



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Numbers: 3008640
Applicant Name: Paul Wu
Address of Proposal: 672 S. King Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow 20 parking spaces in an existing structure (Milwaukee Hotel apartments).

The following approvals are required:

SEPA Threshold Determination (Chapter 25.05 SMC)

Variance - to allow less than the required driveway width to a parking stall.
(Seattle Municipal Code 23.54.030.D)

Variance - to allow less than the required parking aisle width to a parking stall.
(Seattle Municipal Code 23.54.030.D)

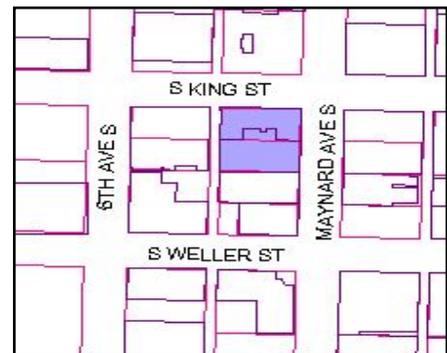
Variance - to allow less than the required turning radius to a parking stall.
(Seattle Municipal Code 23.54.030.D)

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site & Area Description

The development site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of South King Street and 7th Avenue South, in the International District Mixed zone with a 75-foot height limit or 85 foot limit (IDM 75-85), if at least 50 percent of the gross floor area comprises residential units (per SMC



23.49.208). The site is developed with the Milwaukee Hotel, a 5-story historic landmark building built in the 1920s. Master Use Permit No. 7500528 was issued in 2005 for rehabilitation of the building, to include construction of 120 apartment units in the upper 4 stories. In 2006, a Certificate of Approval was issued by the International Special Review District Board to convert the basement storage to parking for up to 20 vehicles. Street level retail uses are proposed to remain.

The immediate area is marked by a variety of land uses including restaurants, residential, retail, hotels, warehouse, and administrative offices. The buildings range in height from one story to six-stories, and are predominately made out of brick and stone. The adjacent alley is fully developed abutting the development site along its west property boundary line. The sidewalks abutting the development site is active with pedestrians moving along this centrally placed site in the International District.

Proposal

The proposal is to alter the existing basement level to accommodate parking for 20 vehicles. Access would be taken from the alley adjacent to the west. The entrance to the garage would be 18 feet wide, and the internal circulation way would be as narrow as 19 feet in certain areas, due to the presence of existing structural columns supporting the historic structure. A new ADA compliant elevator would be installed in an existing elevator shaft, and at least two sets of stairs would provide additional interior access for people utilizing the parking spaces.

Public Comment

None.

ANALYSIS - VARIANCE

Variances from the provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code shall be authorized only when all of the following facts and conditions (stated in *italics*) are found to exist:

1. *Because of unusual conditions applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, which were not created by the owner or applicant, the strict application of this Land Use Code would deprive the property of rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties in the same zone or vicinity; and*

The subject landmark structure is supported on columns evenly spaced at 20 foot intervals (on center) east to west, and variegated approximately between 20 feet to 15 feet along the north-south axis. To shift the columns would create significant engineering challenges. Placement of columns alone is what limits ability to provide code-complying circulation ways. For example, an access entry driveway is proposed from the alley through a row of columns spaced 18 feet apart. Such column placement limits the potential width of the driveway. The 22-foot width required by code for two-way circulation simply cannot be provided without undue cost to re-engineer the support for the entire building. Similar difficulties compromise provision of the aisles and turning radii. The efficient use of the underground space to accommodate parking for vehicles has created obstacles in the aisle width area, thus interfering with Code required vehicles maneuverability in and out of the parking stalls.

The proposed parking is not a Code requirement per SMC Section 23.49.016.A.2. The applicant has noted on-street parking is in high demand in this area as one of several reasons to provide parking on-site. A number of nearby properties have on-site parking for the users of their properties – including at least one acquired by means of a similar variance application. Strict application of the Code to the parking standards would require the relocation of existing columns to accommodate aisle and driveway width standards. Given the location of the columns to structurally support the building (which were not created by the owner or applicant), the strict application of the Land Use Code would deprive the property of rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties in the same zone or vicinity.

2. *The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located; and*

The requested variance is to allow vehicle parking within an existing structure that has structural columns arranged in such a pattern that they encroach into all feasible drive lanes and parking aisles. The requested variances are strictly responsive to existing structural limits, and otherwise attempt to satisfy code requirements as much as possible. Therefore, the proposal would adequately meet provisions for providing access to parking and provides the minimum necessary to afford relief.

3. *The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zone or vicinity in which the subject property is located; and*

Substandard aisles and turning radii should not prevent use of the garage, but they would pose maneuvering challenges and hence risk of damage to vehicles. The risks are not so great as to dispose the City to disallow the proposal; a certain degree of risk is attendant upon all human action, and in this case, the owner is aware of the risk and responsible for dealing with such incidents as occur. Hence, to minimize potential damage to the columns and vehicles, the owner proposes to paint the columns with a bright color and provide protective wrap around them. Project approval is conditioned upon such action.

Plans do not show proposed lighting (if any), yet clearly safe use of the proposed garage is partly dependent upon adequate lighting. Project approval is further conditioned upon revision of plans to show all proposed lighting and specification of proposed light fixtures. All lighting must be installed prior to temporary or permanent certificate of occupancy.

Given that, the proposed reduction of the driveway and aisle width does not constitute a material detriment to the public welfare or injury to impact surrounding properties.

4. *The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this Land Use Code would cause undue hardship or practical difficulties; and*

Strict application of the Code would not allow for any parking stalls to be established on the site without undermining the structural integrity of the existing structure or necessitating substantial seismic upgrades. DPD has concluded that this is unreasonable for other old downtown

buildings. All three of the requested variances rest on the same rationale. Thus, the literal interpretation of the applicable provisions and requirements of the Land Use Code, which requires conforming driveway and aisle widths, and by inference the removal of columns, would cause an undue hardship and practical difficulty by denying the applicant from providing on-site parking within the existing structure.

5. *The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code and regulations for this area.*

The spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code provides for rehabilitation of existing buildings in a flexible and discretionary manner to promote the International District's unique social mix and design character. The building is being renovated to provide viable commercial and residential options within the International District. One of the components to the renovation entails providing accessory parking to ensure residential parking on-site, to reduce congestion on adjacent streets, and minimize spillover parking into adjacent areas. Reducing the width of the driveway, parking aisle and turning radius areas within the structure will not have an adverse impact in this community – rather the reverse - and therefore will be in keeping with the spirit and purpose of the Land Use Code.

DECISION - VARIANCE (Based upon approved plans in the file)

The proposed variances to allow substandard driveway width, aisle width, and turning radii are **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**. The conditions are specified at the end of this report.

CONDITIONS - VARIANCE

Prior to Issuance of the Master Use Permit

The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall:

1. Revise plans to show all proposed lighting and specifications of fixtures.

Prior to Issuance of any Temporary or Permanent Certificate of Occupancy, and for the Life of the Project

The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall:

2. Paint the columns a bright color and provide a protective wrap around each column's base, and maintain same.
3. Install and maintain lighting per plan.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: March 27, 2008

Paul Janos, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services

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