



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3015374
Applicant Name: Matthew Aalfs
Address of Proposal: 2200 Western Avenue

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a change of use of a 54,612 sq. ft. building from warehouse to office/retail. Project also includes a 7,906 sq. ft. addition.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) requires the following approvals:

SEPA - Environmental Determination - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

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

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location and Zoning Designation

The project is located on the southwest corner of Western Avenue and Blanchard Street (assuming a north-south orientation for avenues and an east-west orientation for streets in downtown Seattle). An alley abuts the site to the east. The site is located in a Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial zone with an 85/65 foot height limit (DMR/C 85/65). The four-story, structure on the site has most recently been used for warehousing and storage.

Vicinity Description

The DMR/C 85/65 zone continues north, south, and west of the site. Across the alley to the east, land is zoned Downtown Mixed Residential/Residential 85/65 (DMR/R 85/65). An Urban Harborfront Shoreline Zone is located about 500 feet southwest of the site.

A building with a nightclub and upper-level offices is located immediately northwest of the site. Across the alley are apartment buildings with street level restaurants and bars. Vacant public land and the I-90 viaduct are located across Western Avenue. Across Blanchard Street is a surface parking lot and a high rise condominium tower with street level retail uses.

Proposal Description

The proposed project would rehabilitate and re-use the Urban Stables building, a City of Seattle designated historic landmark. The building also has been submitted for landmark designation to Washington State and National registers. The project would change the existing warehouse and storage uses to office (50,928 sf) and retail (11,590 sf) uses. The project includes the addition of a penthouse office floor, as well as replacement of street level fenestration, flattening of the existing sloped floors, insertion of a new elevator and stair core, and seismic retrofitting.

Public Comments

The SEPA comment period for this project ended on August 28, 2013; no comments were received.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (SMC Chapter 25.05).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant and dated July 17, 2013, and annotated by this Department. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. As indicated in the checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature or limited effects, these impacts are not expected to be significant.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation," subject to some limitations. Under certain limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is considered appropriate, and is provided below.

Short-term (construction-related) Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected during the construction period: decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during transport of materials to and from the site; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; increased traffic demand from construction personnel traveling to and from the work site; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Given the rehabilitation of the existing building and the small amount of new construction, these impacts are expected to be minor. Compliance with applicable code and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. These include the Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08), the Street Use Ordinance (SMC Title 15), and the Seattle Building Code. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project. No conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Long-term (operational) Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are anticipated as a result of this proposal, including increased building bulk and scale on the site; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Operational activities are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

Historic Landmarks

On February 6, 2013, the Union Stables building was nominated at the request of the property owner for consideration as a City of Seattle landmark. On June 5, 2013, the City's Landmarks Preservation Board approved designation of the building as a Seattle Landmark. A Certificate of Approval Application for the proposed project was filed with the Landmarks Preservation Board on December 16, 2013. Compliance with SEPA Historic Preservation policies will be met through compliance with the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance.

Traffic and Parking

A trip generation analysis by the Transpo Group estimated that the project will generate approximately 530 daily vehicle trips, with about 50 of these occurring during the AM peak hour and about 70 occurring during the PM peak hour. These estimates are conservative, as they do not reflect the removal of any trips currently traveling to and from the site. The project does not include any parking; vehicle trips made to the site are anticipated to use nearby public parking lots, two of which are located north and south of the site along Western Avenue. The lack of on-site parking will disperse vehicle trips; no substantial increase in trip volumes is expected along any roadway or through any particular intersection due to the project. The project includes a transportation information center in the building lobby that will provide information on public transit options; the project also will provide secure bicycle storage and shower facilities to encourage bicycle commuting. Given these measures and the dispersion of traffic noted above, the project is unlikely to have any noticeable transportation or parking impacts pursuant to SEPA.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.
- Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2C.

CONDITIONS - SEPA

None.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: January 20, 2014
John Shaw, Senior Transportation Planner
Department of Planning and Development

JS:drm

Shaw/Doc/3015374 decision.docx