



## Approved MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Greg Nickels**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Mary Johnston**  
Chair

**Andrew Barash**

**Graham Black**

**Brendan Connolly**

**John Hoffman**

**Julie Parrett**

**Nathan Polanski**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Norie Sato**

**Guillermo Romano**  
Executive Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

**March 5, 2009**

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:00 am

### Projects Reviewed

Bicycle Advisory Board Briefing

Pike Place Market Briefing

Vacations Briefing

Planning Division Update

West Seattle Junction, Conner Homes Alley Vacation

### Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair

Andrew Barash

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Julie Parrett

Nathan Polanski

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

### Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Valerie Kinast

Tom Iurino



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<b>March 5, 2009</b>	<b>Project:</b>	<b>Conner Homes, West Seattle Junction</b>
	<b>Phase:</b>	Alley Vacation
	<b>Presenters:</b>	Joseph Hines, Weber Thompson Peter Greaves, Weber Thompson
	<b>Attendees:</b>	Beverly Barnett, SDOT Charlie Conner, Connor Homes Gabe Hanson, Weber Thompson James Miller, Conner Homes Jim Westcott, Weber Thompson Joseph Hines, Weber Thompson Peter Greaves, Weber Thompson Scott Evens, TRA Sheronn Meeks, Fairmont Community Tom Rengstorf, TRA Tracy Record, West Seattle Blog

**Time:** 1 hour

(170)

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## **ACTION**

The Design Commission would like to thank Weber Thompson and the project team for the very thorough presentation including new drawings and diagrams in response to previous Design Commission comments. The Design Commission approves the Public Benefits package for the Subterranean Alley Vacation as presented including the following:

- Continued public access to the Alley at the street level.
- Widened sidewalks and building entrances along California, Alaska and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets and the Alley.
- Landscape and planting strips and upgrades to sidewalk paving with scoring and color on California, Alaska and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets.
- Upgrades to the Alley including paving scoring and color, bollards and a landscaped plaza at the building entrance off of the Alley.
- Public mid-block passages articulated with the building façade, paving scoring and color, landscaping, lighting, street furniture, bollards and structures from California to the Alley and from 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to the Alley.

The Commission believes that the new and revised graphics have been helpful in describing how the spaces would be beneficial and work within the public realm. In particular, the Commission likes the new occupiable plaza and specimen tree that terminates the mid-block passageway from California to the Alley as opposed to the previously shown green wall. In general, the Commission supports the use of different paving patterns and colors and plant materials to create consistency, wayfinding and legibility throughout the public spaces, including the extension of the “rug” paving into the sidewalks, however some concern was expressed about deviating from the City of Seattle standard paving within the sidewalk along Alaska. The Commission expresses some concern that the private landscape spaces of the live-work spaces and adjacent benches may cause the mid-block passageway to feel private rather than public and encourages the project team to consider carefully

**how this area is designed. The Commission suggests that adding bike racks within the mid-block passages would help the passageways feel more like sidewalks and therefore more within the public realm. Additionally, the Commission encourages the use of movable tables along both mid-block passages so they can be moved into sun or shade depending on which is desirable. In general, the Commission does not have a problem with the garage entrance being located off 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, although one Commissioner expressed his desire for the entrance to be located off the Alley.**

## **Presentation**

The project will be going back to the Design Review Board (DRB).

The building steps out at the predominant corner of California and Alaska, to 17.5 ft. from storefront to curb. Flexible pedestrian flow is made possible by this move. Three conditions of public space are provided with the varying widths of sidewalk including eddies and nodes.

Attention has been given to how the midblock passage addresses the sidewalks along the streets, where the two intersect. Also, with the way the shift at the alley is dealt with has been refined. Pavement differentiation creates a crosswalk situation in alley. At junctures of walkway with alley and sidewalks, pavement gives cues as to how the buildings interface, and how pedestrians might move through the space. Runners, boarders, shadows - color and /or textural cues are given.

The bird's eye view on page 12 of presentation illustrates the structure over the walkway where trellises, lighting and plants could be used to create a particular atmosphere in the space. Areas were created for benches and landscaping. Where pedestrians are led from California into the cross block passage, an area has been created at the alley by hollowing out the building on the east side of the alley for a small plaza. The plaza is marked with paving and bollards and has a specimen tree at the center visible from California Ave. SW

The seam between the Harbor Properties site and the subject site was given further attention. There is a grade differentiation along the property line, which affects the solution in this area. Harbor Property's trellis is proposed to carry over onto the subject site. Boarder rug and shadow elements will give visual cues to pedestrians to move through the area. In front of the live-work units there is a series of steps that are broken down into separate sections. There is one section near 42<sup>nd</sup>, another near the alley and a central one, with stairways connecting the three.

The landscape and plant materials were presented.

There is no RapidRide stop in front of the site as previously presented. RapidRide passes along the project but stops a block away.

The location of garage access from 42<sup>nd</sup> is so that it is more apparent to visitors that parking is available under the building, because the community is concerned about traffic, and businesses are concerned parking availability won't be apparent. Locating the garage entrance there, and obtaining a subterranean alley vacation, takes away the necessity of two garage entrances from the alley.

Since the last presentation, the building footprint has been shifted toward the alley to provide more sidewalk space along 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW. It is the desire of the DRB to recess the upper portion of the building, and this locks the footprint to about a foot from the lot line to 15 ft. from the lot line. The east building has been moved south a foot and slightly east to give more room to the alley pass through.

## **Commissioner's Comments and Questions**

*P. 15 in walkway the paving surface identified. Is it same material as on Alaska.*

Runner. A different color and texture of Seattle standard. Darker, shadows too. Maintainable.

Node where crossing is in alley is better with specimen tree, destination is a good move.

Segway in passageway – Lack of frames lets you achieve better space and integration of buildings.

Bollards and paving make z movement clearer.

Two passageways different but related. Proposed plantings different, with some overlap. Low-mid-upper form would be good to carry over into both.

*Plantings at live work units? Would you feel you were going into private space?*

Plantings in front of live work at this point planted as part of concept, but if they become personalized it can strengthen. Would be guided past the parts that might be considered private.

*Do people park in alley and run into stores now?*

Yes.

*One reason Commission got stuck was that solution is different than what some people would have come up with. New graphics very helpful – more real. Tradeoff of partial subterranean vacation and what is offered tips in public benefit.*

*Pedestrian crossing along north end where it crosses alley is misleading, but some Commissioners also feel that it makes it clearer that the alley and pass through are public too. Recommend a good amount of contrast. Do really like tongue of special paving reaching out into standard sidewalk – pull people in.*

*Bike parking? Need more inside passages too.*

*P. 19, garage access, don't see problem of it coming off 42<sup>nd</sup> because of extra width of sidewalk, generous environment for pedestrians.*

*Live work spaces, benches shown on page 29, listed as public, but if they're in front of someone's front door. Will depend on if it's more work or more living.*

*Tables in pass through on south side where there's less sun.*



East Mid-Block Pedestrian Walkway Plaza at 42nd Avenue SW