



The City of Seattle

## International Special Review District

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ISRD 153/21

### MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, September 14, 2021

Time: 4:30pm  
Place: Remote Meeting

#### **Board Members Present**

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

#### **Staff**

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

#### **Absent**

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

Ms. Frestedt apologized that the meeting link on the agenda was incorrect and noted that the link on the ISRD website was correct. She said DON's Communications Team posted corrected meeting information on social media.

Mr. Fujimoto said the meeting would be simultaneously interpreted and he appreciated everyone's patience.

#### **091421.1 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carmen Hom, CID Coalition, expressed concern with how the 616 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S. project will integrate with the neighborhood. She noted traffic impacts with children and the elderly with services for those populations nearby. She expressed concern with the lack of affordable housing or family size units, the size of the units, and gentrification. She said community outreach for the briefing was done via sending invites and that limiting outreach to sites within 500' is insufficient. She noted rising rents. She said by allowing this development, the wealthy developers have a hold on the community.

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Ian Munar, ICHS, expressed concern with impacts from construction on foot traffic for senior services, adult day center and meal services. He was concerned about noise, dust pollution and environmental hazards. He said residences are directly over the construction site. He asked that new tenants do not disrupt the residents and that no nightclubs, late hours be allowed.

Meilani Mandery, Wing Luke employee and CID Coalition member, expressed concern that the project doesn't address community needs and contributes rising rents and displacement. She said affordable housing is needed. She said 13-stories is too tall and will block the sun. She said the project will profit without providing benefit to the community.

Xin Zhao said she has lots of friends who live in old apartments in the CID. She said old apartments don't have washer and or dishwasher. She supported the new project.

Jiamin Yue said her mom loves the CID and would love to live there to benefit from groceries and other community amenities, like acupuncture.

**091421.2 BOARD BRIEFING**

091421.21 616 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S.  
*Jeff Walls, Studio 19*

Presentation materials available in DON file.

Design briefing on Use and Preliminary Design (bulk/massing/scale) proposal for new construction of a 13-story mixed-use building, to include 12 levels of apartments, ground floor retail and two levels of parking. The previously proposed hotel has been eliminated. The proposal includes demolition of a one-story non-contributing commercial building.

Ms. Frestedt provided a summary of the project to date, noting dates of past briefings on: Oct. 27, 2015; Aug. 6, 2019; May 23, 2017 and Sept. 11, 2018. She said that Lane is a Green Street. The site is located outside of the National Register District and outside the Asian Design Character District and retail core.

Jeff Wall, architect, stated the project consists of demolishing the two existing buildings on site and constructing a new 13-story mixed-use building. The proposed development will consist of approximately 5,500 sf of street level retail space, and 12 levels of apartments with 202 units over one level of lobby and retail space. The building will also have two levels of below grade parking (117 stalls). The total building square footage is 209,196 sf including parking. The original project scope consisted of larger massing options, more total floor area, as well as building levels. The previous building design also included hotel rooms and condo units in addition to apartments. However, as the design adapted to the comments from the board and the community, the project has evolved into a smaller building with only apartment units and ground floor retail, which will better address the needs of the neighborhood. He said that retail can subdivide into smaller spaces as a result of community input.

He said the will require excavation of the site for two levels of below grade parking. He said the project will improve the rights-of-way by adding trees, curb and sidewalk replacement on 8th Ave S and S Lane St. Proposed work within the right-of-way also includes a new driveway on S Lane St. and incorporation of Green Street concept plans. He noted that they conducted an access study for 8<sup>th</sup> Ave S., but SDOT preferred access off S. Lane Street due to the streetcar on 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Walls went over zoning summary for the area and noted that while the site is outside the Asian Design Character District the project will use elements of those standards in design. He said the zoning for the site is 170 ft and the proposed design goes to 130 ft. He provided a recap of the design process, past meetings and said at the last meeting the board asked the team to look at bulk, mass, height, vehicle access and use. He said the team did a context analysis of surrounding massing, street classifications, and transportation. He said the investigated the architectural elements and techniques implemented throughout the neighborhood to use as inspiration for the project. Elements included: canopies, large glass storefronts, brick material, plaza space, modulation, material differentiation. He said outreach has been provided at meetings with SCIDPDA Real Estate Committee, ICBS, and Interim; 24/7 hotline and email with translation, open houses.

Mr. Walls went over proposed massing, with Option C preferred. He provided three schemes to break down massing:

Scheme 1:

- Minimal additional modulation to break up massing on south façade
- Podium to remain on the southern portion of the site
- Residential open space courtyard along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue S
- Residential patio space at top for base massing at the street corner and along Lane Street
- Roof top terrace along the south façade

Scheme 2:

- Modulate tower massing along all facades to bring down the scale
- Base massing to be located along both the north and south façades
- Central residential open space located along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Roof top terrace along the south façade

Scheme 3 (Preferred):

- 2-story podium on one site and 3-stories to the north.
- Modulate tower massing along all façades to bring down the scale
- Base massing to be located along both the north and south façades
- South base massing pulled back to allow for larger plaza space
- Residential open space located at the street corner
- Roof top terrace along south façade

Mr. Walls said that all three schemes have the same number of units and parking. He requested board input on massing, materiality, programming and functionality. He said next step would be to submit MUP proposal.

