



The City of Seattle

# Landmarks Preservation Board

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

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 207/23

## MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

City Hall

Remote Meeting

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 - 3:30 p.m.

### Board Members Present

Taber Caton

Matt Inpanbutr

Ian Macleod

Lora-Ellen McKinney

Lawrence Norman

Becca Pheasant-Rhys

Harriet Wasserman

### Staff

Sarah Sodt

Erin Doherty

Melinda Bloom

### Absent

Dean Barnes

Roi Chang

Marc Schmitt

Padraic Slattery

Acting Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

## ROLL CALL

**060723.1**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ellen Look spoke against nomination of the Bullitt House. She said the neighbors are working with Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPAR) to create a new park. She said the house doesn't fit in with that vision. She said Bassetti spoke disparagingly about the house.

Alex Farivar spoke against nomination of the Bullitt House. He said it is inconsistent with the vision for the park. He said the house is neither historic nor architecturally significant. He said the Bullitts had no strong predilection to saving the house.

John Dages said he had been a longtime neighbor and spoke against nomination of the Bullitt House. He said the house is just an A-frame and is not a significant architectural work of Fred Bassetti.

Naishin Fu spoke against the designation of 3414-16 Fremont. She said she never noticed the building and affordable housing is needed more.

Colleen McAleer spoke against the extension of Controls and Incentives process for Battelle – Talaris. She said the process shouldn't be determined by SDCI or EIS, only the Landmarks Board.

Kathy Beymer spoke against nomination of the Bullitt House. She said she wants a park and that should match the historic nature of the community / district.

Sharon Lee spoke against nomination of the Bullitt House and said the house is not significant. She said Seattle Parks & Recreation could sell or demolish it. She said neighbors are against nomination.

Ms. Doherty said all letters of public comment received had been shared with the board via email.

**060723.2 MEETING MINUTES**

April 19, 2023

MM/SC/BP/HW 4:0:2 Minutes approved. Dr. McKinney and Mr. Inpanbutr abstained.

May 3, 2023

MM/SC/HW/MI 5:0:1 Minutes approved. Dr. McKinney abstained.

**060723.3 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES**

060723.31 Continental Hotel  
315 Seneca Street  
Request for extension

Ms. Sodt explained the request for a two-month extension and noted the hope to have the agreement wrapped up for that.

Mr. Macleod said the request is reasonable.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for the Continental Hotel, 315 Seneca Street for two months.

MM/SC/MI/HW 6:0:0 Motion carried.

060723.32 Battelle Memorial Institute / Talaris Conference Center  
4000 NE 41<sup>st</sup> Street  
Request for extension

Ms. Doherty explained the request for a six-month extension. She said the process is not influenced by the EIS which is separate from the Controls and Incentives processes. She said she is actively talking with ownership about the agreement and several briefings have been presented to the board. Responding to clarifying questions, she said the EIS process is under SDCI purview. She said Controls and Incentives is a Landmarks Preservation Board process to identify and list items that do not require a Certificate of Approval or that can have an administrative review process. She said the EIS is related to the Master Use Permit; it is separate from the board's consideration of a Controls and Incentives Agreement.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for the Battelle Memorial Institute / Talaris Conference Center, 4000 NE 41<sup>st</sup> Street for

MM/SC/HW/LN 6:0:0 Motion carried.

**060723.4 DESIGNATION**

060723.41 3414-16 Fremont Avenue N

Ellen Mirro, Studio TJP presented the report (details in DON file). She provided context of the site and neighborhood and conducted a virtual walk around the building. She said most of the storefronts had been replaced, the south façade of the URM building was originally brick which has been changed to sheet product at the top, she noted vinyl windows and alley windows which had been cut off in a regrading process. She noted the east areaway between two buildings and courtyard space. She said the north elevation is covered with Hardi-panel. Inside, a 2020 seismic rehabilitation was started but never completed. She said the building was originally constructed as a bank and noted basement and sub-basement vaults. She said the south side of the basement has two-levels, the north side only one floor (upper) exposed. She said there are remnants of a possible stair in the basement level. She said the second floor was a large open space that was later subdivided into two spaces.

Ms. Mirro said the building was constructed in 1905 as one story and sometime before 1927 the floor plan was expanded to the north doubling in size, and adding a second story. She noted steel columns supporting the upper floor and an off-center second story window as curiosities related to the original smaller building. She said the center stairs were enclosed and the entry recessed. She said storefront transoms have been altered, a double door replaced a single door at north storefront, the southern retail space bulkhead tile was painted. She said one of the vault spaces was turned into a recording studio.

