



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
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LPB 325/25

MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

Hybrid Meeting via Webex Webinar or Room L2-80 Boards & Commissions

Seattle City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Floor L2

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Roi Chang Vice-Chair (RC)

Taber Caton (TC)

Ian Macleod, Chair (IM)

Becca Pheasant (BP)

Cameron Wong (CW)

Erica Thomas (ET)

Harriet Wasserman (HW)

Board Members Absent

VJ Kopacki (VJ)

Lora Ellen McKinney (LEM)

Lawrence Norman (LN)

Kati Randall (KR)

Staff Present

Sarah Sodt

Erin Doherty

Nelson Pesigan

Genna Nashem

Key

BM Board Member

AP Applicant

SM Staff Member

Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m.

101525.1 ROLL CALL

101525.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

Patricia Fels, architect with Friends of Gas Works Park. Said that Rich Haag wanted the features of the towers to remain and referred to a personal letter from him. Noted opposition to Parks' application.

Other two individuals who signed up were not in the audience. Chair Macleod asked the staff to look again before presentation of the application.

Out of order – occurring at the beginning of item 101525.53, prior to the applicant's presentation of the Gas Works Park. The Board revisited public comment.

Barbara Swift, landscape architect, gave previous comment noting opposition to the proposal. Said the appurtenances are integral to the towers and Rich Haag intended for them to remain.

The remaining individual signed up to speak was not present in the audience.

101525.2 MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2025

MM/SC/RC/HW

6:0:1

The motion to approve the minutes passed. BM Wong abstained.

October 1, 2025
MM/SC/CW/HW
7:0:0
The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

101525.4 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

101525.41 5th Avenue Court Apartments
2132 5th Avenue
Request for extension

SM Sodt informed the Board that the applicant is requesting a four-month extension and deemed it acceptable, considering the property is a condominium association, which typically requires more coordination, despite being owner-nominated.

MM/SC/HW/TC
7:0:0
The motion passed and approved unanimously.

101525.5 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

101525.51 919 Harvard Ave E
Harvard-Belmont Landmark District
Removal of a dead Elm street tree and replanting with a Paperbark Maple

SM Nashem informed the Board that this is one of two applications for the removal of dead Elm trees.

AP Hannah Swanson, the project arborist, is working with the homeowners to remove a dead Elm tree in the southern planting strip due to Dutch Elm disease. They have SDOT's approval to remove the tree but are coordinating with the power company to safely manage the power lines running through the trees. Replanting in the same location is not possible but due to the power and water lines, they propose planting a Paperbark Maple in the northern planting strip.

The board members agreed with the proposal, noting the widespread issues with Elms and expressing support for the new tree species.

Action:
I move that the Landmarks Preservation Board approve a Certificate of Approval for Removal of a dead Elm street tree (after the fact) and replanting a Paperbark Maple street tree.

District ordinance, the Harvard Belmont Landmark District Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

SMC 25.22

25.22.090 - Approval of significant changes to buildings, structures and other property.

C. The addition or removal of major landscape and site elements, such as retaining walls, gateways, trees or driveways. In addition, for proposed removal or addition of significant landscape and site elements for which permits are not required, and which are identified specifically in the District development and design review guidelines, a certificate of approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board shall also be required prior to the initiation of the proposed work.

Guidelines/Specific
2. CRITERIA AND VALUES

A significant number of buildings within the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District individually embody distinctive characteristics of early twentieth century eclectic residential architectures. These buildings and the mature landscaping which forms their backdrop, collectively create a contiguous streetscape and a neighborhood that are compatible in terms of design, scale, and use of materials.

B. SETTING

Guideline:

1. Landscaping:

Guideline: Maintain existing landscaping, especially the mature trees.

Guideline: Maintain the alignment and spacing of street trees. Planting street trees where none now exist is encouraged. Existing street trees are important and pruning should be done only in a professional manner to maintain the trees health and to retain the natural form.

Guideline: Maintain a clear separation between sidewalk and street and between sidewalk and site.

