



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
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PSB 269/25

PIONEER SQUARE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Time: 9:00a.m.

Hybrid Meeting via Webex or Room L2-80 Boards and Commission

Board Members

Montana Houston (MH)

Sage Kim (SK)

Henry Watson (HW)

Maureen Elenga (ME)

Staff

Genna Nashem (GN)

Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Absent:

Jose Lorenzo Torres (JLT)

Key:

BM: Board Member

SM: Staff Member

AP: Applicant

Chair Maureen Elenga called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

110525.1 ROLL CALL

110525.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments

110525.3 MEETING MINUTES

July 2, 2025

MM/SC/SK/HW

2:0:2

The motion passed, and the minutes were approved. Chair Elenga abstained.

Due to technical difficulties, BM Montana Houston abstained from this vote.

August 20, 2025, minutes were postponed.

September 3, 2025

MM/SC/SK/HW

3:0:1

The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

Due to technical difficulties, BM Montana Houston abstained from this vote.

110525.4 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

110525.41 Pioneer Park

100 Yesler Way

Applicant: Floretta Woart, DSA

Proposed: Installation of decorations and interactive art.

Floretta Woart, Downtown Seattle Association, presented plans for this year's holiday installation at Pioneer Square Park, noting it will largely mirror last year's setup with enhancements. Core features include construction of a 20-foot decorated tree, poinsettia baskets on light poles, and the pergola adorned with bows, garland, and LED lights. New highlights this season are light bursts strung through the trees and a themed selfie station, designed to bring extra cheer and encourage visitors to engage with the park.

SM Genna Nashem clarified to the board that no brackets will be added to the multi-globe light as shown in the submittal.

AP Woart confirmed that only the existing brackets will be used for hanging baskets, with no new additions or structural changes, and noted the inclusion of a site map showing the selfie station placement near First Avenue, designed to add festive flair without obstructing park entryways.

Chair Elenga expressed appreciation for the light burst installation, noting the positive impact of holiday lights during the dark season and raised concern about whether the lights, planned at a twelve-foot height, might still be reachable by the public.

AP Woart explained that the light bursts will be installed at a minimum height of 12 feet, ensuring they remain out of reach of the public.

There were no comments or questions from the rest of the board members.

Action:

I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for Installation of temporary decorations and interactive artwork. All per the applicant's submittal. The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the Nov 5, 2025 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.160 Signs

2. The following signs are prohibited throughout the Pioneer Square Preservation District:

- Off premise signs

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION
Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

MM/SC/HW/SK

3:0:0

The motion passed and approved.

Due to technical difficulties, BM Houston's vote was not recorded.

110525.5 BRIEFING

110525.51 Metropolitan Building and Annex

222 and 210 2nd Ave Ext 5

Briefing on proposed change of use on upper floors with the ground floor retaining retail use and addition of the annex and penthouse on the Metropolitan Building.

Andrew Philips, architect at SMR and Kim Cook, president of Bread of Life presented a briefing on proposed changes of use on the upper floors with the ground floor retaining retail use and addition to the Annex building and penthouse on the Metropolitan Building. He said there was a possibility that they would propose to demolish and replace the Annex building.

Chair Elenga supported the program and noted concerns regarding limited information on the building's massing and scale, as well as the need to determine its historic significance before considering demolition. She said that the addition and penthouse would need evaluation with the Secretary of Interior Standards 14. Chair Elenga encouraged continued exploration of the site but emphasized that any new construction should not overwhelm the historic building in size or scale. She noted the annex and historic building read as separate structures from the street. She said the proposal is not a non-starter.

BM Henry Watson stated, while the briefing was helpful, he would need more information on the design intent before providing further comments.

BM Kim noted that while proposal is within permitted guidelines is a good starting point, significantly more information is needed to evaluate the application and emphasized the importance of exploring multiple scenarios such as demolition versus non-demolition and how additions would affect the building's façade, envelope, and overall and structural integrity and historic integrity. She said her comments are limited to programming aspects which she supports.