Ms. Mirro said tenants over time included a bar/diner in the northern space for 25 years, a grocer for 20 years that is now a restaurant in the southern space, among others. The second-floor space was a social hall for ten years, was used for boxing and dancing and is now divided into offices and a tattoo shop. She provided historic resource survey information as requested by a board member at the nomination meeting. She said the building received different ratings from different surveys and the building is more a contributing building rather than significant to City or community.

Katie Jaeger, Studio TJP said the building did not meet any of the criteria for designation. There is no event associated with a significant impact on the city, community, state, or nation. The building is associated with the original developer and owner of the subject Charles Rensburg and his business partner Samuel Dixon but not closely associated with either man in particular. She said the Fraternal Brotherhood was founded in 1898 in Los Angeles as an insurance collective with social program which was common. She provided a history of the Fraternal Brotherhood in Seattle noting its rise in 1900 and decline in 1920s – 1930s. She said the Fraternal Brotherhood name was painted on the second story but in 1937 it was not operating anywhere in Seattle.

Ms. Mirro talked about bank typology and noted this was a neighborhood bank similar to other neighborhood banks in Ballard, Columbia City, Capitol Hill. She said the subject building is a vernacular commercial type of building and doesn't reflect its usage as a bank. She said if the upper floor hadn't been divided, the building might have reflected its use as a fraternal hall but with the removal of the open community space, the integrity is gone. She said there is not a designer or builder to look at for this building, so it doesn't meet criteria D or E. She said the building is not highly visible or identifiable so doesn't meet Criterion F.

Jessica Clawson, McCullough Hill Leary said the building does not meet any of the criteria for designation. She said the Fraternal Brotherhood was only there a while and was not a majority use. She said the historic resources surveys offer differing opinions. She said the building doesn't rise to the level of landmark.

Mr. Norman said only the façade is significant and that he did not support designation.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis appreciated the additional information on the Fraternal Brotherhood.

Dr. McKinney said the building has changed a lot although the exterior is close to what it was.

Mr. Inpanbutr did not support designation and said he was disappointed Fremont is not a historic district. He liked the building and its scale, but a compelling case for designation was not made.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis did not support designation. She said the building is charming and nice in the neighborhood. She noted the interesting stories and said that nothing sets it beyond that; it doesn't meet the criteria.

Dr. McKinney said it is important that stories are told. She said to ensure that whatever it was, the story is told by a name, or a plaque, or something to tell what was interesting, important, quirky, meaningful. She said the story must be told in a way that doesn't disappear so even if this building is knocked down and turned into a skyscraper – heaven forbid – the story remains.

Mr. Norman said he wished that at least the façade would be kept as part of future development, but he did not support designation.

Ms. Wasserman said she supported nomination, but would not support designation as the building did not meet the criteria for designation.

Mr. Macleod said he shared the results of his independent research on historic surveys with the board through Ms. Doherty. He said the issue of density keeps coming up and he noted that while he is in favor of dense residential development, it is important to think what preserving buildings brings to the community. He said the building is an asset to the Fremont community and it is on a prominent site. He said it is not the best, or most ornate building but it has been an important commercial site. He said Fremont is a draw because it is a nice place, with nice businesses, with unique character and this building contributes to that ethos. He said this building is integral to the core of Fremont. He said he wished Fremont was a historic district. He supported designation under criteria C and D. He said the building is important in a granular way and is kitty corner from a fantastic flatiron building.

Ms. Doherty noted there is no precedent for nominating a façade and recommended the Board consider the entire exterior of the building.

Mr. Inpanbutr said he didn't want the building demolished. He said the building contributes to the community. He hoped the owner would be respectful, that the new building would fit in with the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Norman said there are charming elements, but the criteria were not met.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said it is a hard decision to make – it is a death sentence for the building, but it didn't meet the criteria.

Action: I move that the Board approve the designation of the property at 3414-16 Fremont Avenue N for consideration as a Seattle Landmark; noting the legal description above; that the designation is based upon satisfaction of Designation Standard C; that the features and characteristics of the property identified for preservation include: the exterior of the building.

MM/SC/IM/LM                      2:4:0    Motion failed. Messrs. Inpanbutr and Norman and  
Mmes. Pheasant-Reis and Wasserman opposed.

060723.51

Bullitt House  
1125 Harvard Avenue E

Kevin Bergsrud, Seattle Parks & Recreation (SPAR) said the nomination came at the request of the community and noted SPAR acquired the property through a living trust prepared in 1972 and codified in 1992.

