



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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LPB 98/26

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, April 15, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Roi Chang, Vice Chair, (RC)
VJ Kopacki (VK)
Ian Macleod, Chair, (IM)
Lora Ellen McKinney (LEM)
Lawrence Norman (LN)
Becca Pheasant (BC)
Katie Randall (KR)
Erica Thomas (ET)
Harriet Wasserman (HW)
Cameron Wong (CW)
Matt Zinski (MZ)

Board Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Erin Doherty (ED)
Nelson Pesigan (NP)
Michael de Lange (MD)
Melia Brooks (MB)
Marie Kidhe (MK)

Key

BM Board Member
AP Applicant
SM Staff Member

Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

041526.1 ROLL CALL

041526.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

Sydney Henderson expressed appreciation and thanked everyone involved in the process, acknowledging the significant effort that went into the nomination, including aspects the family may not fully realize. She emphasized the importance of the matter to her own family and expressed gratitude for being informed of the meeting in time to participate.

Marie Kidhe spoke in support of preserving The People’s Wall, emphasizing its significance as one of the last remaining physical anchors of Seattle’s Black historical presence in the Central District. Marie noted that while many key sites, including the former Black Panther headquarters, have been erased, the wall and mural remain as a rare, site-specific record of community organizing, service, and resistance.

Joanna Cullen, a Central District resident, spoke in support of landmarking The People’s Wall. Joanna shared that when she arrived in Seattle in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the wall provided a strong sense of place and meaning, prompting her to learn about its significance and emphasized that the wall serves as a vital link to the civil rights era and the legacy of the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

041526.3 MEETING MINUTES

Consideration of April 1, 2026 minutes was tabled.

041526.4 NOMINATION

041526.41 The People's Wall

1919 E Spruce Street (formerly 173 20th Avenue)

SM Erin Doherty read a letter submitted by property owner Sherryl L. Standifer, who was unable to attend the meeting. In the letter, Ms. Standifer explained that her building once served as the Seattle Chapter headquarters of the Black Panther Party and that the mural on its wall, painted 55 years ago, honors Black American icons and the civil rights movement and noted that the mural has never been vandalized, reflecting the community's deep respect for its history.

Ms. Standifer highlighted the ongoing impact of the Black Panthers' work, including the establishment of the Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center, which continues to provide essential health care and expressed strong support for landmark designation to ensure the mural is properly recognized and preserved, emphasizing its importance as a symbol of Black community leadership, resilience, and contributions to the Central District and the city.

Presenter, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, president of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, presented in strong support of landmarking The People's Wall. Ms. Johnson-Toliver emphasized the wall's significance as a rare, enduring testament to Seattle's Black history and the legacy of the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

Ms. Johnson-Toliver highlighted the mural's role in documenting community leadership, activism, and cultural identity, noting that its preservation is essential to honoring the contributions of Black residents to the Central District and the city as a whole. Ms. Johnson-Toliver underscored the importance of safeguarding this history for future generations and affirmed the Black Heritage Society's commitment to its protection.

Elmer Dixon, co-founder of the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party, expressed strong support for the landmark designation of the People's Wall and thanked the Black Heritage Society for its work on the nomination. Mr. Dixon emphasized the wall's significance amid ongoing efforts nationwide to erase or alter Black history, noting that the site symbolizes the community's defiance against authoritarian actions and recalls moments when residents protected the Party's headquarters from police aggression.

Elmer Dixon concluded and expressed appreciation for the board's consideration of the designation.

Aaron Dixon emphasized the historic importance of preserving The People's Wall and the former Black Panther Party site, noting that Black history continues to be erased both nationally and internationally. Aaron described the location as central to the Seattle Chapter's growth and the development of key community programs, including free breakfast for children, a medical clinic, prison support, legal aid, and food distribution.

Aaron Dixon recalled significant confrontations with law enforcement at the site, underscoring its role in the Party's legacy of resistance and expressed gratitude to the property owners for their longstanding support, as well as to those involved in the landmark nomination effort. He urged approval of the designation and affirmed the importance of continuing the struggle to protect and honor this history.