Secretary of the Interior Standards

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

MM/SC/BP/ET

7:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

101525.52 901 Harvard Ave E

Harvard-Belmont Landmark District

Removal after the fact of three dead Elm street trees and replanting with three Garry Oak street trees

AP Sterling Malcomson informed the Board that three dead trees were removed as they had been deteriorating since last fall. The proposal is to replant either a Garry Oak or Paper Bark Maple trees. While Garry Oak was initially suggested, the Paper Bark Maple could be a better option for uniformity, despite providing less canopy coverage. The final decision is open to the Board's preference, with no strong attachment to either option.

Chair Macleod suggested including language in the motion indicating that Garry Oak is preferred, with Paper Bark Maple as an acceptable substitute.

BM Wassermann agreed with the reasonable approach and expressed a preference for the large Garry Oak trees. However, if they are unavailable, an alternative plan should be in place. BM Thomas concurred.

Action:

I move that the Landmarks Preservation Board approve a Certificate of Approval for Removal after the fact of three dead Elm street tree and replanting three Garry Oak street trees, or Paper Bark Maple trees if Garry Oaks are not available.

This action is based on the following:

District ordinance, the Harvard Belmont Landmark District Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

SMC 25.22

25.22.090 - Approval of significant changes to buildings, structures and other property.

C. The addition or removal of major landscape and site elements, such as retaining walls, gateways, trees or driveways. In addition, for proposed removal or addition of significant landscape and site elements for which permits are not required, and which are identified specifically in the District development and design review guidelines, a certificate of approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board shall also be required prior to the initiation of the proposed work.

Guidelines/Specific

2. CRITERIA AND VALUES

A significant number of buildings within the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District individually embody distinctive characteristics of early twentieth century eclectic residential architectures. These buildings and the mature landscaping which forms their backdrop collectively create a contiguous streetscape and a neighborhood that are compatible in terms of design, scale, and use of materials.

B. SETTING

Guideline:

1. Landscaping:

Guideline: Maintain existing landscaping, especially the mature trees.

Guideline: Maintain the alignment and spacing of street trees. Planting street trees where none now exist is encouraged. Existing street trees are important, and pruning should be done only in a professional manner to maintain the trees health and to retain the natural form.

Guideline: Maintain a clear separation between sidewalk and street and between sidewalk and site.

Secretary of the Interior Standards

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

MM/SC/BP/TC

7:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

101525.53 Gas Works Park

1901-2101 N Northlake Way

Proposed selective removal of elements of old gas plant equipment.

Vice-Chair Chang abstained and was moved into the audience.

AP David Graves, Seattle Parks and Recreation, addressed comments and concerns from previous briefings and presentation, focusing on removing ladders and catwalks that enable climbing of the towers.

The intention is to preserve the towers and associated piping while removing elements that allow access. The updated materials show the towers with climbing elements removed but retaining limited pedestrian-focused elements at the top.

The plan includes photo documentation and potential painting of lines to reference removed elements. Additional security measures like lighting and cameras will be proposed under a separate application. The final version of the proposal highlights elements to be retained and removed with focus on preserving historical value and ensuring public safety.

BM Caton made a comment about a question that came up during the last meeting regarding the intention behind the structures, and it may have been suggested that it was Richard Haag’s intention for the structures to simply

degrade overtime, implying that there is no need to maintain them. BM Caton noted that this is an important issue for some board members, especially given the conflicting public comments received.

AP Graves responded that there is no explicit maintenance plan outlined in the Master Plan or for the towers as they currently stand. There was not any clear guidance on what should happen in the future. The plan does mention preservation, but it never included a specific outline of next steps, future considerations, or associated actions.

SM Doherty made a comment about painting shadow lines on certain elements and was not sure if that is part of the actual proposal or if it was something Parks were suggesting to the board as a potential option.

AP Graves responded that there is a fair amount of work, and if it resonates with the board, Parks would be open to mentioning it as an option. It would need to be done well and would be willing to offer in addition to the documentation.

