



The City of Seattle

# Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649  
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LPB 374/25

## 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, December 3, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

#### Board Members Present

Roi Chang, Vice-Chair (RC)

Ian Macleod, Chair (IM)

Lora Ellen McKinney (LEM)

Becca Pheasant (BP)

Katie Randall (KR)

Harriet Wasserman (HW)

Cameron Wong (CW)

#### Board Members Absent

Taber Caton (TC)

VJ Kopacki (VK)

Lawrence Norman (LN) Erica Thomas (ET)

#### Staff Present

Sarah Sodt (SD)

Erin Doherty (ED)

Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Rebecca Frestedt (RF)

#### Key

BM Board Member

AP Applicant

SM Staff Member

Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

### 120325.1 ROLL CALL

### 120325.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruth Danner, president of Save the Market Entrance, clarified that the Hahn Building was designated a landmark in January 2021 under criteria C and F, correcting an earlier error in her written comments. She highlighted a major flaw in the developer’s July 2025 feasibility study, noting that the consultant incorrectly used a \$7 million land value instead of the actual \$4.2 million figure. With the correct value, the model shows preservation of the landmark exceeds the 6% return benchmark and outperforms all redevelopment scenarios.

Ruth further criticized the study for outdated revenue assumptions, inflated expenses, and misallocated costs, pointing to a broader pattern of errors in the 14-story proposal, including a site plan that wrongly claimed rights to build on land dedicated in 1904. She emphasized that these issues arise amid broader challenges to landmark protections and warned that repeated extensions allow applicants to wait out policy changes. She closed by thanking the board for their time and commitment to the community.

### 120325.3 SPECIAL TAX VALUATION

120325.31 Kobe Park Building/Nippon Kan  
633 Yesler Way

SM Rebecca Frestedt presented on the City of Seattle Special Tax Valuation Program, which allows owners of historic properties to deduct approved rehabilitation costs from their assessed property value for up to ten years, thereby reducing property taxes during that period.

To qualify, a property must be a contributing structure within a local historic district or listed on the National Register, with rehabilitation work completed within the past two years and totaling at least 25% of the property's pre-rehabilitation assessed value. Eligible costs include construction, engineering, permits, management fees, loan interest, and sales tax.

The submitted rehabilitation costs for the Kobe Park Building were \$2,217,209, of which \$2,105,259 were deemed eligible; approximately \$20,000 was excluded for work on a newer addition and a freestanding sign. The property's land is assessed at \$4,837,500, improvements at \$5,726,800, and the rehabilitation represents 37% of the structure's assessed value.

AP Eric Hayashi shared the story of acquiring and rehabilitating the historic Nippon Kan Theater within the Kobe Park Building, now home to his Seattle Clinical Research Center. He described the building's deep cultural significance to Seattle's Japanese American community, serving from 1909 until WWII as a hub for weddings, performances, martial arts, and community events before being shuttered under Executive Order 9066.

After decades of disrepair and multiple ownership changes, AP Hayashi purchased the property with the intent to restore both its theater and upper floors for office and clinic use. Beginning in early 2023, AP Hayashi invested several million dollars in extensive renovations, including structural engineering, seismic retrofitting, brick restoration, tuck pointing, façade repainting, new oak flooring, and installation of a modern sprinkler system.

The theater, once converted into office space, has been returned to its original purpose, with period-appropriate lighting and historical displays. AP Hayashi highlighted the personal connection of meeting descendants of past owners during the restoration and emphasized the building's renewed role as both a research facility and an event venue, now capable of hosting up to 463 people with updated amenities such as a mezzanine bar, rooftop deck, and dedicated green room spaces.

Chairperson Ian Macleod asked whether the building is a contributing property within the historic district, and SM Frestedt confirmed that it is, and is also individually listed on the National Register.

Chairperson Ian Macleod asked AP Hayashi about the graffiti wall located at the back of the theater, specifically whether it had been intentionally preserved as part of the restoration or simply discovered during the renovation process.

AP Hayashi explained that the graffiti wall was intentionally preserved as part of the restoration, noting that it was architect Ed Burke—not himself—who had encased the wall in plexiglass to ensure it could be highlighted.

BM Becca Pheasant praised the restoration, noting that the space is beautifully done and shared that she had the opportunity to attend one of the events held there and found it to be a fantastic venue, expressing gratitude for the effort put into restoring the building.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the Landmarks Preservation Board approve the following property for Special Tax Certification: Kobe Park Building/Nippon Kan Theatre, 633 Yesler Way. This action is based upon the criteria set forth in Title 84 RCW Chapter 449; and based on the recommendation of the International Special Review District Board which made the following findings at its meeting

of November 25, 2025; and that the property is a contributing building located in the International Special Review District, and has not been altered in any way that adversely affects those features that identify its significance or contribution to the International Special Review District; and has substantially improved in the 24-month period prior to application, and that the recommendation is conditioned upon the execution of an agreement between the Local Review Board as required by Title 84 RCW, Chapter 449.

