



The City of Seattle

# International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

ISRD 146/21

## MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, August 24, 2021

Time: 4:30pm  
Place: Remote Meeting

### Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville  
Matt Chan  
Matt Fujimoto, Chair  
Faye Hong  
Tanya Woo  
Andy Yip

### Staff

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

### Absent

Russ Williams

Chair Matt Fujimoto called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

### **082421.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

October 27, 2020

MM/SC/AY/MC 5:0:1 Minutes approved. Ms. Baskerville abstained.

November 10, 2020

MM/SC/MC/TW 4:0:2 Minutes approved. Ms. Baskerville and Mr. Yip abstained.

### **082421.2 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nina Wallace said as someone who has lived and worked in the CID for a long time, she was opposed to demolition of the Bush Garden. She noted that the developer has said it's possible to restore, but just too expensive. She said demo is not the only solution. She asked the board to uphold the code and said demolition is not the only option for the building to preserve the history, community, and culture.

Joan Seko said she is the former owner of Bush Garden restaurant from 1957 to 1997 along with her late husband. She said she supports the development of the site. She said she has

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program  
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

fond memories of running the restaurant which was a destination place for the Japanese American Community. She said the restaurant was a place for gathering and where the community celebrated special events. She said everything in life is a cycle with the need to honor the past and embrace the future with infinite possibilities, but it is time for a change. She said the current structural condition of the building is unsafe and the property is underutilized. She said we shouldn't force the preservation of an unsafe building with many structural issues. She said instead we should support construction of a better building and better future for our community. She said she is excited to see the plans for the new building and get more residents of all incomes through the neighborhood and offer small spaces to immigrants. She said young entrepreneurs can run a successful business to support themselves and their families. She said we need to continually invest in a community to keep it vibrant and healthy. She said she is happy that James Wong and this team of Vibrant Cities has a personal and strong connection to the CID and will respect the history. She said the development will positively impact and contribute to the vitality of the district. She asked the board to review the project and move it forward expeditiously.

Eugenia Woo, Director of Preservation Services at Historic Seattle, said Historic Seattle is opposed demolition of the historic Bush Garden building. She said in its history, the ISRD board has not approved the demolition and destruction of such a historic and culturally significant building in the district since it was formed in the early 1970s. She said let's not allow this to be the first one. She said the Ordinance exists to protect and preserve not to destroy history. She said the Bush Garden building is not too far gone so that it can't be rehabbed. She said Historic Seattle makes that statement based on review of the material submitted and all the decades of experience they have in saving and operating historic buildings in the city. Historic Seattle believes the proposed new construction project is out of scale for the block and surrounding area. She said height limit is different from scale and just because 17 stories are allowed doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. This building, if allowed to be built, will stick out like a sore thumb and will adversely impact the historic character of the district. She said slapping some heritage interpretive panels in the lobby of the new building does not make up for erasing decades of real lived experience. She said the more authentic approach is to renovate, preserve and reuse rather than recreate. She said the applicant has repeatedly said they don't think the building is historically significant.

Tomio Moriguchi spoke in support of the project. He said he has been a part of this community for over 75 years. As former CEO of Uwajimaya he has supported and been active in several community organizations, built subsidized housing. He said he was on ISRD board and appreciates the work board members do. He said he supports this project as a resident, property owner, and operator of a family business which has developed over 200 units of housing in the ISRD. He said he supports new modern housing which will continue to complement and improve the overall well-being of the district. He said he strongly supports the work of Vibrant Cities's development of a mixed use and a mixed income project. He said the project will be new residents and small business opportunities to the community. He said from retail sales from business they have been fortunate to be able to pay all level of taxes including the collection of sales taxes. He said his business has provided hundreds of employment opportunities; each worker has contributed to the betterment of the economy.

Michael Chen, Principal Land Use Planner with McKenzie, said that he is not directly involved with this project but spoke as a community supporter. He said he supports the project. He said he knows there are a lot of concerns about the building. He said he is all about preservation of historic buildings when they have the proper designation and have been properly structurally analyzed to make sure that they have integrity to withstand the rehabilitation like what has been seen on Capitol Hill. He said those structures had gone through designation and structural analysis and design and are able to maintain the façade. He said he can tell from the exterior that the building has been a piecemeal-remodeled building and likely unable to sustain seismic loads to retain the façade. He said the developer is local and understand the community and the fabric of the community.

