

Seattle design Commission

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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 15, 2009

Convened 9:30 am

Adjourned 2:45 pm

Projects Reviewed

SPU Director
Thomas Street Pedestrian Bridge
Fire Station 6 Central District
University of Washington West Campus

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
Lauren Hauck
John Hoffman
Julie Parrett
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Commissioners Excused

Lauren Hauck

Incoming Commissioners Present

Lolly Kunkler

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008

October 15, 2009 Project: Fire Station 6 Central District

Phase: Schematic Design
Last Reviewed: July 2, 2009
Presenters: Ed Weinstein, Weinstein AU
Eric Higbee, Murase Associates
Jon Mihkels, Weinstein AU
Kirsten Wild, Weinstein AU
Steve Gardner, Project Artist

Attendees: David Jackson, Fleets and Facilities Department
David Kunselman, Fleets and Facilities Department
Dove Alberg, Fleets and Facilities Department
Frank Coulter, Fleets and Facilities Department
Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
Jay Feldman, Fleets and Facilities Department
Jayson Antonoff, DPD
Jeremy Nichols, DPD
Lindsay King, DPD
Molly Douce, Fire Department
Rich Hennings, Fire Department
Ruri Yampolsky, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
Susan Rosenthal, Fire Department

Time: 1 hour

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ACTION

The Design Commission thanked the design team for the presentation of the plans for Fire Station 6. The Commission unanimously approves schematic design of the project as presented. The Commission noted that the development of the plans since the last presentation was impressive. The architectural strategy of the central stairway form has really gelled this design.

- The Commission supports the use of a curb bulb along S. Jackson St. for public use, if SDOT finds the area is not needed as a traffic lane.
- If the curb bulb is developed, the design should offer much beyond the basic street tree planting strip. It should be used to maximize the corner, increasing the permeability, public use and dialog of the corner of the site to the neighborhood.
- The Commission asks that the options for providing permeability of the north façade be narrowed but remain open in Design Development.
- Along the north façade, condense the storage areas and consolidate the in-between spaces. Although it's not necessary to keep them uniform, consider keeping the corners open at both ends.

- Commissioners applaud the idea of the perforated overhang/eyebrow along the north of the building. Consider plantings on the roof of it.
- See that the trees in the proposed curb bulb along the façade are of an appropriate scale.
- Continue to develop the S. Jackson St. façade with a mind to the pedestrian experience. Bring integration of the fence and façade, and continue to find transparency solutions.
- Consider the art as it will be experienced from near and also from a more distant point.
- The Commission urges the architects and artist not to relegate the art to the north wall but to allow the art into a holistic approach to opening the site at the corner and providing a friendly pedestrian environment along Martin Luther King Jr. Way.
- Further explore the entrance along Martin Luther King Jr. Way and its function as a public entrance to the building.
- The use of a canopy of trees at the south west corner of the site juxtaposes with the neighborhood in an important way.

Presentation

The project is a new neighborhood fire station serving Seattle's Central District. The new site is located on the southwest corner of Martin Luther King Way South and South Jackson Street. An existing 3,150 SF warehouse/office building will be demolished. The Fire Levy has allocated a total project budget of \$10.4 million with a maximum construction cost estimated around \$4 million dollars. Public bidding is anticipated in the fourth quarter of 2010. This new facility will replace the existing historic landmark Station 6, which is an iconic building located a few blocks to the northwest. The new station will have two apparatus bays, an engine and a ladder and staffed with eight firefighters. The new facility will be construction to essential facility performance standards and has a project goal to achieve a minimum LEED Silver certification.

The site's intersection at 23rd and Jackson will become be more pedestrian oriented but unlikely would be very commercial, given the uses. Operational imperatives drive the project's design. It is a very tight site. The commission's first review suggested more attention be paid to the north face of the building, participation by an artist and landscape architect early in the process, and creation of a more civic presence and more detail and context.

