



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 139/21

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, July 27, 2021

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville
Matt Chan
Matt Fujimoto
Faye Hong
Russ Williams
Tanya Woo
Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Chair Matt Fujimoto called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

ROLL CALL

072721.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 22, 2020

MM/SC/MC/AY

3:0:4 Minutes approved. Mmes. Baskerville, Woo, Messrs. Fujimoto, and Hong abstained.

072721.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

072721.3 BOARD BRIEFING

072721.31 1221 S. Main St. – M12

Applicant: Jeff Walls, Studio19

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Briefing on proposed redevelopment of two-story commercial building. Proposal includes demolition of the existing building and use and design of a nine-story mixed-use apartment building. The focus of this briefing will be on the proposed demolition and presentation of massing studies.

Ms. Frestedt provided an overview of the project which involves demolition of existing structure and new construction and noted the developer is M12 LLC; architect is Studio19, Jeff Walls. Zoning for this site is DMR/C 75/75-95; lot area: 13,875 SF. She said ranges vary between options: 99-161 residential units; 1,750-2,880 SF of retail; 26-70 Parking stalls; (TBD) bike spaces. She said no departures are requested at this time and it is anticipated this project won't trigger SEPA. The extant building 12th & Main Plaza was constructed in 1991. The architect was Joe Donahou of CDA Architects, which is now CDA+Pirscher Architects. She said noted the relevant code sections and Standards, as listed on the staff summary that was provided to the Board (in property file).

Jeff Walls, Studio19 explained the proposed development will include demolition of the existing buildings on site as well as demolition of all site features. The project will require excavation of the site for one level of below grade parking. He said the project will improve the right of way sidewalks and add street trees in the right of way. He said the proposed development consists of six levels of apartments, street level retail spaces, apartment lobby and one level of below grade parking. He said the use will change to a mixed use, apartment building. He said allowed uses include general sales, services business establishment, eating and drinking establishment, and grocery store. He went over setback requirements as per by Zoning Code and ISRD Code and guidelines.

Mr. Walls provided an overview of neighborhood history. He provided history of the site including tenants and owners over time and said nothing significant was found. He said the existing building was constructed in 1991; the ground floor is retail.

Mr. Fujimoto asked if board members had comments following the historic analysis.

Ms. Frestedt said it is typical after presentation of historic property report for board members to comment on any overarching concerns regarding demolition and subsequent development.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciated the excellent historic analysis from 1850 to present. He said an apartment building was demolished in 1975 and the lot sat vacant until the existing building was constructed. He asked why.

Mr. Walls said they found no information on why the previous building was demolished.

Mr. Hong said the district is the Chinatown International District. He said this project is in Little Saigon which is in the Chinatown International District.

Ms. Woo asked who lived there.

Mr. Walls said the earliest construction record found was of the two-story apartment building constructed on the western site of Lot 12. The record indicates the owner was

Cora Banks. In 1949, an addition of a basement apartment as constructed on the Lot 13 portion of the property; the owner of that property was Mr. G. S. West.

Ms. Frestedt cited SMC 23.66.318 and said that the board considers is there is any historical relevance to the district whether an event or an individual. She said this site is outside the National Register District so no determination of significance was made; the board will determine. She said the age of the existing building is outside the period of significance and this part of Little Saigon was not included in the initial district boundaries. She said the expansion of the district boundaries was to add design continuity for changes made. She said the board can request additional information, if needed.

Mr. Walls said they looked at color patterns in the neighborhood and noted that buildings in Little Saigon do not use a variety of materials; most buildings are finished with stucco wall and sometimes concrete surfaces and a few of them are constructed with brick. He said several cultural artworks and projects can be found in this area. He noted the painted columns underneath I-5 which mark the entrance to Little Saigon; the boat-shaped Pho Bac restaurant; several ground artworks and vertical art. He explained the intent to bring artwork into this project is important.

He went over the site context west of I-5 and noted the area is characterized by larger buildings constructed during the late 1800s and early 1900s. He said a typical building in this part of ISRD also features small ground level retail with residential units on upper stories. He said, in contrast, the east side of I-5 is characterized by warehouses and low-rise commercial buildings which house a variety of markets and stores. He said buildings are less than three stories tall and are mostly finished with stucco wall surfaces painted in bright colors. He said development has been accelerating recently and the character of the neighborhood is evolving. He said taller infill buildings are coming. He said that new developments are taking design cues from the more cultural buildings native to this area by applying similar materials, large glass storefronts, canopies and Asian imagery.