Justin Molocznick read from a letter from Martin O'Leary, president of JTM Construction: "For the past ten years, our office has been located at 800 Maynard Avenue South immediately south of the CID. On several occasions I've had the opportunity to examine and inspect the existing conditions at the Bush Garden building. AS a construction professional with extensive experience in assessing the viability and constructability challenges with renovating historic buildings and actual historic renovation construction experience. It is my professional opinion that the Bush Garden building should be demolished so I'm in support of that. I've read the expert reports from Stoller and DCI Engineers and I support their analysis and findings for the same reasons that they outline in their reports. The existing masonry façades are in extremely poor condition. The existing building structure is in poor condition with the following reasons: it was poorly constructed in the first place; it has deteriorated due to exposure to the elements and lack of maintenance; the existing foundation system is not adequately designed to support the existing height of the building; the foundation system was not enhanced when the building was converted from a one-story to a three-story building; and the foundation system is not structurally sound. These are all concerns. For all the reasons above and in the referenced report, in combination with significant construction safety concerns we would recommend demolishing the building and incorporating new masonry façades. For the podium of the building to pay respect to the historic elements of the building as well as the neighborhood as the most feasible path forward. JTC has been a member of the CID community for the last 10 years and we have a lot of respect for the community here and certainly want to say that James Wong truly cares about the future of the CID neighborhood, and we believe that they're doing everything to incorporate the community's concerns and feedback into the redevelopment plan. Thank you".

Po Lee said he is a longtime property and business owner in the community, and he spoke in support of the project. He said the project is a model of positive change and development in the CID. He said James Wong and Vibrant Cities understand the community. He said the CID should be for everyone. He said this property used to be the center for the community; now it is unsafe. He said we need a new, mixed income residents to support and stabilize the community with an increase in activity to make it safe. He said it must change for the better.

Matthew Watts said he married into a refugee family from Asia who settled in the CID. He said many in the family have been working in the CID for 40 years all the way up to today. He said he learned that the CID was created to isolate and exclude. He said the history and story of this district is critical; it shaped generations of people in the story of the CID. It is

not about buildings of wood, concrete, and steel but the people who have changed not just Seattle, but the Pacific Northwest and beyond. He said the redevelopment is a continuing story from one base of exclusion and isolation to one of inclusion for people who are looking to the next hundred years.

Taylor Hien Hoang said she was a community member and former executive director of the Minority Executive Directors Coalition that was located in CID. She supported the Jasmine project. She noted the importance of having a vibrant business environment and the mixed income residential base to support the businesses and services of the neighborhood. She expressed concern for the fate of Chinatowns across the country. She said this complex would revitalize a lot of components the CID is concerned with including public safety, thriving business environment, including bring in the young generation to revitalize the community. She said this project will replace the old unsafe building with a new mixed-use building that will bring life to the community in an area where it is lacking. She said this development is good for the CID. She said it is being developed by a company that loves this community and wants to see the neighborhood thrive now and in the future. She encouraged the board to keep moving the project forward and allow it to be a great development.

Katherine Chang said she is a longtime supporter of the community and economic development in the CID. She said she supported the Jasmine development project. She said she is aware there is a lot of discussion about tearing down a building that has an iconic location where so much of the activist work of the community was conceived of and served as a home to some of the more revered leaders in the APA community. She said a building is not a legacy. We must honor the past while preserving the history and culture of our community; this building is something that will open the door for a future where more people have different backgrounds, incomes and dreams can live, work, and own businesses that will improve the economic development and opportunities that this community really needs and deserves. She said the best way to honor that legacy is to bring it into the future. She said we need this type of development that will bring more residents and business opportunities to the community including incoming residents to support the businesses that are already here. She said Vibrant Cities has the vision, experience and reputation to build something we can all be proud of and look to as a model.

Jay Ho said he is a property owner in the CID and his family has been here four generations. He supported the project and encouraged the board to do so as well. He supported the project's effort to bring more people with mixed incomes into the neighborhood to create a livelier and safer environment for residents, patrons, and businesses. He said he likes how this project will increase the population, foot traffic and activity in the neighborhood while at the same time respecting the history and unique culture of the community.

Anna Hau, Global Travel spoke in Cantonese (through interpreter), She has been working at Global Travel for 25 years and is the chair of a local community group. She supports the project. Many of her clients are concerned about safety.

Erin Demmon said she is an eight-year resident of Little Saigon, and she was the HOA President for Pacific Rim condo at 10<sup>th</sup> and Jackson. She emphasized the importance of building community together so that we can hear all our voices respecting the heritage and

the history of a family business is very important value to the community. She said the project will bring activation, lighting, and safety to the area.

Jackie Chu said she is a software engineer living in the CID. She said she moved into her home in a newly constructed high rise building in the CID; if it wasn't for that building, she would be here. She said like so many others in their 20s she wanted to live in a new high rise with amenities, like a gym while having access to many delicious restaurants in the CID. She said living here helps her spend quality time with Pop Pop or Grandma who has been living here for 15 years and is now only a block away. She said she wants to see it become a safe place where everyone despite income or background can thrive. She said the Jasmine will bring more support to the local family-owned businesses and will continue to make this area safer and allows more people to be proud to call CID their home. Jasmine isn't displacing anyone. She said you can't displace anyone if there is no one living there to displace.