The only opportunity for an intense pedestrian realm is on the north side. The sidewalk is very narrow. They propose to borrow space from on street parking to create a wider public sidewalk. How do they integrate the landscape, art and permeability in this zone?

As they evolved the design, they redesigned the stair. As a result, the beanery and day room now activates the apparatus bays and station. This helped them erode the northern wall to make it more permeable. The flagpole will be at the corner. The fire station doors will generate the pattern of the façade. The building will rest on a concrete plinth that will form the base of the building.

The north wall will have windows above as well as oblique views at street level into apparatus bay. They examined places to put public art. They seek input – should it bold and higher or should it be engaging to the pedestrian? The north wall could be an armature for art.

Another option (A) Is to have three openings in the north wall. A third alternative (B) is to have 4 openings, that



Schematic Plan

would be smaller, for washed river rock. This could have a perception of transparency. A fourth option (C) has 5 openings.

The landscape opportunities are in the right-of-way. The big move is to expand the curb bulb at Jackson and to have it respond to the art and architecture. There is some opportunity for bio-infiltration. A low elliptical bench is proposed at the corner where the flagpole stands.

The artist, Steve Gardner, works with terra cotta and glass panels.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

Is there a roof deck?

Yes, but not on the top. It is at the second level. The green roof could be used for gardening.

Is the fence solid or perforated?

We don't know yet. It may be part of the art.

Where are you with SDOT? That's a default right-hand turn lane on Jackson. If SDOT says no, what do we do? We're in a bind.

We've had initial conversations with them. They are looking for a more formal request. The existing sidewalk is very limited. We want a win win. Support from the design commission would help us with SDOT.

Is the recessed north wall entirely transparent?

Yes. The firefighters could close the shades.

You need to keep the northeast corner from being a tripping hazard.

Yes. There is a grade change.

What are the ideas from the artist?

The art could be a mix of steel and cast glass. Right now, all I have are concepts. It is still pretty early to discuss.

Is there a fence or wall around lot? Why is this needed?

Yes, it's needed. It's a public safety facility. We need security and don't want public coming in. A wall allows to hang hoses and test equipment.

Is there an expression of the green roof for the pedestrian? You could use taller grasses, or could make roof more permeable.

One possibility is that you could see the roof from further up MLK to the north. Or we could have some water conveyed to the swale in some way. And it will also be seen if other properties are developed in the neighborhood.

What is the wall material?

The wall would be either masonry or metal panel. It depends on the rest of the materials.

What is the structural system of apparatus bay?

It would be exposed steel. A big tray would drop down and be winched back up, where there is the most heat to dry the hoses.

For the fence on north side, I would vote for more transparency. The railing of the balcony could be the same for continuity.

The MLK side is appealing.

Thank you for addressing permeability on the north side. Treat the glass as the punched opening; it still needs to read as a box. I'm not sure all the punched openings need to be symmetrical.

Your approach to the stairs provided a strong architectural strategy.

On the north side, you need to carefully pick the trees. Creating an overhanging eave and puncturing it is a great idea. The flagpole could be mounted on the building itself, which might give you some freedom on the corner. The entrance doesn't read as an entrance yet.

Good comments. We will better understand this with 3D simulation.

For the expanded curb bulb, I need to understand the transportation plans for the future. Within a vacuum, it's great.

Regarding the MLK façade, maybe the art work could be on the corner, so it's not so focused on the north side of the building

We'll look at it. But it could be view obstructing.

I worry the numerous nooks inside will be filled with boxes, or if the nooks are outside they will be filled with trash. If you're subdividing the box on the north wall, shrink it down and keep it simple.

Consider planting some trees in the southwest corner of the property.

I have concerns that the MLK façade is too blank, especially the southern section. I also have concerns about the Jackson side; you need more options than just the alternatives of one concept. A lot hinges on the curb bulb being accepted by SDOT. This needs to actually be space, not just a planting area. You need to look at the species you plant. You should green up the parking lot. The fencing along Jackson needs to be integrated and as transparent as possible. The drive-through imperative creates a loss for the pedestrian experience.