



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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LPB 02/26

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, January 7, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Ian Macleod, Chair (IM)
Lora Ellen McKinney (LEM)
Lawrence Norman (LN)
Becca Pheasant (BP)
Katie Randall (KR)
Erica Thomas (ET)
Harriet Wasserman (HW)
Cameron Wong (CW)
Matt Zinski (MZ)

Board Members Absent

Roi Chang, Vice-Chair (RC)
VJ Kopacki (VJ)

Staff Present

Sarah Sodt (SD)
Erin Doherty (ED)
Genna Nashem (GN)
Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Key

BM Board Member
AP Applicant
SM Staff Member

Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

010726.1 ROLL CALL

Chair Ian Macleod introduced new board member, Matt Zinski.
BM Zinski is a partner at Weinstein AU Architectural firm.

010726.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Murdock of Historic Seattle urged the board not to approve the proposed controls and incentives agreement for the Caroline Horton House. Jeff Murdock cautioned that removing the landmark would lead to the construction of 15 luxury townhomes, which would not address Seattle's housing affordability challenges and disputed the owners' stated valuation of \$1.9 million, citing research from Historic Seattle and real estate professionals.

Bryce Seidl urged the Board to reject the recommendation of no controls for the Horton House, emphasizing that the property already provides a strong return on investment in its current condition. Asked that the Board impose appropriate controls to ensure preservation of the landmark.

David Kurlander urged the Board to reject the proposal for no controls on the Caroline Horton House, emphasizing that the Seattle Municipal Code allows no controls only when no reasonable economic use exists and concluded by urging the Board to apply the law as written, reject the no-controls request, and, if financial questions remain, allow the matter to proceed to the Hearing Examiner for further review.

010726.3 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

010726.31 Memorial Wall 401 5th Avenue N

SM Erin Doherty reported that Seattle Public Schools requested an additional four-month extension. The extension was sought to allow the district to complete ongoing negotiations with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation regarding the site.

A motion was made for a four-month extension to the Controls & Incentives negotiations.

MM/SC/KR/BP

9:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

010726.32 Horton House 627 14th Avenue E

AP Ian Brown, co-owner of Horton House LLC focused his presentation on the issue of reasonable economic use and provided a background on the appraisal and valuation process. AP Brown concluded that landmark controls would eliminate any path to reasonable economic return and requested the Board impose no controls on the building or site.

SM Doherty read a letter to the board summarizing the controls and incentives agreement's recommendation and background, as outlined by the staff.

SM Sarah Sodt outlined the two actions available to the Board: approve the controls and incentives agreement that the City Historic Preservation Officer and the property owners have signed under SMC 25.12.510 or decline to approve it and instead forwarding the Board's own recommended controls and incentives to the Hearing Examiner under SMC 25.12.520.

SM Sodt emphasized that if the Board chooses the latter option, it must clearly identify the proposed controls and the reasons for imposing them, as required by SMC 25.12.580 and 25.12.590. SM Sodt reminded members that they will be responsible for presenting and defending the Board's recommendation during the Hearing Examiner proceedings. SM Sodt added that staff testimony, if requested, would reflect the staff recommendation already provided.

BM Zinski thinks the \$1.9M appraised value of the Landmark with controls is the right ballpark (\$1.7-2.1M). Anticipates a desired 15-25% IRR. Does not agree with the appraised value of the land with no controls at \$3.1M. Thinks it is more likely \$2.4-2.7M. Thinks renovating as a single-family house is not likely profitable, but might have some potential for rehabilitation and an added townhome scheme. If the with and without controls were \$1.7M and \$2.7M that is still a 30% delta. Supported the imposition of no controls.

BM Thomas said it's a difficult decision and understands the owner's need for a reasonable economic return. Showed support for the agreement with no controls.

BM Randall said the code is straightforward, and thinks a 40% delta or even a 30% is substantial and exceeds the threshold the owner is trying to demonstrate. Wishes the City could provide more financial incentives for locations like these. Thinks TDR/TDP could be a significant value, but these owners cannot utilize it in this neighborhood. Supported the imposition of no controls.

BM Norman agreed with BM Randall and said it was unfortunate the delta was so big. He hopes the history and story of this property can be preserved or shared in some way. Supported the imposition of no controls

BM Wasserman did not support the agreement and had concerns about some of the information provided to the Board.

BM Wong noted it was a tough decision to make and leaning toward preservation and the imposition of controls. BM Wong understands the economic issue but is uncertain about the reasoning provided. Agreed with colleagues about the need for more financial incentives.

