines

i. The Board will establish a new building's appropriate height based on its visual impact to its local surroundings and the district's profile as seen from outside Pioneer Square. To accomplish this, the Board will consider the following:

a. Perspectives of the building from four sides seen from:

- Adjacent block
- Down the streets
- Viewpoints and entry points

Comparisons of height of existing buildings –applicant must demonstrate compatibility

Sunlight blockage

Extent mitigated by architectural characteristics

Other as approved by the Board

Elevations

- Eye level perspective looking up the block
- May require views from prominent locations and entries
- May require 3-dimensional modeling and analysis or relationships to surroundings and districts

Ms. Pflugrath asked if anyone criticized the guidelines for not being proscriptive enough.

Ms. Nashem said the current guidelines are less proscriptive and just say design must be compatible with district. She said a building's design team challenged board decision and said they could build to height limit. The Hearing Examiner said no that they have to consider the scale which includes height. She said at least at least consideration of surrounding block. She said new guidelines will establish criteria of what to look at to determine if design is compatible.

Ms. Pflugrath said we are moving toward more concrete guidelines.

Ms. Nashem said the City Land Use Attorney will review. She said there is a lot of variety in height but within a range so being able to look at each location in that context for what is appropriate.

Mr. Owens moved on to signs:

- Treat different sign types individually with different guidelines.
- Follow historic precedent.
- Consider signs as a “composed package” integrated with building’s architecture.
- Allow for “artistic variety”.
- Emphasize design and construction quality, including mountings, durable materials, etc.
- Emphasize pedestrian scale.

Ms. Nashem said current rules generally prohibit upper-level signage unless part of an overall sign package. She asked board to consider where building name should be. She said there was litigation over having building name over doorway and also on back of building facing stadium. She said board should specify where does building name go? At top? Which side? How many names can a building have? Historic name versus naming rights to major tenant.

Ms. Collie said to identify how many signs are allowed and identify size, location and quantity.

Blade signs:

Mr. Owens went over blade signs noting clarity on location, dimensions, illumination, materials, mounting.

- No more than one projecting element.
- Nor flashing scrolling or moving signs.
- Signs shall not cover architectural features of contributing or historic buildings.
- Other – maybe we need to discuss submittal requirements here. For example, maybe need a sign “package”.

Ms. Nashem said when a sign is perpendicular to building it is called a blade sign. She asked board members to think about use of neon, external lighting, if part of ‘reduced overall sign package’ then define what that is, and how many signs total should be allowed for a business.

Sign Bands:

Location, size, illumination, letters, materials, new buildings versus historic buildings

Ms. Nashem said current guidelines don't allow internally lit signs as they are associated with fast food and urban shopping centers; glowing letters, entire box lit up.

Window signs:

Ms. Nashem said transparency must be maintained but no maximum coverage is specified.

Mr. Owens said to consider plastic murals, upper-level signage, and to provide examples.

Ms. Nashem said each window should be considered. She noted window signage at Callus was not approved. She noted murals on windows in vacant spaces. She asked board to consider if a mural is better than brown paper; what is preferred? She said 3C logo used at Callus is a number and a letter and questioned if that should fall into the 10" rule or if it should be looked at as art.

Ms. Pflugrath said the 3C logo has art / design to it, so it looks intentional.

Ms. Hoyt said there is no formal oversight of vacant spaces regarding signage. She said it should be easier for a tenant to activate space than to put up murals.

Ms. Nashem said that advertising would need a Certificate of Approval.

Ms. Hoyt...Alliance, King's Crossing – seen as marketing; would need Certificate of Approval. Space becomes valuable to keep empty and use window as advertising.

Neon

Mr. Owens asked if neon should be limited to three colors? Subdued colors? Have no decorative trim? Be part of sign package?

Ms. Nashem said the current section on neon assumes it is window signage, white and black are not counted as colors, size needs to be specified. She said rules were written for window signs, not wall signs. She said current rules allow a few signs. She noted beer signs that bars often get for free to from products they sell. She asked board members if there should be limits on the number of alcohol signs. She noted bondsman office in the Frye Building who has much signage on Yesler Ave.

Mr. Owens suggested dividing neon into window neon, blade neon, and other neon.

Ms. Nashem suggested incorporating neon into other sign types because LED is used, rather than break into neon sign types.

Upper Story Signs

Mr. Owens said they are not allowed.

Ms. Nashem said the District Rules don't say it has to be a building name. In downtown code you cannot have sign above 65'. Exceptions for hotels, hospitals, public service building. Or not having any.

Ms. Hoyt said her business, a co-working /hospitality space needs signage. She said they have been priced out of retail space and would have to be on upper floor. She said they would need exterior wayfinding signage because of the nature of the business. She said a small business inside a building needs people to know they are there. She said there is a different issue for naming rights.

Ms. Nashem noted readability and 7' tall letters. She asked what is pedestrian-oriented? She suggested finding a balance, appropriate letter sizes, placement on building, upper level window signage.

Ms. Pflugrath said upper-level signage is not problematic to her; there is not a lot of it. She said one thing that makes old districts interesting is ghost signs; they add visual interest. She said to be careful about limitations.

Mr. Owens noted existing buildings and difficulty in fitting with architecture.

Ms. Pflugrath said the Dell sign doesn't fit but the Seattle Lighting sign is not a problem.

Ms. Hoyt said a 6' x 2' wide sign in Tacoma is no issue; it needs to fit with architecture and scale.

Ms. Elenga said there is room for case-by-case review based on nature of the business and character of streetscape.

Mr. Owens noted New York upper level uses and suggested including examples of how upper levels uses and signs are dealt with in other cities.

Ms. Hoyt said New York does it well.

Directories

Irrespective of new versus historic building.

Ms. Nashem said just like new buildings should be compatible with the old, so should signage.

Ms. Collie said to make sure there is equity in all buildings; compatible is subjective. She said rules help us understand what compatible is between a 1915 versus a 2020 building.

Mr. Owens said to explain what compatible is and questioned how to allow flexibility in district to evolve.

Ms. Collie left the meeting at 11:00 am.

Banners

Ms. Nashem noted proximity of stadium and preponderance of sports flags and banners. She noted flag holder attachment to building.

Wall

Mr. Owens noted ghost signs, when to allow wall signs.

Ms. Nashem said wall sign is flat on building. She said there is overlap with other sign types and said a sign in a sign band could be a wall sign. If not building name, not advertising, or located in places.

A-Boards

Ms. Nashem said SDOT made regulations for them; need guidelines to comply with that.

Awnings

Mr. Owens said signs above the canopy look tacked on and asked if a location should be identified.

Ms. Nashem said the NOLO sign was inspired by King Street Station.

Ms. Elenga suggested keeping within frame or within architectural element.

Other

Ms. Nashem said to be more specific about sidewalk café not allowing advertising banners and even include in motion.

120121.5 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** Alex Rolluda, Chair

120121.6 **STAFF REPORT:** Genna Nashem

Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator
206.684.0227