Chrisanne Beckner presented the report (full report in DON file) and provided context of the site and area. She said the house was designed by Fred Bassetti for Stim and Kay Bullitt in 1955 with the two-bedroom addition constructed in 1956. The house is in the Harvard-Belmont Historic District and the Harvard-Belmont National Register Historic District. The immediate landscape was designed by Eckbo, Royston, and Williams although the plan was not fully implemented.

She said Seattle is located in the traditional territory of the Duwamish people. In 1851 the Denny party of the first 24 Europeans arrived at Alki Point in West Seattle. By 1855 the Treaty of Point Elliott displaced the Duwamish people to reservations. In the 1880s as resettlement expanded, the location of the Bullitt house was logged. In 1901 developer James Moore named the area “Capitol Hill” and began attracting the wealthy to what he called “Millionaire’s Row” (14th Avenue E). By 1924 the first restrictive covenant in Seattle was written for the Victory Heights neighborhood in north Seattle. By 1927 individual homeowners in Capitol Hill Heights signed a petition to add racially restrictive language to their deeds (Capitol Hill Community Club). Residents on 90 blocks on Capitol Hill followed. Restrictive covenants were written into deeds in the 1920s – 40s. Capitol Hill covenants expired in 1948 thanks to the work of organizations like the Christian Friends of Racial Equality (CFRE), and in spite of a public campaign by Capitol Hill Community Club. Planning programs like “redlining” continued to occur.

Ms. Beckner said Horace and Susan Henry owned the subject property from 1844 – 1928. They built a house in 1893; it burned in 1895. Their new residence was completed in 1904. In 1926 Henry donated their art collection to the University of Washington – Henry Art Gallery. In 1935, the Henry children donated the subject property to the City of Seattle for a city library. When the city chose a different site for the library, the property was acquired by the Julius H. Bloedels who were neighbors of the site. Bloedels’ son Prentice, founder of the Bloedels Reserve with his wife, Virginia, sold the property to Charles Stimson Bullitt.

Ms. Beckner said Bullitt was the son of Alexander and Dorothy Stimson Bullitt, developers and an early broadcasting family. He ran for congress in Seattle’s first congressional district and acquired the subject property for a family home in 1953. His first marriage ended in 1953; he met Kay Muller at Americans for Democratic Action meeting in 1954. Muller was a Radcliffe-educated political activist and teacher who moved to Seattle in 1954.

She did some fairly interesting things to learn more about racial equity, and to learn more about peace and politics. In 1944. She attended Hampton Institute, which put together African American and white scholars so that they could get a sense of how

the other half lived basically, and Kay got a chance to actually look at what segregation was like from the inside.

*Ms. Caton joined the meeting at 5:25 pm.*

Describing the property, Ms. Beckner said in 1955 landscape architects Eckbo, Royston, and Williams designed the immediate grounds. She said a pathway and stair down to Boylston and a wall that follows the western boundary were retained from the Henry's along with a garage and stable on the south end of the property. She said Fred Bassetti had political and social connections to the Bullitt family and they were involved in a lot of the same organizations. Bassetti designed the requested "A-frame ski lodge" and the later bedroom wing addition. She noted the skylights along the ridge line and in flat roof on bedroom wing, so everything is lit internally. She noted how the A-frame portion with single story bedroom space works with the single-story bedroom wing, stone wall which is visible from both inside and outside the house, fireplace, basement below the house, and stairs. She noted the central connecting piece and the stairway right underneath that leads down to the basement area. She provided an architectural rendering showing open volume, large windows facing north, stone wall and fireplace – all that are great for events and gatherings.

Ms. Beckner said the A-frame was popular in the 1950s and provided accessible Modernism. She noted Japan's Gassho-style farmhouses with silkworms in upper stories, and similar stables and lodges in Sweden. She said the structural form's popularity had a short life, waning in the 1970s. She said the A-frame became kitschy and associated with roadside architecture.

Ms. Beckner said the Bullitts divorced in 1979. Stimson died in 2009 and Kay died in 2021. Aside for being a home for the Bullitts and their six children, the house was a gathering place for the extended family and the wider community; headquarters for Stim and Kay's social and political activism: Keechelus Group, which grew into the Metropolitan Democratic Club, summer picnics for the neighbors and political associates, summer camps that promoted peace and racial equity, volunteer Instruction Program, Coalition for Quality Integrated Education, Mayor's Arts Festival of 1971, which grew into Bumbershoot, Urban League and Save Pike Place Market, Japanese American Citizens League, Washington State Advisory Committee to the U.S Commission on Civil Rights, and Sound Savings and Loan which was founded and owned by women.

Ms. Beckner conducted a virtual walk-about the house and noted the private entry, the A-frame portion which includes the kitchen, loft and balcony, windows over the kitchen. She noted the volume of the A-frame, fireplace and stone wall, the built-ins, stairs up to loft, loft bedroom, the study with accordion doors, bookcases, fireplace. She noted the built-in dressers and desks and headboards. She said the bathrooms are the most altered spaces in the house. She noted the basement with windows and concrete lifted area that was used as a stage. She said in the summer camps when they put plays together this is where they would present them.

She said Bassetti won awards for design and was known for the connectivity between inside and outside spaces. He designed public and educational buildings. He remained very well known in Seattle throughout his career and was at one time voted Seattle's favorite architect. He was also a great preservationist as was the Bullitt family, and they worked together for many years on lots of projects.

Dr. McKinney said she spent 13 summers at summer camp there. She said the camp was for Kay's friends' children primarily, and Dr. McKinney's father was Reverend Dr. Samuel McKinney. Mrs. Bullitt and Reverend McKinney were good friends, as was she from age 5 until she graduated from high school. Dr. McKinney said she was good friends with Mrs. Bullitt's son. She recalled that the downstairs was used for some activities for the day camp, including theater, which was filmed for public television. There were Greek and Roman tragedies done in the amphitheater area outside. She said when the parks department began giving tours of the property, she took one. She said she was with a friend from the neighborhood and because she'd had a long history there, she was actually able to identify a lot of things that the park department did not know about. She said they were asking about some discoloration in the grass, and she was able to tell them that a pool had been there in the past. She said they used a tennis court down the street, accessed by the old stair on the west side. She said we've heard that the architect and Mrs. Bullitt may not have been keen on some of the reasons that other people might want to preserve the house. She said she attended meetings of black ministers and civil rights leaders at the Bullitt property, they were working on housing, addressing segregation and other issues. She said she attended those meetings with her father. She said she attended other meetings at the Bullitt property with her mother, like the one for educators planning to boycott Seattle public schools in 1966; she recalled it may have happened there. She said there were a number of important activities at the Bullitt property that were very specific to the history of the City of Seattle that she hadn't heard in any presentation that occurred there and that she witnessed.

Ms. Wasserman said her husband was friends with Stim Bullitt, and she was fortunate enough to host a political fundraiser there in 1973. In preparation for that event, she talked to architect Fred Bassetti about the house. Mr. Bassetti was a good friend of her father and her husband. She said her husband had been in the Keechelus group, which was mentioned. It was really a statewide group that had people who spoke, and a subgroup of that went off and formed the Seattle Democratic clubs. She said her husband suggested she call Bassetti and ask him for some thoughts about the house to put on the invitation. She said she did, and Bassetti did not disparage it. He said Stim wanted sort of like a 'ski house'. Mr. Bassetti said he wasn't totally happy with everything that turned out about it. But he thought that it was a nice thing. Ms. Wasserman said that Mr. Bassetti was most excited about the substation that he got to design, and he said 'I get to design a substation!', but he also did talk favorably about the Bullitt House. She said the neighbors at the time didn't like the style of the house – a modern house among all the Georgian mansions, and said they didn't think Pacific Northwest Modern was considered an architectural style. But she said it is a beautiful example of that style.



Mr. Inpanbutr disclosed his firm is working on SPAR project that is not associated with the subject property.

Ms. Doherty asked if board members or SPAR objected to Mr. Inpanbutr's participation.

There were no objections.

Dr. McKinney said that SPAR asked her questions about the history of the property.

Mr. Norman asked what was included in the Staff Report for consideration.

Ms. Doherty said the Board is considering the whole property, but the board can nominate more or less as it deems appropriate.

Mr. Bergsrud said there are not many estate properties, this is the only one. He said they had to scramble to assess the property and secure it. He said there was community interest in nominating the house and site.

Mr. Norman asked if it would be a public park for anyone.

Mr. Bergsrud said there was a public process in which local community and others participated. He said there was no discussion about if and how the house would be used. He said there is no renovation or redevelopment of the site planned at this time.

Ms. Wasserman noted public comments about the house being in the way of a park. She said the board does not consider future use. There are many ways in which the house could be used – offices, event space, bedrooms.

Dr. McKinney said the way it was used when Kay lived there for social justice meetings, socially active groups that continue to do some of those same things that were important to her in banking and education and different kinds of civil rights ventures – it would be a lovely space for that. She said it obviously needs some work. She said the house itself doesn't get in the way of the park. She said a dog can't run straight through it, and there is plenty of open park space, particularly if the house were to be used for a meeting or event space. She said they didn't have any trouble running everywhere with all of the space, and there were other buildings on the property when she was a kid.