BM Lora-Ellen McKinney asked two questions regarding the long-term stewardship of The People's Wall. First, she inquired about plans to protect the mural from increasingly harsh weather conditions, noting that the last restoration occurred in 2008. Second, she asked whether interpretive tools—such as a QR code—might be added so younger generations unfamiliar with the Black Panther Party could access historical information, including the nomination materials, while visiting the site.

Ms. Johnson-Toliver responded that both preservation and interpretation of The People's Wall have been key considerations throughout the research process. She explained that structural engineers evaluated the wall and confirmed its stability, though some condition issues remain. Ms. Johnson-Toliver noted that advances in paint technology since the last restoration in 2008 would support a long-lasting refurbishment, which she hopes to pursue collaboratively with the property owner, Seattle Chapter Black Panther Party Legacy Committee, and local artists.

Ms. Johnson-Toliver added that interpretive elements such as a plaque or similar acknowledgment could be developed in partnership with the property owner to help visitors understand the wall's historical significance.

Elmer Dixon added that the Black Panther Party Legacy Committee is developing an interpretive center scheduled to open in June, from which guided tours will begin and visit key historical sites in the Central District, including The People's Wall, the former chapter office, and his family home. He noted that plaques and potentially QR codes will be installed at multiple locations in the city to provide historical context, and that schools will be invited to visit the interpretive center and participate in field trips to these sites.

BM Erica Thomas asked for clarification about the ongoing maintenance of The People's Wall, noting that her question was similar to BM McKinney's. Erica inquired whether information had been provided about who is responsible for routine upkeep such as managing the grass and shrubs around the wall, how frequently that work is performed, and whether regular maintenance will be established if it is not currently occurring.

Ms. Johnson-Toliver responded that the owner and members of the Spruce Park community have been maintaining the small turf strip in front of The People's Wall, and that the Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center has expressed interest in "adopting" the area upkeep as part of its community outreach.

Stephanie noted that this partnership with the owner could help ensure regular care of the lawn and surrounding space (right-of-way) and added that property owner Sherryl Standifer has also discussed long-term sustainability and maintenance of the wall itself. Ms. Johnson-Toliver emphasized that the Black Heritage Society and other partners are committed to supporting a future maintenance plan, with the hope that landmark designation will help advance these efforts.

BM Becca Pheasant asked whether any information was available about the artistic style of The People's Wall mural. BM Pheasant noted that the artwork is skillfully executed and appears to reflect a distinct stylistic approach and expressed interest in learning more about the artistic influences or techniques used in its creation.

Stephanie Johnson-Toliver and Elmer Dixon explained that while no formal documentation of the mural's artistic style was identified during research, artist Dion Henderson had a distinctive aesthetic visible across his work. Ms. Johnson-Toliver suggested that a future supplemental document could be developed to illustrate his style and artistic intent.

Elmer Dixon added that Dion Henderson's work is characterized by dramatic, highly descriptive imagery, noting several powerful scenes depicted on the wall including Bobby Seale chained and gagged in a Chicago courtroom, members of the New York 21, Bobby Hutton, and silhouettes of Seattle Panthers on the Washington State Capitol steps. He emphasized that these vivid, narrative-driven images reflect Mr. Henderson's dynamic artistic approach, though further research would be needed to formally classify the style.

BM McKinney noted that the artistic style referenced is commonly identified as vernacular art or African American folk art, offering this classification to help contextualize the mural's aesthetic.

BM VJ Kopacki asked whether future restoration efforts for The People's Wall would continue to prioritize involvement from community artists, noting that the 2008 retouch was completed by local artist Eddie Walker. BM Kopacki wondered if maintaining community participation in the restoration process would remain a guiding principle as additional preservation work becomes necessary.

Stephanie Johson-Toliver, Aaron Dixon, and Elmer Dixon responded that future restoration of The People's Wall would continue to prioritize maintaining the integrity of Dion Henderson's original artwork while engaging community artists.

Elmer Dixon explained that the 2008 restoration was guided by Mr. Henderson himself to ensure fidelity to the original style, and he noted that the Black Panther Party Legacy Committee may play a key role in selecting future artists.

Aaron Dixon emphasized the depth of talent among young Seattle artists, many of whom have created murals at the new Black Panther Park in Skyway and expressed hope that youth involvement could be central to future preservation efforts.