Mr. Walls said the site is on the edge of Little Saigon; he noted its green coverage / parks, solar exposure, views, street classifications, and transportation. He said there are topography issues to deal with – there is about a 6% slope. He said this project will improve the right of way. He said overhead powerlines will require a 14' set back.

Mr. Walls said they have worked with Friends of Little Saigon on community outreach and said they have been great to work with. He said they came up with a community engagement plan and will keep it moving. He provided a schedule of community engagement events, engagement strategies and targeted stakeholder groups.

Ms. Baskerville asked how many people have been engaged.

Mr. Walls said about 200 people.

Hui Tien, Studio 19, said at the virtual meeting there were about 30.

Mr. Chan asked what the mix of units will be.

Mr. Walls said it is not yet finalized but there will be a mix of studios, one and two bedrooms.

Mr. Fujimoto asked where they are at with outreach response regarding the design.

Ms. Tien said there have been a few meetings, next step is to contact organizations. She said they have relied on Friends of Little Saigon (FoLS) for outreach.

Quynh Pham, FoLS, said the next focus is stakeholder groups. She said the first phase will introduce the project and get general information. The next phase will be more targeted with community groups at public meetings to get feedback and comments. She said they are more stewards helping to get information out there.

Mr. Hong said there hasn't been outreach to Chinatown area which is the majority area west of the freeway. He said none of Chinatown area has heard of project. He said it is the Chinatown International District, not the International District.

Ms. Woo said she thinks Mr. Hong is wanting to hear more about feedback from seniors, non-English-speakers, and organizations. She was interested to hear what feedback they got about the massing.

Mr. Fujimoto agreed with Mr. Hong and Ms. Woo about targeted stakeholder groups.

Ms. Pham thanked Mr. Hong for the Chinatown side especially the associations, they haven't been able to reach out to them, but they would love to include them on this outreach to make sure they have a broader outreach. She said SCIDPDA, Interim and the BIA do work across the neighborhood and that includes Japantown and Chinatown. She said the rest of the groups are neighboring this project. She said the groups that will be most impacted by construction and that actual development, they wanted to get their input first. She said they will definitely reach out more on the Chinatown-Japantown side. She said they would love recommendations on contacts to be able to get their input.

Mr. Fujimoto thanked Ms. Pham for her comment and clarification.

Mr. Yip said community outreach is immediate concern to neighborhood. It is important to include Japantown and Chinatown.

Mr. Walls presented four massing concepts (details in DON files):

Option 1

Pros: covered retail along street front to better activate pedestrian-oriented retail spaces; community roof deck, retail plaza supporting community uses; pronounced building entrance for residents and to create a vibrant street frontage. Cons: minimal modulation along front building façade.

Option 2

Pros: corner orientation, modulated façade, vertical and horizontal; retail plaza supporting community uses; maximum retail space to promote business activities and economic

development in the area; community roof deck. Cons: lack of building street presence not allowing for maximized retail space.

Option 3

Modulated façade, vertical and horizontal; maximize retail along street frontage; pronounced building entrance for residents and to create a vibrant street frontage; identifiable residential entry separated from the retail entries; covered retail along street front to better activate pedestrian-oriented retail space; community roof deck. Cons: no exterior courtyard space except the roof.

Option 4 (Preferred)

Smaller in height; covered retail along street front to better activate pedestrian-oriented retail spaces; retail plaza supporting community uses; increased access opportunities and street presence for the retail space; pronounced building entrance for residents and to create a vibrant street frontage; more units with outdoor patio and balconies; modulation opportunities on the back facades facing the ISRD. Cons: minimal modulation along front building façade.

Mr. Fujimoto stated that this is a briefing and no action would be taken. He asked Mr. Walls what kind of input he was looking for.

Mr. Walls said he would like recommendations for outreach and input on design, massing, programming and materiality.

Ms. Frestedt said this is an opportunity to provide feedback, ask for more information, or comment on preferred option to help focus. She said outreach continues to come up and she reminded that the board doesn't have code jurisdiction over outreach plans, but it is reasonable for Mr. Walls to ask for input. She said board's interest is in how outreach has informed the project.

Mr. Fujimoto asked who lived in the apartment building prior to existing building. He said he had no issue with demolition of existing structure as it was recently built. He wondered why the lot was left vacant for so long after the 1975 demolition. He said that a history of legislation has caused changes in the district.

Mw. Woo said she was curious if this was part of the Central District.

Mr. Fujimoto said Ordinances in past affected the district and he would like to see that.

Mr. Chan said there was a mix of Chinese businesses up to 23rd in the 1940s-60s. He noted the mix of Black, Japanese and Chinese community members in the area, historically.

Ms. Baskerville said it was part of jazz club area.