Mr. Norman asked about precedence.

Ms. Wasserman noted Parsons Gardens in Queen Anne, which is a pocket garden / public park was given to SPAR.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis asked how the Harvard-Belmont Historic District intersects with this property.

Ms. Doherty said the local district was based on the survey and inventory done for the National Register District. She said this house is not within the period of significance for NR, it is from the 1950s so it is seen as non-contributing. She said when the Harvard-Belmont Architectural Review Committee and Landmarks Preservation Board look at proposed work in the local district, the only current parameters for this site are changes visible from the right-of-way. She said designation would put additional review into the Landmarks Preservation Board's purview and there could be an overlap with the district review. She said it could be clarified in a Controls and Incentives Agreement.

Dr. McKinney said she was interviewed because she had information that SPAR didn't have about groups that met there and ways the property had been used.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said public commenters mentioned negative feelings Mrs. Bullitt and Mr. Bassetti had about the house. She asked if that was documents or if it was just in conversation.

Ms. Beckner said it might be in Kay's papers at the University of Washington, but she didn't see anything. She said Kay loved the house.

Ms. Wasserman said Kay did not want to interfere with what SPAR would do with the land or house after she was gone.

Dr. McKinney said she heard the same comments from the Bullitt family, and noted that Mrs. Bullitt mentored her through college.

Ms. Doherty said Ms. Wasserman shared her conversation with Fred Bassetti. She said the disparaging quote about the house included in the nomination application was the recollection of a man whose father was friends with Mr. Bassetti. She said it is somewhat hearsay.

Ms. Wasserman said Stim Bullitt wanted something like a ski house because he loved to ski.

Ms. Pheasant Reis said it sounds like maybe it wasn't Bassetti's preferred design aesthetic, but that doesn't necessarily mean he didn't like the house he designed.

Ms. Wasserman added, it also didn't mean he didn't put his best work into it. She said when she talked to him about including the house on the invitation it was his chance to describe it.

Mr. Inpanbutr supported the nomination.

Dr. McKinney said even though she has raccoon scratches on the back of her neck as a result of her time in the house (... kids playing and dropping it from the loft area), she supported nomination.

Ms. Caton supported nomination.

Mr. Macleod appreciated the stories about the property. He said there are so many members on the board that have been longtime Seattle residents and have such rich stories to tell about so many properties that have been presented recently. He said he appreciated the public comments from neighbors and noted the historic district. He said he understood the gravity of the turn of the century architecture in this neighborhood but noted the Egan House and other mid-century properties in the area. He said he doesn't have the stories about this site that Dr. McKinney and Ms. Wasserman do, but he remembered a property in Pierce County – the Kobayashi House that fell into disrepair as it was surrounded by a park; it was a shame to lose that resource in the park. It is the fortune of the Landmarks Board to look at things decades after they are built. He said that it can in hindsight look at this property and see that it is a great resource for this potential park. He said he is happy to see this is turning into a park and he supported the nomination.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said it would be helpful at the designation hearing to have a site plan that identifies when things were added or removed from the site and from the building to help in understanding the age of the existing elements.

Mr. Macleod said it would be helpful to hear about the grounds and property in addition to the house itself.

Dr. McKinney said nobody else had mentioned, and she hadn't seen it in any reports, there is an amphitheater there that was used for very specific purposes and could continue to be as a component of a city park, there is the place where there were the stables, which are not there now, but the area there is being used in a particular way. She said knowing what used to be there and what remains there and making certain that all of it is incorporated for right now, until we can make some other decisions, is a good idea. She said she knows the property very well because of her relationship with the family, and that it's important to know that it's a different era than the other buildings around it. She said it has significance because of what happened in it and for the architect, and these are things that are part of the criteria. She said she would like to keep the nominated features broad, and when there is a little bit more information about some of the component parts, other decisions can be made.

Mr. Macleod said parks can take on different forms with different activities. He agreed with Dr. McKinney to include the whole site.

Ms. Doherty said she would work with SPAR to offer a tour that would include the interior of the house to enable a more refined discussion.

Mr. Bergsrud said it would be OK if the condition of the house is good.

Action: I move that the Board approve the nomination of the Bullitt House at 1125 Harvard Avenue E for consideration as a Seattle Landmark; noting the legal description in the Nomination Form; that the features and characteristics proposed for preservation include: the site; the interior and exterior of the house; that the

public meeting for Board consideration of designation be scheduled for July 19, 2023; that this action conforms to the known comprehensive and development plans of the City of Seattle.

MM/SC/HW/MI 7:0:0 Motion carried.

**060723.6**

**BOARD BUSINESS**

There was no board business.