Stephanie Johson-Toliver added that discussions are underway with the Historic Central Area Arts & Culture District and professional conservators to determine the appropriate restoration approach, whether through an open call or a targeted selection, to ensure the mural is preserved with proper expertise and community participation.

Vice-Chair Roi Chang thanked the presenters for their thorough historical narrative and noted how effectively the nomination materials conveyed the story of the site. Roi asked for clarification about the original extent of The People's Wall, referencing a photo presentation that suggested the mural once continued along an additional section of the entryway stairs. Roi inquired whether artwork had existed on that portion of the wall, whether it was lost, and if so, what elements of the narrative or imagery are no longer visible today.

Stephanie Johnson-Toliver and Elmer Dixon explained that The People's Wall originally extended around the corner and down Spruce Street for approximately ten additional feet, featuring artwork that has since been lost due to redevelopment.

Elmer Dixon recounted that when the property was being prepared for new construction, the developer attempted to preserve as much of the wall as possible, but the corner section could not be saved.

Stephanie Johnson-Toliver added that partial photographs of the missing artwork have been shared by artist Dion Henderson's family and may help document the full original composition. Both noted that recovering and displaying these images at the site would help the public understand how the complete mural appeared when created in 1970.

Sydney Henderson (the mural artist's daughter) explained that the missing section of The People's Wall once featured images of Eldridge Cleaver, Billie Holiday, Bobby Hutton, and Huey Newton speaking at a rally. She noted that the family possesses original photographs of these artworks and emphasized that any future restoration should involve consulting the family so artists can accurately reference these images when recreating or interpreting the lost portions of the mural.

Board members expressed unanimous and enthusiastic support for the landmark nomination of The People's Wall, thanking the presenters and community members for their thorough historical work and powerful public testimony.

Board members highlighted the wall's deep personal, cultural, and historical significance, its strong alignment with multiple landmark criteria, and its importance as a rare and essential recognition of Black history within Seattle's preserved sites. Several members reflected on the resonance of community stories, the ongoing impacts of displacement in the Central District, and the need for a more representative landmark portfolio. Collectively, the board affirmed that The People's Wall is precisely the type of site the Landmarks process exists to honor and agreed that the nomination should move forward.

Action:

BM Erica Thomas moved that the Board approve the nomination of The People's Wall at 1919 E Spruce Street (formerly 173 20th Avenue) for consideration as a Seattle Landmark; noting the legal description in the Nomination Form; that the features and characteristics proposed for preservation include: the mural; the "L-shaped" retaining wall the mural is painted on; and the eastern portion of the site where the wall sits, including the land between the wall and the east and north property lines; that the public meeting for Board consideration of designation be scheduled for May 20, 2026; that this action conforms to the known comprehensive and development plans of the City of Seattle.

MM/SC/ET/KR

11:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

041526.5 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

041526.51 Sunset Hill Community Hall
1264 Eastlake Avenue E

SM Doherty explained that the proposed Controls and Incentives agreement for the Sunset Hill Community Hall largely follows the standard template, with a few clarifications specific to the property. Erin noted that, after extended discussions with the building's stewards, staff agreed to refine the interior protections to focus on preserving the upper hall's historic open volume rather than finishes that have been altered over time, though in a compatible manner.

The agreement clarifies that the lower level and connecting stairs are not part of the designated features and allows future interior changes as long as the main hall's volume remains intact and unpartitioned.

SM Doherty stated that these adjustments are reasonable, consistent with the original staff recommendation, and maintain appropriate preservation oversight.

BM Randall moved to approve the Controls and Incentives agreement.

MM/SC/KR/HW

11:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

041525.52 Steinhart Theriault Anderson Office Building
1264 Eastlake Avenue E
Request for extension

SM Doherty reported that the property owners requested an additional three-month extension. The owners indicated they need more time to continue evaluating their options and therefore asked for the extension.

Vice-Chair Chang noted that she had participated in the original nomination of and emphasized the building's significance. Roi recalled that although the owners did not initiate the nomination, they have been cooperative and open to working with the board, particularly given the complexity of the site and the surrounding parcels they control.