Tianyuan Li Tenison said she is a martial arts instructor and owner of Northwest Academy in Chinatown for 13 years. She said she knows the importance of having a vibrant community include mixed income residential as a base to support the business and services of the neighborhood. She noted safety issues and said with no people there it is a big negative impact. She said the Jasmine project will bring all elements of what vibrant community needs and that could be more mixed income residents who will support businesses like hers. She said she supported the project and asked the board to move forward in review.

Ms. encouraged those wishing to make public comment to send written comment to her; she provided her contact information. She said the presentation tonight is a briefing and no formal action will be taken.

**082421.3 BOARD BRIEFING**

082421.31 614-620 Maynard Ave S. – Elgin Hotel and adjacent warehouse  
*Applicant:* Li Alligood, Otak

Briefing on proposed redevelopment plans for the properties at 614 Maynard S. (Elgin Hotel) and 620 Maynard Ave. S. (warehouse). The focus of this briefing will be on the demolition of the 614 Maynard Ave. S. building and further exploration of massing options for the proposed development. No formal actions will be taken at this meeting.

Ms. Frestedt explained the 614 Maynard Ave. S. – Elgin Hotel was constructed in 1910, designed by Sabro Ozasa. 620 Maynard Ave. S. was constructed: 1946 – foundation for church that was never completed. The site is in the IDM 85/85-170 zone. She said Maynard Ave. S. and S. Lane Street are both designated Green Streets. This site is located outside of the National Register District and outside the Asian Design Character District/Retail Core.

Ms. Frestedt said briefings had been held on: 7/24/18, 5/28/19 and 10/22/19. There was a site visit on 8/27/19.

**Presentation** (presentation documents in DON file)

Gary Reddick, OTAK provided history of the project to date. He said he has worked on many projects in Asia, especially China, which he said gives him special insight to the design aesthetic. He provided a brief history of the buildings on site as covered in the Johnson Partnership report. He said the building became a welcoming gathering place for immigrants arriving in Seattle and it grew from word of mouth. He said in 1957 the Bush Garden restaurant was moved to this site and operated for four decades. He said the restaurant and banquet space was the site of many events: Wedding receptions, birthday parties, public meetings, events and organizing.

Mr. Reddick said the Bush Garden is closely associated with community leader Bob Santos, who had a presence at the Tuesday night karaoke at the Bush Garden, for years. He said what is most important about Mr. Santos is his long life of activism for equity and justice for Asian American, African American, Native American, and Latinx communities. His mentoring earned him the nickname, 'Uncle Bob'. He said that Mr. Santos was the spokesperson and leader of the movement that began in the 1970s to preserve Seattle's Chinatown International District now known as the ID or CID.

Mr. Reddick said when you take in the history of this location, as an architect he knows he is working on hallowed ground. He said that is front and center for the entire architectural development team and is taken as a great responsibility.

Mr. Reddick summarized community outreach and said that James Wong and Vibrant Cities held or attended 38 community outreach events and received 63 signed letters of support from local businesses and 324 from CID residents. He said the last community meeting held was just before pandemic lockdown. He said there was a great deal of communication on community safety, mixed incomes, neighborhood investment, affordable retail spaces, Asian aesthetic in building design, legacy of place, and community space.

He talked about story telling through the architecture and provided images of places where this has been done. He proposed to provide inclusive spaces, large multi-use gathering spaces on the ground and second floors. He said there will be a significant stair up to the large community room which will have a capacity of 250 people. He said they want to engage the community with the design team to gather input to help shape the space.

Mr. Reddick said the board asked for more information on what it would take to retain / save the existing 614 Maynard building. He provided a review of what the team viewed as comparable projects that were successful and those that were not. He said the existing masonry, building structure, below grade bearing soil, and below grade perimeter walls are in poor condition and not structurally sound. He said the existing masonry façade requires a 12" thick concrete wall to be built behind the brick to create a shear wall which will also glue the bricks to the concrete so they won't fall off. He said exterior structural bracing is required. He said the building was built on 20+ feet of structural fill. He said the foundation was designed for a one-story structure and the addition of the second and third story did not include any upgrades to the structure. He said extensive micro piles foundation supports (up to 120) would be required. He said the exterior perimeter walls pose a serious risk of collapsing on construction workers. Structure on the inside has no structural capacity

anymore. Structure is rotted and mildewed. All of that structure would need to be removed and no part of existing interior would survive. He provided three explorations of rehabilitation: 1) interior steel bracing and shotcrete, 2) exterior steel bracing and shotcrete (save west façade only) and 3) remove and document all brick and replace after new building constructed. He referred to a slide that detailed nine steps to saving the façade, including demoing the full interior. He said that if building were to be reconstructed, it would not resemble the original building. The interior would not match existing due to current building code requirements. He said the end result is that is too expensive to repair / rehabilitate the building, nor is there a feasible way to do it. He said, we could build a replica if cost were no object. He asked himself, if the real building is all gone, what have we saved or retained? He then spoke to lost opportunities of not redeveloping. He said they wanted to save the building, but at some point you can't deny reality.