MM/SC/KR/RC

7:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

#### **120325.4 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

##### **120325.41 Beacon Hill Garden House/Turner-Koepf House**

2315 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue S

Proposed planting trees

SM Erin Doherty explained that the application was brought directly to the board rather than the Architectural Review Committee because no ARC meeting was scheduled for the previous week due to a City holiday.

SM Doherty noted the application was straightforward and did not warrant delay, especially since the next ARC meeting is a month away and emphasized the importance of timely review given the current season is ideal for planting.

AP Megan Stanek presented a proposal to plant three Italian cypress trees at 2336 15th Avenue South to help screen the orchard from the adjacent gas station and busy intersection while maintaining visibility and openness for the public. Two trees would be placed along the sidewalk fence and one near the southern property line, spaced six feet apart with shrubs interplanted to break up sightlines. She emphasized the design would create a permeable screen that preserves air circulation and the welcoming character of the orchard.

BM Harriet Wasserman expressed her appreciation for the progress made on the project, recalling past challenges with the property's sale and the threat of inappropriate redevelopment and noted her happiness at seeing the building rescued and improved, praised the proposed tree plantings as a positive addition, and acknowledged the thoughtful effort put into selecting suitable species despite not being personally knowledgeable about trees.

Vice Chair Roi Chang commended the presentation, noting that it thoughtfully addressed key concerns such as the limited number of trees, their spacing and location, potential shade impacts, distance from existing trees, and avoiding the risk of introducing new diseases. Vice-Chair Chang appreciated the clarity and thoroughness of the presentation and expressed gratitude for the careful consideration put into the proposal.

Chairperson Macleod agreed with AP Stanek's presentation, noting that the proposed trees effectively screen the view, complement the opposite side of the property, frame the house and landscape, and help define the property line and described it as a strong proposal, and echoing BM Wasserman's sentiment that it is encouraging to see progress in restoring the landscape.

Action:

I move that the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board approve the application and issue a Certificate of Approval for the proposed tree planting at the Beacon Hill Garden House / Turner-Koepf House, 2336 15th Avenue S, 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 Ordinance 127090.
  - a. It appears that the placement of the trees shall have no adverse impact on the historic pear orchard.
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 did not request alternatives as the proposal appeared reasonable.
3. The factors of SMC 25.12.750 C, D and E are not applicable.

MM/SC/LEM/HW

7:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

### **120325.5 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES**

- 120325.51 Sunset Hill Community Hall  
3003 NW 66<sup>th</sup> Street  
Request for extension

SM Doherty reported about continued communications with the property representative and indicated that additional time is needed, likely around three months.

The Board made a motion to extend the negotiation of controls and incentives for three months.

MM/SC/BP/CW

7:0:0

The motion passed unanimously.

- 120325.52 Seattle Times Block  
1120 John Street  
Request for extension

SM Sarah Sodt noted that owner representative requested a four-month extension and explained that the Landmark Board has already issued a certificate of approval for the Seattle Times block. SM Sodt noted that the original office building is under a separate control's agreement. The extension pertains specifically to the printing plant and part of the office building.

The Board made a motion to extend the negotiation of controls and incentives for four months.

MM/SC/KR/HW

7:0:0

The motion passed unanimously.

- 120325.53 Knights of Columbus Building  
700-722 E Union Street  
Request for extension

SM Sodt stated that the building is partially occupied and noted support for granting another four-month extension.

The Board made a motion to extend the negotiation of controls and incentives for four months.

MM/SC/BP/LEM

6:0:1

The motion passed. BM Wasserman abstained.

120325.54 Hotel Elliott/Hahn Building

103 Pike Street

Request for extension

SM Sodt reported that Ian Morrison has requested a four-month extension and noted that Ian submitted updated documents earlier in the summer. SM Sodt recently provided comment, some of which reiterated prior requests for required materials.

Ian Morrison confirmed SM Sodt's summary and thanked the board, noting the property—commonly known as the Green Tortoise—remains active with the hostel on the upper floors and a retail shop on the ground floor, so vacancy is not a concern.

Ian explained that his team submitted an economic consultant's report in July, and SM Sodt provided City comments in November requesting additional and new information, which is now under review by his consultants.

*BM Lawrence Norman joined the meeting at 4:29 p.m.*

BM Randall commented that the requested extension is reasonable, as it allows all parties more time to address the complex issues involved and expressed appreciation for the owners' willingness to remain engaged and continue participating in the process.

MM/SC/LEM/KR

7:0:1

The motion passed. BM Lawrence Norman abstained.

**120325.6 BOARD BUSINESS**

SM Sodt noted that the American Can Building will be considered for designation at the next meeting and offered to coordinate a tour if board members are interested, but added that they are also welcome to visit the site independently and walk around the exterior.

SM Doherty reminded the board that the reception to show appreciation for board and commission members will be held this Friday at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.