Mr. Chan said it is an odd lot. He said he supports the massing and scale. He appreciated the retail in the corner and said it was good for activation. He said now, it is not activated. He said he applauded the inclusion of family housing and said it is in high demand. He said new development has been predominantly one-bedroom units.

Mr. Fujimoto asked for more information on design. He said he understands how setbacks relate to certain conditions, but he wants to see how the project is listening to the guidelines.

Ms. Baskerville noted the green factor and landscaping as part of the plaza and commented it is great to have a larger plaza. She said they could have additional landscaping and said tree canopy is a big issue.

Mr. Walls said they are in the early stages and could include more.

Ms. Baskerville said outreach to Bailey Gatzert school would be helpful. She said there is a lot of interaction between Boren and Bailey Gatzert and the street is not pedestrian friendly.

Ms. Woo asked about garbage and waste, where the dumpsters and pick ups will be. She said the lobby entrance is hidden and could be a safety issue. She asked about safety for first level apartments and patios.

Mr. Walls said all trash will be held below grade in parking area and will be wheeled out on pick up day to area just west of parking entrance. He said there will be security staff on duty at night and there will be lighting as well as other safety features. He said the back patios are up a bit with guard rails, he noted the sloped grade. He said they will make sure they are safe.

Mr. Williams appreciated the inclusion of family units which he said will create vibrancy for the district. He said three options reach maximum height with only one showing less than maximum. He asked if they considered going higher to get unit numbers up, especially family housing. He said anything that can be done to increase unit count, modulation and add character, not overly flat. He noted the con indicated was minimal modulation. He said it would be a challenge to take the flat façade out and give the building character without compromising square footage and owner intent. He appreciated Option 4 and said the provided plaza could be used publicly for dining, coffee, or community involvement. He asked why parking on Option 4 only went down one level for parking while others went down two.

Mr. Walls said there is no parking requirement; parking is related to the number of units.

Mr. Fujimoto suggested showing vertical modulation or design considerations. He said it would help to understand how bulk and scale are addressed with set back floors. He asked to see opportunities to address safety – lighting, CPTED – in future presentations.

Ms. Woo said she appreciated the comprehensive presentation. She said she would like to see more of the spirit of the community captured – colors that are meaningful, history of why buildings look the way they do and how to capture that. She would like to see more about the relationship between this building and others in the district.

Mr. Yip said he likes the plaza idea; it is inviting and uses the corner space. He said he supports options 1 and 4. He said to showcase the spirit of the community in materiality

and art. He said the district is being developed and there will be future buildings to the south and west. He said to think about design of the patios on back of building and how a new building would impact that.

Mr. Hong said he appreciates the scale of Option 4 and said the presentation showed very nice options. He said there is more space for residents to hang around. He said to remember the area was just a car repair and old run-down houses that were torn down. He said 2-story retail is useful and he looks forward to the new project.

Mr. Williams asked how much retail is proposed versus what is there now.

Mr. Walls said there is less.

Mr. Fujimoto said he would like to hear community thoughts about retail space, use and if infrastructure will be included to support uses.

Ms. Woo said Asian businesses in the plaza would be nice. She said to get input from shoppers coming to the community to shop.

Mr. Fujimoto said board members who are active in organizations could provide contact information.

Ms. Frestedt said to be cautious about direct contact with applicant outside of meeting because of conflict of interest. She said to forward any contact information to her.

Mr. Fujimoto said there are rich diverse community groups and to expand outreach.

Ms. Tien said they have a comprehensive report on activities.

072721.4 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt said she has been meeting with DON and City Historic Preservation Officer to address election. She said the emergency order is still in affect and there are still vulnerable community members. She said they are talking about options and noted the importance of voting. She said she would provide an update and would send a media release as well.

Ms. Frestedt said after the events of last summer, boards were installed to protect store fronts. She said SPU put the boards up and independent property/business owners can remove them whenever they are ready. She said there is a reluctance to remove the boards absent of other security measures. She said a couple businesses have asked for bars. She said that bars, gates are not ideal and suggest that the area is not safe. She said businesses feel they need them. Bars and gates can damage property if not done appropriately. She said it is a big trade off if a business leaves. She said she has guidance on best practices and minimizing damage that she can send out.

Ms. Baskerville said she heard Wing Luke is collecting boards to save murals and wondered if that has happened.

Ms. Frestedt said the BIA might be involved. She said MOHAI is collecting boards as well. She said there are two-three new construction projects, and she is working to schedule them based on available of interpreters and material translation. She said they will general a lot of public interest.

She thanked LeVinh and Tammy for their interpreting service.

Adjourn 6:22 pm

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