When considering, what they would do if they had a "clean slate" Mr. Reddick provided five massing studies from previous ISRD Board meeting that assume the removal of the existing building, with Option 5 preferred. He went over various massing strategies they had done. He said they narrowed it down to three schemes (slide 29 in the presentation). They prefer scheme 3 as a starting point, with a four story base, same height as adjacent building, with 20' set back on Maynard and 15' setback on Lane.

Mr. Reddick concluded his presentation with a question for the Board, "Given the channeled and outcomes outlined in rehabilitating the existing building, does the board support: a new housing/retail development that necessitates the removal of the 614 Maynard Building and is centered around a legacy-driven community space on the ground floor and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors."

Mr. Fujimoto offered to the Board that they can consider the question posed, stating that he thinks it's a bit out of place to be receiving a question as direct as that at this point in time. He added, we should of course be considering what information we should need going forward.

Mr. Reddick said they are hoping to move forward to come back to the board with more details on what the new building would look like. He said it should provide some comfort to the board that they anticipate a number of meetings ahead and lots of opportunities for the Board to look at what the team is doing and how the project is honoring the legacy of the building and if those community members who join the design team think their ideas have been respected and followed through. He said their respect for the legacy of this property has grown over the months and they understand the responsibility that they have.

Mr. Fujimoto reminded the Board and team that no formal action would be taken at this meeting. He asked for board input on whether the board has enough information about the project.

Mr. Chan asked if micro piles would be needed if there was a complete demo and construction of a new building.

Mr. Reddick said the new building would have several levels of below grade parking so the excavation of all that poor soil would be a result of preparing to bring parking into the building.

Mr. Chan asked if the building were being designed as condominium or apartment.

Mr. Reddick said he didn't know if that decision had been made.

Mr. Chan said a concern is that the board has seen this in other projects is that designated community spaces ended up just being amenity spaces. He said he was concerned the same would happen if building designated condo. He said when talking about housing stock it is important to look at the type of units that are going to be in the building. He said so many of the apartments and condos going up in the neighborhood are one bedroom or studio units. He asked if this would add to the actual housing stock that is family friendly – two, three-bedroom units in the building is something to consider if we are trying to really activate the community function of the building and to be something that adds to the housing stock that is needed in the community.

Mr. Reddick said it is James Wong's intention to have this be a family-oriented residential building.

Ms. Woo asked if the community space really will be open to the public. She said the Board has seen community spaces converted into private spaces because of liability and insurance and security. She noted that spaces promised to community members are also entrance ways to residences above. She said if community spaces are being offered, the ownership needs to have a plan for that. She asked for more plan development if that is the intention to use those spaces. She said as someone who works closely with apartment buildings, she didn't think it was feasible. She continued with a question about the soil quality. She asked how unstable soil, as noted, will support a 17-story building.

Mr. Reddick said the 20' of really poor soil will be excavated to make way for multi-story basement parking; they will dig down to the actual bearing soil that they are trying to reach with micro piles. He said he is not qualified to speak to security, but that the team is intent on having usable, sustainable space set aside, planned on and programmed and working agreements with the community, so it isn't a hollow promise. He said they will have a number of people from the community advising them in the design phase and they will have public pinups in the neighborhood at periodic points along the way as the building is progressing. He said there will be a chance to answer everybody's questions.

In response to a clarifying question about options, Mr. Reddick said consistent with this presentation, if the decision is made not to approve the demolition of the building, then he didn't know any other way than that it would continue to degrade and eventually fall down.

Ms. Woo said she is just a little confused regarding the end of the presentation. She asked for clarification if the plan is to move forward with demolishing the entire building or to save the façade.

Mr. Reddick said the brick is lousy and powdery. He said there are all kinds of questions that if a 12" thick concrete wall three stories high behind it and tried to glue the brick to it, a lot of bricks wouldn't glue because they are too powdery. He said they haven't had any conversations that if it came down to just three brick walls and the fourth being the party



wall with the next-door building. He said they haven't looked at that option yet or remotely thought it was a wise thing to do.

Ms. Woo asked if the façade brick is not viable to save?

Mr. Reddick said it is not. He said they are convinced that nothing in the building is salvageable.

James Wong, Vibrant Cities, responded to Ms. Woo's question about the community space and security issues. He said that from the last Board meeting, the Board told the team to "do something that impresses us". He said they didn't have a community space in the last design, but that Vibrant Cities is going to build a big community space on the first and second floors that is going to be serving the community. He said they are happy to do a conditional Certificate of Approval on the community space so that it is written into the agreement that we would keep that as community space forever as long as the building exists, so people can have weddings, birthdays and have a place that will hold up to 250 people for community events to support restaurants and events in the Jasmine Building. We're happy to write it in as a specific agreement that it stays a community space.