Ms. Frestedt suggested that the board to re-affirm guidance or provide input on the demolition part of application. She said prior board had no issues or concerns, or objections to demolition.

Members stated that they did not need additional information about proposed demolition. Mr. Hong said he wasn't here for previous presentations, but he liked the schemes.

Mr. Fujimoto said the shift in programming from hotel to apartments is a big change.

Mr. Chan noted traffic on Lane Street and asked why parking entry is there. He said there is already a lot of activity there with buses for residents of Legacy House, daily drop off / pick up of Children at Denise Louie and emergency vehicles. He said he is concerned about the activity on Lane Street. Additionally, he stated a recurring theme is the desire for family units, noted there are only one bedroom and studio units. He said it is not within ISRD board jurisdiction, but this input should be taken seriously. He said there are many new studio and one-bedroom units in new developments, the community wants to see multi-bedroom units.

Mr. Walls said family unit type is not shown but noted the corners where units are sized for two-bedroom units. He said there are currently no three-bedroom units, but he could explore it. He said he heard many times that family-size units would be beneficial.

*Ms. Woo left the meeting at 5:30 pm.*

Mr. Chan requested that type of units be shown in future renderings.

Ms. Baskerville said her comments were similar to Mr. Chan's. She supported multi-bedroom units. She asked for exploration of locating the parking garage at northwest corner. She said she understands that SDOT wants access on Lane, but noting that it's a Green Street wondered why it would be there.

Mr. Fujimoto asked if the traffic study had been updated now that the building would no longer be a hotel. He said the board can recommend and Director can take a position on parking access.

Mr. Walls said that parking was reduced more than half, from 250 to 117. He said they should update traffic analysis. He said there had been some board support for having garage entry on Lane and noted there are issues with having the garage entry on 8<sup>th</sup> as it would impact pedestrian safety and it is more congested. He said the proposed location is on a green street, but it is pushed to the end of the green street. He said the grade changes impacted the decision as well. He said it will be only residential activity now, less than a hotel.

Mr. Chan expressed concern about traffic from service vehicles – garbage, deliveries, large vehicles in the area, and congestion caused during peak times. He said that vehicles that linger could create a problem for emergency vehicle access.

Ms. Frestedt said she reached out to SDOT and said that it sounds like because there is a change in programming, a new street improvement plan (SIP) will be required and service access will be under consideration during SIP.

Mr. Williams applauded the owner for listening to the community and reconsidering the height and massing of the project. He said it would be interesting to know other properties at the four corners of the intersection are accessing services.

Mr. Fujimoto asked for input on change of use, height, preferred scheme.

Mr. Chan said ISRD board has to operate within the provisions of the code, noting that the community often wants the board to act or comment on elements outside the board's jurisdiction. He noted the east view is missing from renderings and should be included. He said it abuts the freeway and is the site of many issues, problems, safety concerns.

Mr. Walls said it is very similar to the front on 8<sup>th</sup> with windows, glass in middle, but flipped. He said you won't see brick podium but it will be similar at upper levels. He said they have been discussing windows on that side having higher STC ratings for residents on that side. He said there is a significant grade change on 8<sup>th</sup>; two volumes with glass in middle will be visible from that side.

Mr. Chan expressed concern about the design of the podium level and asked how about the space between building and freeway.

Mr. Walls said he is not sure what SDOT or WSDOT would allow there but they will contact SDOT, WSDOT to make sure that space is cleaned up and safe and secure.

Ms. Baskerville asked if the strip could be leased from SDOT or WSDOT and noted it has been done before. She asked about STC window rating.

Mr. Walls said the amount of noise coming through windows is covered by STC rating.

Ms. Baskerville voiced support for schemes 2 and 3 and said the increase brick façade on scheme 2 fits in the neighborhood, but scheme 3 has bigger public space. She said the massing has improved.

Mr. Yip concurred with Ms. Baskerville and supported options 2 and 3. He liked the increased brick especially on Scheme 2. He said Scheme 3 provides more public space. He said he would like to see more modulation on the north façade as it is an important and highly visible elevation.

Mr. Fujimoto said the north façade from a design standpoint is an important façade for the site and needs more modulation, noting the care and attention paid to other facades. He said the view on page 46 appears "bulky". He said new construction should be in

keeping with the character and scale of existing buildings. He said there is something interesting about the lower elevations from zero to 45' where more brick is offered. He said the design is in keeping with the character and scale of existing building.

