



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 158/26

PIONEER SQUARE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting Via Webex Or Room L2-80 Boards And Commission

Board Members

Maureen Elenga, Chair, (ME)
Sage Kim (SK)
Jose Lorenzo Torres, Vice-Chair, (JLT)
Sean O'Brien (SOB)
Katrina Plewinski (KP)
Maya Spotted Bear (MSB)
Catherine Walker (CW)
Henry Watson (HW)

Staff

Genna Nashem (GN)
Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Absent:

Key:

BM: Board Member
SM: Staff Member
AP: Applicant

Chair Maureen Elenga called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

052026.1 ROLL CALL

052026.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no in-person and virtual public comments.

052026.3 MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2026

MM/SC/JLT/CW

5:0:3

The motion passed. BM Katrina Plewinski, BM Maya Spotted Bear, BM Henry Watson abstained.

052026.4 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

052026.41 Areaway

DONH-COA-02067

Applicants(s): Kit Loo, SDOT

Proposed: Repair of areaway including replacement of the glass prism panels

AP Kit Loo of SDOT presented an overview of the areaway repair project at 616 1st Avenue South, describing the need for repairs following a vehicle collision in which the driver was unaware of the areaway structure.

AP Loo outlined the differences between pre- and post-accident conditions, noting previously intact masonry, skylight assemblies, and interior spaces that were subsequently disturbed by utility cuts, debris, loose brickwork, and significant damage to skylight panels and frames.

AP Loo detailed proposed minor repairs including re-securing displaced masonry, tuck-pointing, and restoring portions of the concrete slab and major repairs requiring fabrication of a new skylight assembly, reconstruction of supporting concrete ledges, and partial sidewalk replacement.

The updated skylight design will meet current structural requirements, mitigate hazards, and incorporate durable materials such as stainless steel framing and an epoxy-based cementitious infill, while offering options to maintain visual compatibility through matte finishes, potential coloration treatments, and choices in glass puck appearance.

SM Genna Nashem reported that the Board asked at the ARC that the applicant to provide samples showing the texture and sheen of the proposed stainless-steel substitute material for the cast-iron skylight frame and noted that because the project involves a full replacement, current load-bearing code requirements apply, though the code does not mandate a specific material as long as it meets structural standards.

SM Nashem referenced the included substitute-materials report and discussed considerations for whether the glass prisms should be sandblasted, explaining that sandblasted prisms in some locations appear dark while others retain a lavender tone depending on site conditions.

SM Nashem also observed that many existing prisms in Pioneer Square are set directly in concrete and only one has a minimal stainless-steel trim. She recommended that any removed panels be preserved so their glass prisms can be reused in other locations where prisms are missing, noting past difficulty sourcing individual replacements and prior Board practice requiring their retention.

Board members expressed interest in understanding the final appearance of the proposed stainless-steel frame, emphasizing the importance of reviewing color and finishing samples before deciding.

Board members discussed whether the design should minimize exposed stainless-steel surfaces to reduce visual brightness and questioned the necessity of the extended lip included in the proposed frame detail. Several board members supported simplifying the design by embedding only the essential metal angle into the concrete slab, noting that this approach could reduce visual contrast and avoid attempting to replicate historic conditions with a different material.

Overall, the board conveyed support for exploring revised frame details but requested additional information and samples to fully evaluate the proposed alternatives.

SM Nashem advised that two key issues remained unresolved: whether the proposed frame modifications were feasible and how the final color and finish would appear and emphasized that the Board would likely want to review physical samples, particularly to assess the top ledge and overall appearance.

SM Nashem recommended postponing the portion of the decision related to the frame until the applicant could provide the requested samples and explore an alternative and added that the Board could still approve the prism panels at this time and defer only the frame component pending further review.

AP Loo requested that the Board approve the minor repairs included in the project scope, noting that these items are straightforward and not dependent on the outstanding decisions regarding the frame design.

AP Loo clarified that the minor-repair work consists of tuck-pointing and brick replacement, along with concrete slab restoration in the areaway to address deterioration caused by previous utility cuts.

AP Loo asked that these repairs be allowed to proceed while additional information is gathered for the remaining elements of the proposal.

Action:

Revised motion: Vice-Chair Jose Lorenzo Torres move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for repair of areaway concrete, brick and concrete in the areaway including replacement of the glass prism panels with sand blasted purple glass. The decision on the frame is postponed pending additional information on material color and frame design.

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 May 20, 2026 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.

Pioneer Square Preservation District Rules

XVIII. AREAWAYS

Areaways are usable areas constructed under the sidewalk between the building foundation and street wall. Areaways were created after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 when the District was rebuilt and the street elevations were raised. Building standards adopted shortly after the fire required fireproof sidewalk construction to replace the pre-fire wooden sidewalks. Areaways are part of the City's right-of-way area, however, the space is often available for use by the adjacent building owner. (7/03) The most significant qualities of an areaway are its volume of space, which provides a record of its history, and the architectural features that render its form, character, and spatial quality. These features include use of unit materials (brick or stone), bays articulated by arches and/or columns, ceiling vaults, and other special features including tilework or skylights (sidewalk prism lenses). The historic characteristics of areaways shall be preserved. (7/03)

In 2001, the Seattle Department of Transportation completed a survey of approximately 100 areaways in the District. Each areaway was rated in terms of its structural condition and presence of original historic characteristics. A range of structural repairs options were proposed based on the structural and historical ratings. The 2001 Seattle Department of Transportation Areaway Survey shall serve as a guide for the Board's decision making on future alterations or repairs to areaways in the District. (7/03)

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Preservation Briefs 16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors

Compelling reasons to use a substitute material instead of the historic material include the unavailability or poor performance of the historic material, or environmental pressures or code-driven requirements that necessitate a change in material.

Considerations:

Matching the appearance of the historic material

Matching the physical properties of the historic material

Performance of the material over time.

MM/SC/JLT/SOB

8:0:0

The motion passed.

052026.5 BRIEFING

052026.51 No briefings

052026.6 BOARD BUSINESS

052026.7 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

052026.8 STAFF REPORT

SM Nashem reported on several administrative reviews, including the replacement of existing bollards at 301 South Main Street to match recently installed East–West Street improvements and noted approval of an additional blade sign on another façade of the Nolo Building.

A temporary window signage at the Schwabacher Building for Flora and Henry, and temporary traffic barriers to be used solely for FIFA-related traffic management.

Additional approvals included new signage for the Black Panther Interpretive Center at the Metropole Building, signage and storefront painting for a new business, The Bach Gallery, at the Mottman Building, signage for Hoyle Hat Company at the Latimer Building, and a change of use to eating and drinking, along with new business signage, at the Crown Building.

SM Nashem reported that the denial of the proposed murals on the Morrison Building has been appealed. As a result, discussion of that project and broader discussions related to art must be paused until the appeal process is resolved.

BM Maya Spotted Bear reported that the Grandmother Frog welcome figure was installed the previous day at the new Fortson Square park at Second and Yesler, marking a significant milestone for a project that has been underway for more than four years.

BM Maya noted that the park is expected to open after June 5, with a celebratory event planned for the following week, and will share details once confirmed.

BM Maya also highlighted the cultural significance of the installation, explaining that the location aligns with the original shoreline of Seattle, where welcome figures historically stood for Native communities and offered to provide the story of the welcome figure for distribution to the board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.