AP Philips explained that the project is currently at the feasibility stage. Kim's next step will be to present the proposal to her board in order to seek approval for purchase. Once the approval is secured, the team will return with options and findings to share what has been explored. At this point, the focus is solely on determining whether the program can fit and how adjustments might be made. No design options have been considered yet, including potential additions or the placement of the penthouse. The effort right now is simply to establish whether the project can be done.

AP Philips noted concerns about the new building or annex potentially overwhelming the contributing structure and the annex will likely appear taller than the adjacent structure due to the site's topography and the alley configuration, and asked whether the view from the railroad side is considered as significant as the view from the 2nd Avenue Extension side.

BM Kim agreed that the view is significant, emphasizing that the building must be considered within its broader context and fabric rather than treating one side as more contributing than another. While the annex itself is not historically contributing to the National Register, it sits alongside a contributing historic building, and together they form the overall setting, the importance lies in how the structures stand within the whole context.

110525.52

Sidewalk Cafe

419 Occidental Ave. S

Briefing on proposed sidewalk café including enclosed structure.

Justin Martin, Senior landscape architect at MIG and Dave Rodgers, MIG, presented a briefing and walkthrough on a proposed sidewalk café including an enclosed structure.

SM Genna Nashem explained that sidewalk cafes are typically reviewed administratively when they comply with existing guidelines, but this proposal requires board consideration because it involves an enclosed structure. Current guidelines prohibit walls or roofs on sidewalk cafes, and while the board has previously reviewed two similar cases, neither was approved or advanced. Approving this application could set a precedent that effectively changes the guidelines, so consistency and careful evaluation are necessary. Each case should be considered individually, with attention to any unique circumstances that may distinguish it from other proposals.

SM Nashem further noted that city regulations generally do not allow fully enclosed structures with four walls and doors, as they risk privatizing public right-of-way. Although the building owner funded and maintains the improvements, the space remains public. This situation differs from past cases involving wood decking, where the city was concerned about long-term maintenance if businesses closed. The responsibility for upkeep is built in, but issues such as compliance with enclosure rules, gates, and the installation of gas fireplaces still require board review.

AP Rodgers reported that the fire department was consulted, at the request of the SDOT, regarding necessary permits. The fire department confirmed that propane tanks would require a fire permit, while hardwired gas supplied

from the basement would only require a plumbing permit and not a fire permit.

AD Rodgers added that existing irrigation services already penetrate the building's shear wall, and if gas and electrical connections proceed, they would likely run parallel to the current water services. These penetrations occur mid-building, where infrastructure is already in place to accommodate such utilities.

Chair Elenga inquired about the penetrations into the woodside walk for connections.

AP Rodgers explained that if the board agrees to proceed with considering the structure, the next step will involve the structural engineer would review the existing supports and determine whether modifications are needed to accommodate an additional structure on top.

AP Rodgers noted that to install electrical or gas lines, the decking would be temporarily removed to expose the custom support system. The utilities would be run through the area alongside the supports, after which the wood decking would be replaced to restore the surface.

Chair Elenga emphasized concern about the privatization of space intended to remain public while acknowledging the area is designated as a furniture zone rather than a sidewalk, and noted unease about fencing off a public space.

BM Kim noted that this was the first time encountering a fully enclosed, permanent structure on a sidewalk, and questioned whether the proposal constituted fully conditioned space, given the inclusion of gas heating, rather than serving solely as weather protection and what additional code requirements might be.

AP Rodgers noted that it is not fully conditioned, and it will not meet a heating energy code requirement. AP Rodgers emphasized that the space would not include air conditioning, and its design allows for adequate airflow and ventilation.

AP Rodgers clarified that the proposed structure would be anchored but should be considered semi-permanent rather than permanent, and described it more like a greenhouse, noting that it could be moved or adjusted in the future if utility work or other needs arise.

BM Kim inquired about a building permit is required for the proposed structure.

AP Rodgers stated that the next will be discussions with SDOT, beginning with whether overhead weather protection is acceptable to the Pioneer Square Preservation Board, and explained that this issue serves as the starting point before considering related matters such as walls, enclosure, security and maintenance.

