

Presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners
June 23, 2016
Excerpted from the minutes of that meeting.

Presentation: Seattle Asian Art Museum Expansion Project

Presented by Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation; Kim Rorschach, Seattle Art Museum; Sam Miller, LMN Architects

Background: There are major deficiencies in the building at Volunteer Park. The building is operated by the Seattle Art Museum. In 2007, City Council approved reallocation of money for the design and planning for a major renovation of the Asian Art Museum building. At the time, each party would put in about \$11 million. The 2008 Parks and Greenspaces Levy allocated \$9 million to the Seattle Asian Art Museum for renovations, including seismic retrofitting; it was projected the City would pay 40% of renovation costs.

In 2014, SAM was not ready to start the renovation so the money was reallocated to fund 12 projects. SAM is ready to move forward with their renovation and have started the design process.

Kim Rorschach – The Seattle Art Museum was in the building at Volunteer Park until the early 1990s when they moved the bulk of their operations to the new facilities. The Seattle Asian Art Museum moved to Volunteer Park. The building was built and financed by the first Seattle Art Museum Director, Richard Fuller. He gave the building to the city. This museum is an important link to the Asian continent. The new expansion will provide the opportunity to present the diversity of Asia in a greater way. There are significant maintenance needs in the building – seismic and climate control - that pose significant risk and are very important for the collections. Not to mention, much of the museum's collections are stored in this building.

SAM considered moving but wanted to keep the Asian Art Museum there, since it is a part of the city's history. They are currently raising funds to fix it. SAM is proposing a very modest addition to the building that would allow for new education and event spaces and programming. In the last year the attendance at the museum has doubled.

Sam Miller – This is a historic building in a historic park, both of which are important to the city. Olmsted plan did not have a building in the original plan. The Olmsteds refused to place a building there. Noble Hoggson, Jr. became the landscape architect for the building. The building was very modern and symmetrical. There have been many additions and changes to the building over time.

Desired Improvements to the building:

- Add program area, education space, meeting space – revenue piece to enhance that

- Seismic retrofit – hollow tiles used and they are not braced to the ceiling. This poses a significant risk to the works housed inside.
- Environmental controls – single glazed windows with steel sashes – produce condensation. There is no air conditioning and it still uses the original boiler.
- Better connectivity between the building and Volunteer Park;
- Receiving and loading issues – the loading dock ceiling height is very low and impossible to bring trucks of any size near to it. The freight elevator is not big enough to carry large art works.
- Location of addition - The architects are aware of existing surveys and are utilizing these. There are some significant trees identified around the building. The favored plan for expansion expands to the east, roughly 12,000 sf over 3 floors. The architects are roughly halfway through the schematic design.

They have met with Friends of Olmsted and the Volunteer Park Trust and the Landmark Board.

The design of the new addition hopes to bring circulation and visibility to the ground level on the east side, bring the park into the garden court, and showcase the large beech tree. The lower level would have an event space and the Board Room could then be used for educational opportunities.

They would also upgrade the freight elevator create a larger receiving area and a conservation lab, and renovate and enhance mechanical and electrical systems.

There will be offices and a meeting area in the bottom floor that will connect to a terrace. The hope is this terrace will engage the park and create an amenity to both park users and museum goers.

Timeline and budget - Design will continue through Q2 2017. The architects are working on landmark review, permitting and design. They hope to have a contractor on board by Q2 2017 so they can help figure out the budget. Opening tentatively set for March 2019.

Cost estimates between \$47-\$49million. Construction coming in around \$32million. They will know more when the contractor is on board. They are trying to get federal tax credits.

Fundraising – \$32.5 million raised and SAM is actively fundraising. This total includes \$15 million from the City. They are hoping for \$5 million in federal tax credits. \$12.5 million in private fundraising, which includes \$1.4 million from King County for Cultural Facilities. They are applying for many grants and are starting their capital campaign. People have been responsive to the enhanced project because it allows better service to the community.

Utilities will be so much more efficient SAM is anticipating a decrease in the expenses. They would like to increase the curatorial staff by 1 but that would

require an endowment. They will look at ramping up the education programs if there is the space.

Outreach? Met with Seattle Parks Foundation, Friends of Volunteer Park and Olmsted – their responses have been overall very positive. The area where the addition would go is a blank wall, this will beautify the area and create more activity in that area.

SAM will hold community forums to find out from the public what the museum should be, how it can best serve the community?

According to Gerry Johnson, the lawyer who worked with MOHAI is assisting SAM with their tax credits, it is structured similar to MOHAI. Federal tax funding only relates to historic renovation and not the addition.