BM Pheasant was not sure that many historic properties would pass the reasonable economic use test. Wishes the code was written differently, because it does not take into account the loss of cultural significance.

BM McKinney conflicted because she would like to see the house preserved and the owners have an economic return.

Chair Macleod agreed with fellow colleagues but thinks he has seen enough in letters of public comment to convince him there is a reasonable rate of return.

Board members deliberated and agreed that this was a difficult and complex case, shaped by conflicting financial analyses (between owner information and letters of public comment), navigating code language, and the tension between preservation goals and property-owner rights. Several board members expressed concern about the significant valuation gap between the property with and without controls, noting that the code allows the finding of no controls when any required factor is met.

Others questioned the appraisal and comparables used. Some expressed disappointment in the lack of tools, such as transfer of development rights, that might otherwise offset a potential loss in value. While some members leaned toward approval based on the economic and legal framework, others felt the Horton House's cultural importance and uncertainties around "reasonable return" justified opposing controls.

Overall, the board was divided, with members acknowledging both the preservation value of the property and the constraints of the code they must apply.

Action:

I move the Board approve the recommended Controls and Incentives agreement for Horton House on 627 14th Avenue East.

MM/SC/KR/BP

5:4:0

The motion passed.

010726.4 BRIEFING

010726.41 Harvard-Belmont Landmark District – 946 Broadway E

Briefing on proposed alterations to the existing building and addition

SM Genna Nashem explained that the project involves a building located in the Harvard-Belmont Landmark District, which is subject to review by the local committee and Landmarks Preservation Board. During an initial site visit attended by one district committee member, the reviewer recommended design adjustments to ensure the addition relates more closely to the existing structure.

They were otherwise comfortable with the overall bulk and scale of the proposed addition and with its placement at the rear of the building.

AP Seth Hale presented a brief overview of the project and the proposed alterations to the existing building and addition.

SM Nashem emphasized the importance of providing early feedback before construction drawings advance, particularly regarding the project's height, bulk, and scale and noted that the board should assess whether the proposal appears compatible with existing guidelines and whether it meets the intent of the district's established standards.

Board members offered a wide spectrum of perspectives on the proposed addition, centering on how it relates to the historic structure in terms of massing, materials, and overall character.

Generally, the Board acknowledged that the proposed addition is in back of the existing house and is minimally visible, the bulk and scale are similar, and use of wood as a siding was all consistent with Preservation Brief 14. Board members noted that the existing house design was very balanced and the design of the proposed addition is not balance.

Overall, the Board recommended that design, color and material alternatives are brought back to the next briefing for consideration and comparison, with the following specific comments:

- a. Board members agreed that the addition was differentiated (design, form, colors, materials, window pattern, floor heights, etc.). However, it wasn't necessary for design to be opposite to be differentiated. Most of the discussion was about the extent that there is some compatibility, sympathy or relationship to the existing structure in order to comply with Secretary of Interior Standard No. 9, which says an addition should be both compatible and differentiated.
- b. Coordinating the color pallet between the existing house and proposed addition was suggested.
- c. Many Board members were okay with the rooftop monitors for sunlight. Some Board members thought the monitors were a modern interpretation of the gable roof, while some Board members recommended consideration of how the monitors could be better aligned with the gables on the existing house. Others Board members did not think the monitors achieved any relationship to the existing building.
- d. Many Board members suggested the proposed addition should be simplified, so that it doesn't compete with the design details and textures of the existing house.
- e. Using the same color for the entire addition was suggested as way to simplify.
- f. Wrapping the 1st floor with the same color and materials around the addition to create a base was suggested as a way to make the building relate to the existing house.
- g. Some Board members thought that the horizontal lines on the proposed addition did not line up with horizontal lines of the existing house, so it magnified that floors were not aligned between old and new. Others thought it was too subtle to make the connection. Board

members agreed that the line feature did not provide a relationship to the original building as intended.

- h. Board members suggested looking at some of the features on the proposed addition that are not on the existing building, and consider whether those features are necessary, such as the undercuts.
- i. Some Board members saw the stairs section as a gasket between the old and new. Those Board members thought that that design concept could be strengthened. One suggestion was to lower the roofline so that it is a vertical separation as well, including separation to allow for the existing roof to remain untruncated; another suggestion was the material of the north side be more similar in material or color as the south side, recognizing that the north is a bathroom wall so it could not be an open transparent screen. They agreed that matching the south 1st floor material and color was not successful.

010726.5 BOARD BUSINESS

SM Doherty thanked the board for their work, welcomed new member Matt Zinski, and acknowledged the departure of Taber Caton from the Board. Meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.