



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Megan Groth

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

December 19, 2013

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Macy's Skybridge

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair (excused at 9:30)

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew (arrived at 9:30)

Martin Regge

Commissioners Excused

Ellen Sollod

Megan Groth

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman

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December 19, 2013
9:30 – 11:00 am

Project: **Macy's Skybridge**
Review Type: Skybridge Ordinance
Previous reviews: none

Presenters: Jack McCullough McCullough Hill, PS
Bill Polk Innova Architects
Tom Howard Macy's

Attendees: Beverly Barnett SDOT
David Burgesser SDOT
Amy Gray SDOT
Vincent Heitzmann Macy's
Angela Steel SDOT

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the proposal by Macy's to retain their existing skybridge. Their 30 year permit had expired, so they were required to remove the skybridge or apply for a new term permit ordinance from the City Council. The term permit would allow them to retain the skybridge for another ten years, with the possibility for two ten-year renewal options.

Per SMC 16.54.050 B, "The applicant shall present the proposed conceptual new skybridge and public benefit mitigation elements to the Seattle Design Commission. The Seattle Design Commission shall provide their recommendation on the proposed new skybridge and public benefit mitigation elements to the Director of Transportation."

At this meeting, the Design Commission reviewed the reasoning for retaining the skybridge and the proposed public benefit mitigation elements.

Summary of Proposal

The owner of Macy's applied to SDOT for a new skybridge term permit ordinance to allow them to retain their skybridge for another thirty years. The skybridge is located over 3rd Ave between Pine St and Stewart St. It was built in 1962 to connect the Macy's building and parking garage across 3rd Ave. At the time, both buildings belonged to the same owner, but now the parking garage is owned by a different entity. The Macy's building is a landmark that was constructed as a four-story building in 1928; four more floors were added in 1952. The skybridge is not a landmark.

Summary of Presentation

Jack McCullough, of McCullough Hill and representative for Macy's, gave the presentation dated December 19, 2013, and available on Design Commission website. He explained Macy's request to retain the skybridge because they find it essential to their operations as a downtown department store and

because it provides ADA accessibility between the store and parking garage. He noted the critical position the store plays in the retail core. The public benefits proposed by the applicant were as follows:

1. Lighting under the building canopy along 3rd Ave from Pine St to Stewart St.
2. Improvements to their loading dock surface, including lighting and additional screening.
3. Existing Seattle Police Department use of store frontage as a police station on 3rd Ave.

The applicant coordinated their public benefit proposal with the SDOT and Metro 3rd Ave Transit Corridor Improvements project. SDOT's plans for this area are a "quick win" aspect of the 3rd Ave plans that the Design Commission reviewed.

Summary of Discussion

The Design Commissioners discussed the use of the skybridge and its function within Macy's store operations. They discussed the impacts of the skybridge to the streetscape and many expressed that the bigger concerns along 3rd Ave are other issues at the street level, such as a lack of activating uses along the frontage. The Commissioners also talked about the problems with the Macy's building along 3rd Ave, noting the safety issues of a loading dock so close to a busy transit stop and the lack of visual connections into the store along this side of the building.

Commissioners lamented the lack of visual materials showing all of the proposed public benefit items together with the planned bus stop improvements to be installed by SDOT and Metro as part of the 3rd Ave Transit Corridor Improvements project. They felt that the lighting in particular needed to be seen together to understand the value and role of the canopy lighting in the new streetscape. Overall, the Commission identified the need for all elements of the Macy's proposal to be integrated with the surface materials, bus shelters, and other street furnishings SDOT will install.

There was significant interest in lighting. While the applicant had extended the canopy lighting the full length of the block where previously planned only for the southerly portion, concern remained about the appearance if it simply ends and does not feather out or wrap around the corners. A proposed solution was to replace all fluorescent lighting around the building with LED. The Commissioners discussed the integration of the lighting more comprehensively within the block but also further around the building.

The Commission inquired about the loading dock, concerned that delivery movements occurred at such a busy bus stop. Macy's clarified that they had already restricted deliveries and loading hours as much as possible. For the gates, the conversation centered on potential dynamic solutions and integration with the landmark building. It was understood that the Landmarks Board would need to approve the design, and within that framework the Commission believed there were a variety of possibilities for a more attractive gate, given its current design and condition.

Agency Comments

Angela Steel, SDOT, stated that the Skybridge Review Committee (SRC) recommends approval of the skybridge term permit ordinance contingent on a public benefit package approved by the Design Commission. The SRC had recommended modifications to the public benefit package, some of which have recently been proposed. The SRC believes additional study is warranted on the intensity of the lighting under the awning and how it will interface with the new sidewalk material. In addition to the public benefit proposal, the term permit ordinance will require façade improvements to the skybridge,

recladding, or repainting the surface within two years of the effective date. General maintenance is not subject to landmark review.

Public Comments

none

Action

With a **vote of 6 to 1**, the Seattle Design Commission recommended approval of the Macy's proposal to retain the skybridge over 3rd Ave between Pine St and Stewart St, including the following public benefit mitigation:

1. Lighting under the building canopy along 3rd Ave from Pine St to Stewart St
2. Lighting and visual screening improvements to the Macy's loading dock on 3rd Ave
3. Existing Seattle Police Department use of store frontage as a police station on 3rd Ave

Under consideration that changes to the building, such as the loading dock, must be approved by the Landmarks Board, the Design Commission provides the following recommendations to inform the design. The Commission believes it is possible to reach a design that both follows the recommendations and meets with approval of the Landmarks Board.

1. Provide better transitions where the canopy lighting ends at Pine and Stewart. Consider wrapping it further, maybe even all the way around the building. Explore LED lighting for all frontages around the building.
2. Integrate the canopy lighting and loading dock improvements with the other improvements planned for the block by the City and Metro.
3. Consider all lighting along this block in unison and plan the canopy lighting to be a part of the comprehensive lighting system.
4. Analyze the interaction between the ground plane material and canopy lighting to determine appropriate lighting levels.
5. Improve the design of the loading dock gate. Further explore a more dynamic approach, such as use of variable lighting and/or dynamic visual art. A better solution might also be more simple, but high quality, with the intent of not competing with the architecture.

As the project proceeds, if it is not possible to meet or exceed the level of improvements presented to the Commission, the proponent must inform the Commission and, as needed, provide other commensurate public benefits.

Commissioner Kunkler voted no because she found the amount of public benefit insufficient.