Ms. Frestedt said she appreciated Mr. Wong's thoughts and additional information and noted there are questions that remain to be seen, from a legal standpoint, how that would be addressed and the reach of the ISRD board in conditioning such an approval. She cautioned the board that a lot of information is needed, about how something like this would function and be managed. She said the Board has a specific set of criteria and categories, as outlined in the land use code, that it weighs in on. The proposed agreement about the community space use is a nuance that is above and beyond, perhaps, what the board could actually condition an approval on. She said she can talk with the development team further and will need to do some additional research on it.

Mr. Fujimoto said as an architect he wanted to ask more specific pointed questions about this community space that the team is saying it will deliver. He said he was asking about looking for further information of some of the questions and assumptions. He said as he heard it, the team mentioned that it wanted to move beyond a shell for their spaces and asked if that means that the development team is specifically presenting a plan that includes a tenant improvement to that space.

Mr. Reddick said that is correct. He said they will show the tenant spaces along the ground floor along Maynard and Lane. He said working in a collaborative way with a group that forms up and then begins to inform that we have the spaces the right size and what ancillary spaces might there need to be in addition to the larger room, how does that come and go, work and all those things. He said they are at the first step. He said he is earnest when he says that they will have a collaborative team at the table. He said it is an invitation to participate in a hands-on design dialog.

Mr. Fujimoto said he has seen new buildings constructed with residential use above a commercial space or two, but those commercial spaces remained vacant for years. He asked about the process for developing this space.

Mr. Wong said he is of Asian descent and is third generation in Chinatown and their office is located right next to the Jasmine Building. He said he is very invested in this community. He said his goal as an Asian developer with partners the goal is to bring Asian culture to our buildings, Asian-inspired design, Asian retailers, great Asian restaurants and to expose Asian culture to the mainstream. He described projects in Portland and Capitol Hill that have are not vacant, despite the pandemic. He added that Vibrant Cities will be voluntarily offering, and would accept under the Board's authority - which the Board has the Code authority to do, he added - that they will keep the community space a community space. He said that his was confirmed by his attorney, who was listening on, that the Board has the authority to accept that.

There was a brief discussion about the frequency of new construction having vacant retail at the ground floor.

Mr. Reddick stated that this neighborhood has a very mature retail environment that will probably have people waiting to sign up for ground floor places.

Ms. Woo suggested looking into commercializing the spaces and working something out with a business that will do events, in particular to navigate these issues. She noted that Asian culture is not a monolith and that a lot of the people who are really concerned about legacy are not concerned about Asian culture as a whole, but about the legacy of this particular building. This building is meaningful to a lot of people who are hoping to preserve the legacy of what's there and how you're going to connect the development to the building's history. She continued, when the team comes back before the board, she would like to hear what the community thinks about demolition of the building without preservation of the west façade. She wanted clarification that people and organizations that offered their endorsement of the project understand the existing building is proposed for demolition or that the new building would be 17 stories.

Mr. Hong said he has been going into the CID for so long. He said over the years the whole building has deteriorated and the warehouse next door is an eyesore for the District. He said he is impressed by the lobby and community space and the scope of the project. He said a new building is better than an empty lot. He appreciated the team reaching out to community.

Mr. Yip said he has been on the board since the first briefing on this project so has a broad perspective. He wanted newer board members to be brought up to speed before he commented. He said he has been in the community for 25 years and has been active in the community on Asian Chamber of Commerce and on multiple non-profit organization boards. He said it speaks volumes that the previous owner of Bush Garden supports the project. He said that Vibrant Cities has come back to the board on multiple times and has made concessions and taken board comments to heart. He questioned if this is the right time for the development team to ask the board point blank if they can go ahead with demolition. He said it is hard for the development team to plan or offer different scenario without having some guidance from the board. He said the board needs to determine if it has the information needed to make a decision and to provide clear guidance on what is needed. He said Ms. Woo made a good point about needing to hear from the community about demolition, the massing, and the height. He questioned if people know what they are

supporting and hearing from residents, business owners about specifically what they support would be more meaningful than just a 'support letter'.

Ms. Baskerville said she is the newest member on the board and thanked the team for the presentation. She said she appreciated diving in the rich history that has happened inside the building. She said a lot of public comments were reflecting that as well. She asked what specifically can be preserved from the building. She said it sounds like the team didn't want to number the bricks and put them back on to the structure. Can preservation of the west façade still happen? She said what has been presented doesn't necessarily reflect the history of that specific building that was a place where people would sing karaoke and gather for activist meetings.

Ms. Frestedt acknowledged the work the team has put into the project. She said she appreciated the team's attempt to respond to so many of the questions that the board has asked. She said it is important at this pivotal point for the board to start giving the applicant some concrete feedback about whether or not there is enough information for the board to consider demolition, if that's what is reflected in their complete application. She said what she has heard and the shift from summer and fall of 2019 to today is the applicant team has come to a determination that retaining the building or salvaging the building is either too infeasible because of costs, or that in the process of demolition there wouldn't be anything to retain, and therefor salvaging portions of the building may not be a path they intend to take. She referenced the presentation of three massing studies presented. The board should discuss whether or not the board has enough information to move forward with the demolition piece, noting that the final decision will not be binding until the application is complete. She encouraged the Board to also provide input on the massing studies and how they respond to Chapter 23.66 of the Code, and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. She said there has been so much public comment and discussion and feedback about the economic vitality of the neighborhood and the uses but she didn't want to lose sight of other components that are relevant to an application being complete and moving forward.

Mr. Fujimoto asked board members to focus discussion and deliberation on what Ms. Frestedt outline about demolition and massing.

Ms. Woo said she had enough information to decide. She said she believes that if the team wanted to save the building they could, but that maybe it isn't cost effective. She said she thought there was one choice, to demolish the exiting building and rebuild, including community space. She asked if Option 5 is the only option currently on the table.

Mr. Fujimoto said the last slide was confusing and asked Mr. Reddick to clarify what the slide is about and then the subsequent slides about massing.

Mr. Reddick said there are new board members since the last briefing and there is value in showing where the process was a couple years ago. He said he presented the current option. He said the image presents a simple formula of base, middle and top. He said the danger is that people in their mind think the building is going to look like that. The image is intended to show at the very earliest how they are thinking about massing. He said he has not been clear but he is inviting a collaboration on how the building is articulated.

Mr. Chan said he had enough information to make a decision on demolition of the building versus the other alternative. He said the team has done a great job answering all the questions from previous meetings. He said the diversity of opinions that came in from the community was pretty informative. He said that is important because part of the board's job is to reflect what the community wants and it also balances against what the board actually has purview to rule on. He said the question of mass and scale is yet to be addressed and that he doesn't have enough information on that yet, but that the direction the team is heading in is commendable.

Ms. Woo agreed with Mr. Chan and said it is too early to talk about the second question as there isn't enough information. She thanked the team for answering board questions. She reiterated her request for more information about what the community thinks when the team comes back with mass and scale.

Ms. Frestedt asked each board member to speak to the two questions about demolition and mass / scale and specifically note what information is missing. She noted three potential schemes to break down the massing of a 17-story building were provided in presentation.

Mr. Wong reiterated his comment about board challenging the team to do something significant that would contribute to the community instead of only saving a façade. He asked if board members supported giving the project a clean slate and if so, which of the three schemes is preferred so they can move forward with the project.

Mr. Yip said he has enough information on the demolition/saving the façade part. He said they aren't ready for the discussion on massing other than the fact that they have shown are just sketches. He asked if the team is saying that Option 5 is what the board should be discussing now.

Mr. Reddick said he is not a fan of trying to get input on something this ambiguous. He said the team presented to the board if we had a clean slate, what is the beginning massing moves that could be shared with the board. He said they presented three options that captured the commonality of a bunch of the other designs. He drew the comparison of carving a sculpture out of stone and at the beginning you don't know what the end result will look like. He said they have a lot of work and carving to do and are looking for the board to say that the four story base is a reasonable thing to do, that it aligns with the adjacent building and the step back.

Mr. Yip said he didn't think the current board was on board with the massing as there have been some board member changes.

Ms. Woo asked if what Mr. Wong was saying is that the proposal presented today is to demolish the entire building including the façade. That instead of saving the façade, they're going to give a community room. She asked for clarification that the team is proposing to demolish the entire building.

Mr. Reddick said that is right. He said it has been a long time since they have been in front of the board and there is a lack of continuity with the meeting two years ago. He said they

were doing detailed design studies and technical studies and costs studies of what it would take to save the façade. It wasn't their preference, but there was interest from a few people in saving the front. He said "facadism" was not well received. He said later in the board meeting the chair asked what could be done if the team could start over, if they had a clean slate. He said it complicates things to revive the discussion about saving the façade.

Ms. Frestedt said if the board is comfortable with further talking about these massing studies, unless there is objection, that may be the appropriate pathway going forward. She expressed concern about facadism creating a false sense of history. She encouraged the board to think about how to mitigate height differential based on the rest of the district and what information is needed. She said to think about how the new construction would differentiate itself while still being compatible with the district and could be influenced and inspired by the character of the District, rather than trying to recreate what would look like an historic building, as you give feedback to the applicants.

Mr. Fujimoto said he heard from Messrs. Chan, Hong, Yip and Ms. Woo that they have enough information to move forward with the current proposal in terms of demolition of the existing building. He read from SMC 23.66.032 A. He said that the Director of Neighborhoods may rely on information submitted by the owner. Information may also be provided by members of the public. Noting submitted public comments, he said he wanted to state that because he thought that other information could be added to the discussion. He said that perhaps there is an independent third party that wants to be involved; they should do so expeditiously if they want to be part of the conversation.

Mr. Fujimoto said there is opportunity at this intersection, where two Green Streets intersect, to step back and create an urban environment that has access to light and air. He said he looks forward to whether it is scheme three or some variation of it to seeing that decision respected. He said there is a challenge in stepping back the upper floors. He said the podium aligns the top edge with adjacent existing building as indicated by Scheme 3. He said he would love to have a constructive conversation about how that mass is articulated because this is a historic neighborhood and would want to respect the provisions outlined in all the standards that the board supports.

Ms. Baskerville noted the challenge of going through notes of the past years to be brought up to speed, but said her understanding is that nothing will be preserved on the building and the concession was that the developer is proposing a community room.

Mr. Reddick said yes.

Ms. Baskerville said she has enough information.

Mr. Hong said he has enough information.

Mr. Chan said the four-story podium is a pretty good idea in lieu of replication of what was there. He said he is still troubled with how a 17-story building will fit into that area versus the rest of the surrounding areas. He said he thinks it is a good start, but he wants to see how the proposed building actually sits in amongst the existing buildings. He said even with the renderings from the different perspectives, it still looks massive. He said he is

trying to figure out what things will be done to mitigate some of the mass. He said he looks forward to having that discussion.

Mr. Yip said he wanted to follow up on Mr. Chan's comments and said he thought the general consensus is that demolition is alright. He said setting the podium back 20 feet is a good start to mitigate the massing. He said Scheme 3 is generally an OK idea to go down the path with. He said he looks forward to seeing how they can further break down the massing from different directions. He said he looks forward to more renderings and seeing the relationship of proposed building not just by itself, but with other buildings around it and how that will add to a comprehensive pedestrian experience. He appreciates the podium height being the same as adjacent building but wondered how the rest will look from other angles.

Mr. Reddick said they agree with everything just commented on and said. One of the reasons they haven't gone any further than this is they haven't had the opportunity to work closer with the board, it would be premature.

Ms. Woo said she wants to hear more information about what the community thinks. She said there are a thousand seniors living in the area. She said the burning question is, why 17 stories? It is financials only? Why has nothing else been explored?

Mr. Reddick said to get a project like this built is very complicated. He said in order to provide below grader parking, to provide a large common space for the community that is not providing income for the project...all of that is weighed. More can be said about that in greater detail. We're working within the height limit established by the City Zoning Code. Commenting on urban planning, more broadly, he said smart growth is growing up and not out.

Mr. Fujimoto noted they are building legally within the height limit – 170 feet- and what is interesting about massing in a fragile neighborhood is how can, in each of the schemes, be compact in that tower? There's an opportunity to be tall and to have a positive impact on the community, but be compact to be more respectful to the existing fabric of the neighborhood.

Mr. Reddick said they look forward to beginning collaborative discussion with great excitement.

Mr. Fujimoto thanked the design team for their time.

Mr. Wong asked the chair if he could ask each board member about what to do. He said he wasn't clear about how to move forward and asked for guidance in one direction or the other, regarding demo and the massing.

Mr. Reddick said he had the same question.

Ms. Frestedt said that every member has spoken to the demolition piece. She said she hasn't heard that the board needs additional information as it relates to demolition. She said this isn't a binding action, it is just feedback. She said she is hearing a shift in the

discussion to focusing on massing and further refining the schemes to reflect the character and the fabric of the neighborhood, and to show the context of that refinement in relation to the broader neighborhood. She asked board members to speak up if additional information is needed. She said she's heard some good direction from the Board along those lines.

Ms. Baskerville said would echo comments made by Ms. Frestedt and Mr. Woo about seeing different scales and different story levels.

Mr. Yip said he does not need additional information with regard to demolition or keeping the façade. He said he was leaned toward being OK with a proposal that includes demolition with more information on Scheme 3 for 17 stories. He said the board might come back and ask for a bit more about the massing or height, what is optimal or best for the community. He's okay with the team moving forward with the next step of the design phase.

Ms. Woo said Mr. Wong is asking about demolition but it goes hand in hand with design and she said she isn't sure if she has enough information at this point. She said Phase 1 and Phase II go hand in hand. She said it is a question she can't answer today. The Board can't take a vote.

Mr. Fujimoto restated that he heard many of his fellow board members say they do not need further information regarding demolition. He said he does not need additional information. He reiterated that if there is additional information submitted by another party he encouraged that party to do so expeditiously.

Mr. Yip said he said he gave his opinion of support for demolition, based on the fact of the information that was provided and also community input and the site visit he and other board members were able to take a couple years ago. He said maybe other board members need more information.