AP Rodgers noted that the team came to the board to gauge whether overhead protection is generally appropriate to pursue with SDOT, ensuring alignment before moving forward with more detailed considerations.

BM Kim raised questions about the roof design and height and drainage.

AP Rodgers explained that the custom decking was designed to ensure the soil beneath remains uncompacted, allowing tree roots to access oxygen and water. Rainwater naturally drains under the deck both now and in future conditions, providing necessary moisture to the London plan trees without impacting the soil structure.

Chair Elenga acknowledged the unusual circumstances of the decking in a former parking area but expressed strong concern about the proposal's full enclosure, and noted that while overhead covers may be acceptable, enclosing the space with four walls risks privatizing public space and sets a troubling precedent. She asked whether alternatives had been considered that would provide weather protection while remaining open and accessible to the public. She said the aesthetics is less of a concern.

AP Rodgers noted that options range from off-the-shelf to fully custom designs and acknowledged concerns about privatization that were raised during the earlier wood decking proposal and said that many of those who commented previously are now supportive and enthusiastic about this project moving forward.

AP Rodgers explained that alternatives could include structures without doors, or partially enclosed with large openings to allow temporary use during inclement weather, though such designs present management challenges, and emphasized that if weather protection is deemed acceptable, the next step would be to work with SDOT and the Preservation Board to weigh the pros and cons of fully enclosed versus more open configurations.

Chair Elenga emphasized that the project was originally approved as a public space, and maintaining that character is important, and noted that fencing and planter boxes along Occidental Avenue seem reasonable but expressed concern that the proposed enclosure and gated wood area would effectively privatize the space. Chair Elenga emphasized that the decision could set a precedent for other businesses seeking similar greenhouse structures.

AP Rodgers noted that the ability to install gates, and whether they could be locked or unlocked, would need to be reviewed in coordination with the SDOT.

BM Kim emphasized that doors and gates in a fully enclosed space raise life safety and egress concerns, which must be confirmed, and noted that the proposed café structure on King Street appears to block building egress routes.

AP Rodgers confirmed that the building includes multiple doors around its perimeter and stated that compliance with egress requirements will be verified through the tenant improvement permit process.

BM Kim noted that at this stage there appears to be more code-related items than preservation-focused comments. From a preservation perspective, BM suggested considering alternative design options for the greenhouse.

BM Kim also pointed out a potential conflict in the rendering, where the proposed 12-foot-high greenhouse seems to overlap with an existing tree.

AP Martin explained that the greenhouse was originally planned in a more central location between two trees, but the design was adjusted to better open the view of the building façade while still preserving the trees. AP Martin acknowledged the close proximity shown in the rendering and noted that, based on the roof slopes, the greenhouse and trees can coexist with only minor pruning required. Since the London plane trees will eventually develop a higher canopy, he believes they can remain healthy and create an aesthetically compatible relationship with the greenhouse.

Chair Elenga stated that she could not support the proposed gates and full enclosure, as they do not align with the guidelines, and encouraged the team to return with alternative options that better comply

AP Rodgers acknowledged the challenges and noted that, at a high level, there appears to be interest in exploring the possibility of overhead protection that is independent of the building, acknowledging that such a measure would be considered an exception and clarified that this idea does not involve a full enclosure.

Chair Elenga clarified that while full enclosure is not supportable, the board could consider alternatives that provide overhead protection under exceptional circumstances, and emphasized that the space should remain primarily for café use but in a more open form, without being completely gated off, which she felt would be a more compelling approach.

AP Rodgers explained that the next steps involve returning to SDOT, and checking code requirements for tenant improvements and egress, and noted they will review gate configurations and reconfirm them with the SDOT, as well as discuss the enclosure.

Chair Elenga suggested that once answers are obtained from SDOT, the team should return with alternatives to the full enclosure for further discussion.

110525.6 BOARD BUSINESS

110525.7 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

110525.8 STAFF REPORT

SM Nashem reported that, in collaboration with SPU and Seattle Channel, a short program on sustainability and historic preservation will be filmed on November 19, featuring the Westland Building/ Populous Hotel.

Meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.