BM Pheasant mentioned that a structural engineer would need to be involved in the decision-making process and would like to clarify if Parks have a structural engineer who has been providing recommendations throughout this process.

AP Graves mentioned that Parks currently does not have a structural engineer under contract. Much of the analysis is based on earlier work with PSM Haley, and Rob Martinson, who was involved in the initial phase. Parks were relying heavily on that foundational work. As part of the earlier effort, Parks conducted some selective removals and began looking at this more closely, going back to around 2018. There was a fair amount of structural analysis done at that time, which serves as the basis for the current proposal.

BM Caton asked if Richard Haag was involved in the efforts to preserve the catwalks or to let it simply leave to degrade.

AP Graves mentioned not having any additional information to offer about that work or having records that were done on the towers or structures. There is documentation about work done on the towers and their foundations particularly around 2005.

Chair Macleod commented about reviewing some materials that came to the Board's attention through public comment letters. Historic Seattle shared notes from a 2016 visit with Mr. Haag, and it appears Mr. Haag provided responses at that time, and it is clear that the most recent feedback the Board received aligns with those earlier observations by Haag.

Chair Macleod commented that the removal of these catwalks and walkways makes sense since clearly, they are no longer in service, and the danger is that someone could climb up and fall off. Chair Macleod felt there are still quite a few elements at ground level that could pose hazard themselves and asked if there is a possibility someone could climb onto of those exposed pipes and slip off, and would like to understand why those kinds of risks would not be included in the scope of this project.

AP Graves responded that the intention of this project is to remove the elements that provide easy access to the higher levels of the towers, specifically the ladders and walkways that allow people to move up to and around them. AP Graves added that it would be a much harder route to take in removing everything at ground level, like the pipes and compressor turbines and leaving the elevated elements intact.

BM Pheasant asked if there was any information about what is planned for the removed elements.

AP Graves responded that it depends on their condition, some of the material may be recyclable, but it needs to be tested for lead paint and other hazards.

BM Wong asked about installing security cameras and lights to help deter access inside the fenced area, and asked why that has not been done before.

AP Graves responded that the security cameras would not be actively monitored, and they are intended to give intel on how people are getting into the towers. There is no plan to monitor them 24/7. If something were to happen inside the cracking towers, Parks would review the footage after the fact, but continuous monitoring is not part of that approach.

As for lighting, AP Graves noted that it would illuminate the towers, but lighting alone is not always a deterrent. There was lighting in other parts of the park, and those areas still experienced graffiti.

BM Caton asked about the condition assessment. The Board typically asks when historic material is being removed from a landmark and why Parks would not invest in assessing the condition of the materials. BM Caton asked if their alternative method for evaluating the structural capacity of the metal does not require physically touching every piece.

AP Graves responded that the challenge with the metal up there is the coating, and it makes it difficult to see what is underneath. For example, the ladder element that was removed two years ago looked fine until it shifted, and that is when it became obvious that it was not structurally sound. BM Thomas commented that the project is not about the graffiti since the resolution to that is essentially covering it with paint. It is more about safety and the risk of people getting hurt or injured including staff who might be harmed while attempting any kind of maintenance work on towers, walkways, and stairways. Parks are not necessarily trying to prevent fence climbing or graffiti, the focus is on minimizing the risk of harm to individuals.

AP Graves noted that the purpose of this proposal is to remove the elements that make it easier for people to climb the towers, and also protecting staff while they are working in and around the towers.

BM Wasserman appreciated the work that went into the documentation and presentation drawings, and said it was clear that a lot of thought and effort went into them, and the results are truly impressive. Appreciated the additional items shown for preservation at the top. BM Pheasant concurred and said it was moving in the right direction.

BM Caton commented about the importance of human life and that the Park is for people, a place to be safe and to enjoy and appreciate the beauty and history of the City. BM Caton added that the application is lacking evidence of a thorough process that ensures striking the right balance between safety, enjoyment, preservation, and stewardship of the Park. Wants to see a structural engineer's report, involvement of a preservation expert, and a security analysis. Believes there should be a long-term plan and a broader look at the park. Thinks the long-term plan should look at removal of the fence.