Mr. Chan said the board is debating something that isn't really what this meeting is about. He said this meeting is not to determine a Certificate of Approval, it is strictly a briefing. We are straying off into an area where we shouldn't be going at this point. He said he is a little uncomfortable about being pushed to the edge because while he is ready to make a decision, a complete application is not in front of the board to vote on.

Ms. Frestedt reiterated that she has heard feedback about demolition and about massing. She reminded board members and applicant team that the decision does not need to be unanimous or a consensus. It needs to be a majority of the board members to move forward. She said one approach would be keep refining toward putting together the Preliminary Design application because the board cannot weigh demolition absent a plan for replacing the structure.

Ms. Woo asked what happens if the board decides not to approve demolition.

Ms. Frestedt said the applicant has to complete an application for the Board to act on. Until the application is complete, there are too many unknowns to adequately answer that question. She said if an application is denied because the board determines that it

does not meet the requirements of the Code and the Standards then the applicant would have the option of coming back with a new proposal, following appeals period. She said the intention of all this discussion is to help the applicant get to a point where the denial isn't something that even needs to be considered, and if it is then it will be addressed at the time. She said the board is not there yet and the Board has hardly discussed the massing of the 17-story building. She said there is discussion that needs to occur on how it is further broken down and detailed and refined to address comments that have come up this far.

There was discussion about the requirements about an application for demolition, which includes plans for a replacement structure.

Mr. Fujimoto said only sketches and street level views were provided and acknowledged the complexity of developing a 170' tower. He said this is an opportunity for this community to look at how this can be done without destroying the fabric of this wonderful place that we live. He said he is interested to see the evolution of the tower where there is a lower element that is part of the street level experience that has function and transparency into it above. He is excited about exploring those options.

Mr. Yip said the massing of the 17 stories is within the legal limit of the City Code for this location. He said the board has approved building of similar height but noted it was not in the heart of the historic district. He said a board we want to make sure that new construction is done sustainably and tastefully and with minimal impact to the community.

Mr. Chan said the City Code allows 170' and his focus is on how the height, mass and scale can be mitigated. He said the height is a sensitive issue for the community. The zoning is a city thing and pressure should be placed there by those who aren't supportive of that. He said clearly the MHA has a component of it that is very racist and is equal to redlining in the sense that it desperately impacts certain communities. He said developers should not be punished by that because they are working within the framework of those rules. He said the board needs to look at what can actually be done to guide the applicant's design into something that is acceptable for the community.

Mr. Fujimoto said he is in agreement.

Ms. Woo said the board has not been given many options – they all look the same. She said the massing and height are similar, just designed and stylized differently, but the spirit is the same. How to make it look smaller will be a lot about materials. She said bringing 200 people in CID won't solve the crime. She asked about accommodating all the cars and parking. She asked if the units are proposed for local workers or tech workers.

Ms. Frestedt said those topics are important to members of the community on both sides of the development discussion. She directed the conversation back to Mr. Chan's comment about increase in zoning. Given the underlying zoning, how the massing will evolve and break down to a degree that it can start to respond to its context. That is the responsibility of the architect team and the developer to determine how they will respond.



Mr. Fujimoto said he was excited about some of the proportions that were presented and he noted that the site is on a Green Street. He said there should be considerable setback requirements as a result that could help the development relate to neighboring buildings.

Ms. Frestedt encouraged the board to add final comments that are related specifically to the massing portion and work toward wrapping up and allow the applicants to respond to feedback.

There were no further Board comments about the massing. Mr. Fujimoto thanked the design team for the presentation.

Mr. Reddick thanked the board and staff and said they are anxious to begin carving into the building and coming back with how we intend to respond to the questions being raised.

Ms. Frestedt thanked everyone for their time and thoughts and calm and thoughtful feedback on both ends. She said she knows there is a lot of emotion about this project and development in the neighborhood, in general. She said she was thankful for the productive discussion. She said it will be an interesting and rich discussion to see how the applicants respond to the feedback.

#### **082421.4 BOARD BUSINESS**

Ms. Frestedt normally this would be the time when she was working on the work plan for the 2021 Board election. She explained that with COVID-19 numbers rising there is trepidation about holding election in person. She said options are being explored for this year as an interim measure. She said that the intention would be to hold an election, by mail, with a slightly different timeframe.

Mr. Hong said he will serve his term but does not want to continue beyond that. He wants to retire. He said it's been an honor to serve with everyone.

Ms. Frestedt said he deserves retirement and appreciated the service that he has given, especially after this unusual couple of years.

She said information will be sent out to the community about the election and the process, including translations.

She said there have been weird quirks about Zoom and how it presented names of public commenters. She said she welcomes any feedback from the community on that experience from a community standpoint.; she provided her contact information in the chat.

#### **Adjourn**

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator  
206-684-0226  
rebecca.frestedt@seattle.gov