



The City of Seattle

# Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
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PSB 133/21

**MINUTES** for Wednesday August 18, 2021

### Board Members

Lynda Collie	
Kianoush Curran	Absent
Sam Dawson	
Alise Kuwahara Day	
Brendan Donckers	Absent
Audrey Hoyt	
Alex Rolluda, Chair	Absent
Felicia Salcedo	Absent

### Staff

Genna Nashem
Melinda Bloom

There was no quorum. Review and input were provided to application and work session.

**In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation is limited to access by the WebEx meeting link or the telephone call-in line provided on agenda.**

### Roll Call

**081821.1      APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
June 2, 2021  
Tabled.

**081821.2      PUBLIC COMMENT**

**081821.3      APPLICATION**

081821.31      **Burke Building - Sidewalk and Areaway**  
160 S Jackson St

Rebuild the sidewalk including alterations to the areaway ceiling and structurally reinforce the areaway for two panels

Staff report: Ms. Nashem said a couple years ago a truck drove on the sidewalk causing a portion of the sidewalk and areaway ceiling to cave in. It has been temporary covered with a metal plate since. Shortly after the accident occurred SDOT structures staff, and the building owner, along with a sidewalk topping consult along with herself attended a site visit. Staff observed that this section of the areaway is walled off from the rest of the areaway, that it had cobble and brick walls as well as one remaining brick arch. It was also noted that there were several locations of cracks and previous failed repairs to cracks and spalling on the sidewalk. Options discussed at the time included filling the areaway and adding a topping coat to the sidewalk. The proposed alternative maintains the space of the areaway, and the areaway walls and provides for a solid sidewalk. The entire building's areaways are rated as substantially intact areaway and the remainder of the areaway is used for underground tours.

Ron Wright said the double bay brick vaulted areaway is sealed off by itself with a City Light transformer vault nearby. He said a large truck poked a hole through the street and the areaway collapsed. He said steel plates lay over the affected area. He said the project will replace the sidewalk and maintain the areaway but will need to remove the brick and add concrete slabs with wide flange beams to support the new sidewalk. He said the granite curb on top of the areaway wall extends around the corner and will remain. He said existing manhole cover won't be replaced.

Mr. Wright proposed replacing both bays even though the second bay appears undamaged, but they are structurally tied together so both need to be done. He said in the end there will be three bays to reduce the loads. He said the new arches will be concrete and the brick arches will be removed as they are in the way of getting the thickness required to meet loading requirements.

Ms. Kuwahara Day said it is unfortunate, but the issue needs to be fixed and the project approach is as needed. She asked if the bricks will be saved.

Mr. Wright said they could and could be stored onsite or at SDOT yard. He said he would request that to the owner.

Ms. Collie thanked Mr. Wright for his approach which she said gives more respect to the areaway. She agreed that brick should be saved.

Mr. Wright said it is getting harder to find the materials as the yards keep moving. He said it is harder to find the granite. He said that the areaways don't meet current area load requirements and are vulnerable to this type of failure.

Ms. Nashem said she would reschedule the application and this presentation would be considered a briefing.

**081821.4 BOARD BUSINESS**

**081821.41 Work Session**

Discussion of revisions to Design Guidelines

Steven Treffers presented (presentation documents in DON file). He described the intent to create a framework that would inform the board to what information is needed as part of the process to make a decision. He said the Guidelines would help the applicant as well. He said the guidelines would establish clear guidance and identify materials and perspectives needed to make decision; it would create a more consistent and efficient process. He said with regard to signage the approach would be to identify signage types and state that it is not “one-size-fits-all”. He said the guidelines will identify historic precedent and show what is meant by “integrated with building architecture”. Each sign type will have specific conditions. Guidelines will provide guidance when a sign type is appropriate or not. He said ghost signs are considered an architectural feature. He said lessons learned from other cities will be provided.

Ms. Kuwahara Day said what comes up frequently is the proliferation of signs and wondered if there was a way to make it clearer to applicant where that line is.

Mr. Treffers said it could be folded into an overarching mission statement and create framework and goals of what to consider that will help inform applicants what is too much.

Ms. Hoyt agreed that proliferation was a common theme. She noted 3-D sign language, window canopies, projecting signs, which have a general limit to begin with. She said the maximum % window coverage is helpful, having it defined better will be helpful. She said the board pushed applicants to have sign packages to discourage coming back piece meal. She said there are different views of a building and defining different approach and ways to limit signage is helpful.

Mr. Treffers said there is no clear historic precedent on directory signs, and they are less consistent with historic character of the district.

Ms. Nashem said those are in response to upper-level businesses wanting signage. She said the advantage to having a directory sign is that as businesses come and go, just the individual plaque has to be changed and there are no changes to the attachments to the building. She said to consider what is meant by “pedestrian scale” – usually something that is in proportion and meant to be seen and read by a pedestrian as they are walking by. The Board previously had an applicant claim that it was pedestrian scale if a pedestrian could read it from miles away.

Ms. Kuwahara Day said the overarching intent when reviewing is that the building’s architectural character is not overwhelmed by signage and that the focus is on the architecture: signage should not overshadow architecture.

Mr. Treffers said that is a helpful frame – to not overwhelm the building. He said the building is the primary feature, not the sign.

Ms. Nashem noted the limitation for neon signs and to think about graphic interest versus just words.

Ms. Hoyt said an artistic approach is encouraged.

Ms. Nashem noted a previous sign that had graphics and design in addition to the letters.

Ms. Hoyt said using examples that are more attractive in that way could implicitly tell people that is a good way to go.

Mr. Treffers appreciated implicit encouragement of good design by use of good examples.

Ms. Hoyt said visuals can speak volumes. She asked where the ban of upper-level signage came from.

Ms. Nashem said it has been in the district rules from the start. It was initially a total ban then an exception to be able to be considered as part of a sign package. She said the language makes it difficult when signage proposed is not appropriate even with a sign package. She said the Board should consider if the upper level signage should be allowed at all or if building name signage should be allowed and if so where and what other guidelines are needed to keep it from overwhelming the building or turning the building into a prop for advertisement. IN a previous consideration some Board member have thought that the building name signage should be at the entry of the building.

**081821.5** **REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** none

**081821.6** **STAFF REPORT:** Genna Nashem

Ms. Nashem said that she worked on changes to code legislation to add more flexible uses to Pioneer Square. She said it will allow for streamlined administrative review and require that storefront uses must be more active uses such as reception, display, lobby.

Ms. Hoyt questioned if lobby constitutes an active use.

Ms. Nashem said the legislation intends to require some visible forms of activity, some form of activation. For example public restrooms are not allowed at storefront area nor can anything be installed to block windows from outside view.

Ms. Nashem said new board members should be approved by Council on September 20, 2021, which would make September 15, 2021 the last meeting for Ms. Kuwahara Day and Mr. Donckers.

Mr. Dawson said this would be his last meeting.

Ms. Nashem thanked Mr. Dawson for his dedication. She appreciated that he was always prepared and offered good questions and comments.

Mr. Dawson said he has gotten some good insights from his time on the board and he thanked the Board.

Genna Nashem  
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator  
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