Mr. Williams said he preferred schemes 2 and 3. He asked about setbacks on all four sides.

Mr. Walls said the brick sections set back 3-4' depending on the scheme. He said the white section is 10-15' back; above podiums on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave setback is a minimum of 10'; above podiums on Lane the setbacks are a minimum of 15 – 20'. He said there is 12' of right of way / sidewalk from property line to base of curb.

Mr. Williams said green space and area could be used for café to enhance the pedestrian experience but questioned if that would make this scheme 4 or 5. He said with right of way space, a merchant could utilize the space and make it inviting and appealing to pedestrians and the community.

Mr. Walls said it sounds like a great idea. It would have to be run past SDOT but noted that SDOT is encouraging more of that use. He said it is a good idea that we can include some of those ideas and see if that is something they would allow.

*Mr. Hong left the meeting at 6:09 pm.*

Mr. Chan preferred schemes 2 and 3 and said Scheme 2 has a stronger face to the street. He noted the quality of materials and designing of podium on 8<sup>th</sup>. He said the adjacent lot will eventually be developed. He said this design will be a departure but should blend into the historic district. He said he does not want to see a canyon of tall building; the design should signify an updated, modern approach to the district and establish a look the rest of the street could play off.

Mr. Williams said Scheme 2 is a stronger, bolder statement than Scheme 3. He said the project is benchmark to be used for other projects in the vicinity. He discouraged using ICON as a benchmark. He felt it is not compatible with the district. He said this project should raise that bar and be a newer benchmark that allows standards to be raised. He asked if there would be a café or retail tenant that could enhance the right-of-way.

Mr. Fujimoto reiterated that this site is outside the Asian Design Character District. He said the Wing Luke Museum is a good one to study for the level of care and craft that was put into the renovation of the building. He said he would like to see that level of care go into this building.

Mr. Chan said at this moment the proposed building could be anywhere and questioned what touches could make the design say 'uniquely ISRD'. He suggested blending new with old.

Mr. Walls said they will get to that level.

Mr. Fujimoto referenced the repetitive window pattern. He said he's not advocating for horizontal emphasis, but said design should reference the fabric of the CID. He asked how to preserve street level access to light and air and to maintain compatible design elements at podium level.

Mr. Walls asked how the board feels about balconies and decks.

Mr. Chan said anything that breaks up the mass of wall that would add to the design element could be interesting and help avoid canyon effect.

Mr. Williams said he agreed but noted it is hard to visualize. He said some level of balconies would be beneficial to the project and suggested attention to how the decks are constructed with regard to texture, schemes, interesting elements. He said he's not a fan of pre-engineered bolt-on aluminum balconies.

Ms. Baskerville said she supports balconies, as they provide good livability and access to outdoors.

Mr. Fujimoto agreed balconies do add to livability with addition of outdoor space. He cited SMC 23.66.336 A, and noted the board is charged with retaining and enhance the visual order and compatibility with adjacent buildings.

Mr. Yip said he agreed with the other comments on balconies. He said they meet a need for residents and help break down the mass of the residential tower. He said to explore how to make it not cold or too commercial feeling. He asked if there would be amenity in towers and said if there is room, recommended setting back floors to create a terrace.

#### North Façade Comments

Mr. Fujimoto said it is bulky and massive above the podium and hoped to see access for air and light to street.

Mr. Williams echoed Mr. Fujimoto's comments and said to continue to pursue thoughts provided about schemes 2 and 3 and to continue to pursue board input and possible 4<sup>th</sup> scheme.

Mr. Chan asked if there is a plan to mitigate demolition / construction impacts on Legacy House, Denise Louise, and the clinic. He said this area has the worst air in the city and he would like to see a statement about mitigating inconvenience, dust, noise.

Ms. Baskerville agreed and noted high risk populations – children and elderly - at Denise Louie, ICHS.

Mr. Fujimoto agreed. He referenced different materials and encouraged creativity.

Ms. Frestedt noted earlier comments from the board regarding right of way and service access.

Mr. Chan said he applauded the project's taking in board and public comments about mitigating massing.

**091421.3 BOARD BUSINESS**

Ms. Frestedt reported that election would be held via mail-in ballots in consideration of community safety. She said both Ballard Avenue Landmark District and the ISRD have elections which didn't happen last year. She explained this method would be used for 2021 only with resumption of in-person next year. She said notification would be sent out to local newspapers and email lists.

Ms. Baskerville asked if unregistered voters could register by mail.

Ms. Frestedt said identification must be checked. She said she will work with community organizations to hold in-person voter registration events.

Ms. Baskerville asked if a Zoom event could be held where voters show their ID.

Ms. Frestedt said she would check. She summarized board member terms and which board members were eligible to run again.

She said another briefing will be presented at the September 28, 2021 meeting.

**Adjourn** 6:56 pm

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