Vice-Chair Chang expressed interest in seeing how the owners may use available incentives and development opportunities to benefit from the designation and stated her support for granting the requested extension.

A motion was made for a 3-month extension.

MM/SC/BP/HW

11:0:0

The motion passed unanimously.

041526.6 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

041526.61 Admiral's House
2500 W Marina Place
Proposed site/landscape alterations to improve vehicle circulation

Tom Brown of Gelotte Architecture reported that the project team has addressed all comments previously received and completed an extensive review process with SDCI, including critical areas, environmental considerations, and technical engineering requirements.

Tom explained that the proposal now reflects the final, city-approved version of the planned alterations to the Admiral's House. Tom noted that the ARC reviewed the updated design and now presenting it to the full board for approval.

BM Wasserman stated that the ARC was generally supportive of the proposed alterations to the Admiral's House and appreciated the applicant's responsiveness to earlier feedback. She noted that the new driveway addresses a significant circulation bottleneck and expressed particular approval that the Arborvitae hedge would be utilized, as its formal character complements the historic building.

BM Wasserman summarized the ARC's discussion about the proposed lettering, explaining that the group agreed to reserve judgment until seeing how the letters appear on the concrete, though she personally felt the brass option suited the house's formal and nautical character. She concluded that the committee had no major concerns with the proposal.

BM Pheasant noted that the ARC had no concerns with the proposed alterations to the Admiral's House, asking only a few clarifying questions that were satisfactorily addressed. She observed that the changes would not affect views of the house from the water or driveway and that the committee was generally in agreement that the proposal was well executed.

Regarding the lettering, BM Pheasant supported allowing the final decision to be made in the field once the wall is in place, unless a board member feels strongly about a specific material or color, between the two options proposed.

BM Zinski expressed concern that the rendering of the proposed wall depicted as a fully green, vegetated surface may not reflect the actual outcome.

BM Zinski noted that, without a clear plan for a true green wall or ivy treatment, the finished result could resemble the more exposed concrete shown in the middle image, with gaps in the hedge and significant visible wall surface.

BM Zinski emphasized the need for clarification on how the wall will be fully covered to achieve the appearance presented in the renderings.

Tom acknowledged the concern about the accuracy of the green-wall rendering and explained that while gaps will be visible when the shrubs are newly planted, they will gradually fill in as the plantings mature. Tom noted that the shrubs are set slightly away from the wall, which will create some shadowing and visible space from certain angles in the early years, but emphasized that by approximately seven to eight years when the hedge reaches its intended height and width the wall will be largely screened.

Tom added that the existing healthy portions of the current hedge demonstrate how fully the vegetation will obscure the wall once mature.

Board members expressed general support for the proposed alterations to the Admiral's House, noting that the applicant had addressed prior questions and that the changes would not significantly affect key views of the property.

The board appreciated the retention of the formal Arborvitae hedge and agreed that the new driveway resolves an existing circulation bottleneck. Several members discussed the proposed wall, acknowledging its height but emphasizing the importance of landslide protection given increasingly unstable soil conditions.

Comments on the lettering indicated no strong objections, with members agreeing that the final material choice could be made in the field once the wall is constructed.

One board member raised concerns about the accuracy of the green-wall rendering, prompting clarification from the applicant about plant maturity and screening over time.

Overall, the board found the proposal well considered and had no major objections.

Action:

BM Randall move that the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board approve the application and issue a Certificate of Approval for the proposed site and landscape alterations at the Admiral's House, 2500 W Marina Place, 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 ORD 124135.
 - a. The proposed landscape and site alterations significantly change the topography northeast of the building, but should not adversely affect

views of the house exterior, the open lawns, or scenic vistas from the building toward the water.

- b. The proposed landscaping will provide a visual buffer for the retaining wall once it matures.
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. No alternatives were requested as the proposal appeared reasonable.
 3. The factors of SMC 25.12.750 C, D, and E are not applicable.
 4. The proposed work as presented is consistent with the following Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as listed below:

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

MM/SC/KR/BP

10:1:0

The motion passed. BM Zinski voted not to approve.

041526.7 BOARD BUSINESS

Meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.