



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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January 29, 2021

LPB 22/21

To: Landmarks Preservation Board members

From: Sarah Sodt, City Historic Preservation Officer;
Erin Doherty, Landmarks Preservation Board Coordinator

Subject: Controls & Incentives Agreement for Seven Gables Theater, 911 NE 50th Street

Attached is the Controls and Incentives Agreement sent to the property owner, Landmark Theatres, for its signature. We recommend that no controls be imposed on the Seven Gables Theater, which was designated a Seattle Landmark on September 20, 2017.

Our recommendation for no controls is in response to a devastating fire that occurred on December 24, 2020. As a result of the fire, only remnants of the south, east, and north walls remained, and a portion of collapsed roof and floors connected to these walls.

On December 27, 2020 the Landmarks Board coordinator Erin Doherty visited the site and photographed the damage, illustrating that two-thirds of the building was completely lost, and the remaining third was heavily damaged and portions in a state of collapse.

Structural Engineers, Coughlin, Porter, Lundeen (CPL) assessed the building condition on December 29, 2020 and noted the damage to the structure was significant. CPL said that the remaining light wood framing had no structural capacity and was in danger of further collapse.

The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) undertook several inspections of the property, and its Director, Nathan Torgelson, determined that the remaining portion of the structure was an imminent threat to the public's health and safety. Director Torgelson spoke with the Department of Neighborhoods' Director Andrés Mantilla and Historic Preservation Program staff, and consulted with the Landmarks Preservation Board at their meeting on January 6, 2021 to convey his decision; as consistent with SMC 23.400.008.B, and SMC 25.12.835.B. Director Torgelson stated that a demolition permit was in the process of being reviewed, and he expected it would be issued before the end of the week.

At the Landmarks Preservation Board meeting on January 6, 2021, board members expressed their disappointment that the property owner could not have been done more to protect the vacant landmarked building, but acknowledged that there was no reasonable means to preserve what remained following the fire.

On January 8, 2021, SDCI issued demolition permit #6816617-DM for removal of the building. The demolition process began shortly thereafter and has since concluded.

Suggested Language for a Motion

“I move that the Board approve the Controls & Incentives agreement for the Seven Gables Theater at 911 NE 50th Street.”