BM Wong added that it would go a long way toward making the case for this proposal if a thorough due diligence had been done including studies, conversations with experts and the community.

BM Pheasant commented about not seeing any kind of assurances from Parks that the Board is typically looking for, even knowing that assurances can change and may not guarantee future outcomes. BM Pheasant wished that Parks had provided the Board that the requested extra clarity that would make this proposal move forward. Thinks the removal of all elements should be done with a safety plan that includes removal of the fence.

AP Graves said the soil within the fenced area would need to be remediated before the fence could be removed. Parks is currently focused on remediation of sediment at the shoreline which is very costly.

CM Wasserman said the removal of elements may be acceptable if there was a plan to take down the fence.

Chair Macleod commented that the Board members raised several valid points and feels similarly about it, adding that there is not enough evidence that the current proposal is the best or only solution and would prefer to see this analyzed and explored further. Wants a structural engineer's report or testing.

SM Doherty reminded the board about seeing a range of alternatives, including a number of alternatives have already been considered and some that have already been implemented. Parks already made some small interventions, and there are very large interventions which Parks is not pursuing, like removing all of the towers. Parks is aiming for something they believe to be a reasonable middle ground.

AP Graves talked about an emergency declaration that would skip a long, drawn-out procedure, instead, the project would get pricing from a select contractor to pick one and move forward, and could issue a notice to proceed as early as possible. If the Board voted "no", the project would be publicly bid, a slower process that could take three to five months. SM Sodt informed the Board regarding this motion that if the board votes to deny, then Parks can decide whether to appeal the decision. Alternatively, another interested party could also file an appeal.

The applicant will not be able to submit the same proposal again until the appeal period has ended. On the other hand, if the board were to approve the application, there is still a possibility of an appeal from others.

SM Doherty said the Board could consider a conditioned approval with potential changes to the scope, if there is something that a majority agrees to make the proposal acceptable. The board is welcome to suggest any conditions that might help Parks move forward, whether it is about structural testing, fence changes, or something else.

Chair Macleod appreciated all the work that has been done with the proposal and believed that the board members all want something mutually agreeable.

The Board discussed some ways to reduce the scope of work, but it was difficult to make this a condition because it would not be clearly reflected in the drawings.

Chair Macleod took a straw poll to determine if anyone was willing to support the application as presented, and all were opposed.

Chair Macleod asked David Graves if Parks was willing to table the application and return with the information requested. AP Graves said that Parks was not willing to table the application and asked that the Board vote.

SM Sodt said that SM Doherty had been drafting a new motion during the deliberation, to reflect the Board's feedback. It was shared on the screen for the Board's review. The Board requested some changes and the motion was revised.

Action:

I move that the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board deny the application for Certificate of Approval for the proposed selective removal of maintenance access equipment, appurtenances, and associated supports at the former gas generating equipment in Gas Works Park, 1901-2101 N Northlake Way, as per the attached submittal.

This action is based on the following:

1. With regard to SMC 25.12.750 A, the extent to which the proposed alteration or significant change would adversely affect the features or characteristics described in Ordinances 121043.
 - a. The proposal removes too many designated features at the towers without sufficient justification.
 - b. Additional information requested includes: a structural report and/or testing, a security analysis, a preservation plan, and an overall master plan for this structure within the park.
2. With regard to SMC 25.12.750 B, the reasonableness or lack thereof of the proposed alterations or significant change in light of other alternatives available to achieve the objectives of the owner and the applicant.
 - a. The Board determined that other alternatives with lesser impact should be considered first, including video cameras and lighting for improved security.
 - b. The Board noted that the proposed alternative may be a reasonable approach following additional due diligence as noted above.
3. The factors of SMC 25.12.750 C, D and E are not applicable.

MM/SC/HW/TC

6:0:1

The motion to deny passed. Vice Chair Chang abstained.

101525.6 BOARD BUSINESS

There was no board business.

Meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm