



The City of Seattle

# Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 403/23

## MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

City Hall, Room L2-80

Hybrid Meeting

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 - 3:30 p.m.

### Board Members Present

Dean Barnes

Taber Caton

Roi Chang

Ian Macleod

Lora-Ellen McKinney

Lawrence Norman

Katie Randall

Becca Pheasant-Reis

Marc Schmitt

Harriet Wasserman

### Staff

Sarah Sodt

Erin Doherty

Melinda Bloom

### Absent

Matt Inpanbutr

Padraic Slattery

Acting Chair Ian Macleod called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

## ROLL CALL

111523.1

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jan Sutter said the Battelle-Talaris landscape was designed as an inward feature; the proposed redevelopment is upsetting. All important features will be lost with the addition of 82 houses.

Pat Chaney said the Battelle-Talaris iteration is the worst yet and fails to preserve the integrity of the landmarked site. She said the owner let the property deteriorate and is now using deterioration against the site. She said Building G is the central core of the site; she noted the beautiful waterfall effect and said retaining the building reduces the count. She said they are said blaming the building for needing to make up density elsewhere. She said their design ignores the original design of the green buffer to the site, and the property owner should live up to his responsibilities and do less damage.

Spencer Howard, NW Vernacular said with no Controls and Incentives on the Battelle-Talaris site, everything is subject to board review. He said the proposed design fails to preserve the landmark and most of the site with only buildings A, B, C, D and F left. He noted the landscape was designed by Richard Haag. He said calling this project a 'rehab' is incorrect and misleading. He said the site's character defining features exhibit a unique space fully different from the neighborhood. He said that the proposed changes do not comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. He said the owner has been granted multiple extensions to the Controls and Incentives process. He believes that Controls and Incentives are a prerequisite for considering costs effects. He said the site was designated on criteria C, D, E and F with a high level of integrity. He said what is proposed are not minor changes, and landmarked features would be lost if the project goes ahead.

Colleen McAleer, Laurelhurst Community Club said she supports rehabilitation and reactivation of the site. But what is proposed now, destroys the landmarked site with rows of new houses and new tree species. She said the proposed glass panel railings to replace the metal ones does not meet Secretary of Interior's Standard #s 1, 2, and 9, in her opinion. She said the property owner seeks a maximum return on investment, and that losing Building G affects the entire site. She said financial incentives would compensate for that.

Jeff Murdock, Historic Seattle, sent written comments (in DON file) and said he was on the landmarks board when this site was designated. He said it was considered a threatened site. He said the site is considered one of the best in Pacific Northwest Modernism, and designers David Hodemacher and Richard Haag spoke to the board about the significance of the design. He said it has been ten years since the landmark designation. He said there has always been a willingness to add housing. But too many houses and too much impact is being proposed. He said a proforma with fewer houses and no demolition of Building G is desired. He said the rules established for the Certificate of Approval process are important.

111523.21 Harvard-Belmont Landmark District  
1027 Summit Avenue S

Ms. Nashem explained the Special Tax Incentive Program. She said submitted and eligible rehabilitation costs were \$508,727. Costs attributed to the new addition above the garage are not included in the submitted rehabilitation cost. Work was performed in conformance with Certificate of Approval issued by the Landmarks Preservation Board. Other interior work did not require a Certificate of Approval.

Action: I move that the Landmarks Preservation Board approve the following property for Special Tax Valuation: 1027 Summit Ave S, that this action is based upon criteria set forth in Title 84 RCW Chapter 449; that this property has been substantially improved in the 24-month period prior to application; and that the recommendation is conditioned upon the execution of an agreement between the Landmarks Preservation Board and the owner.

MM/SC/LE/DB 9:0:0 Motion carried.

**111523.3 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES**

111523.31 Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ  
1915 E Fir Street  
Request for extension

Ms. Doherty explained the request for a three-month extension and noted she is actively working with ownership.

Ms. Wasserman said it is reasonable.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for Tolliver Temple Church of God in Christ, 1915 E. Fir Street for three months.

MM/SC/HW/LE 9:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.32 Caroline Horton House  
627 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue E  
Request for extension

Ms. Doherty explained the request for a three-month extension. She said the building was nominated by an outside party and she is continuing the conversation with the owner. She said the property owner has concerns about landmark status preventing reasonable economic use of the property. She said the house is currently used as an apartment building.

Mr. Macleod said it is a reasonable request.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for Caroline Horton House, 627 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue E for three months.

MM/SC/HW/DB 9:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.33 líq'təd / Licton Springs Park  
9536 Ashworth Avenue N  
Request for extension

Ms. Doherty explained the request for a 12-month extension. She said she has been in communication with Seattle Parks and Recreation, owner of the site. She said Seattle Public Utilities has infrastructure that runs underneath the park and there are easements and agreements to negotiate. She said it is an ongoing conversation with many moving parts. She said they need time to work through the complexities.

Ms. Chang said it is a reasonable request given the complexity.

Mr. Macleod concurred.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for líq'təd / Licton Springs Park, 9536 Ashworth Avenue N for twelve months.

MM/SC/BP/DB 9:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.34 The Showbox  
1426 First Avenue  
Request for extension

Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill said there is a lease with the Showbox operator who continues to operate there. He said the economic use assessment done no longer applies post pandemic. He said they are updating the current market realities and request extension to April 3, 2024.

Ms. Sodt was comfortable with the request.

Ms. Wasserman said she wants to see this move along.

Mr. Macleod said many briefings have been presented and he was comfortable with the extension.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for The Showbox, 1426 First Avenue until April 3, 2024.

MM/SC/HW/BP 9:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.35 White Garage  
1915 Third Avenue  
Request for extension

Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill said this building sits next to Donahoe Building / Bergman Luggage. He said ARC has seen multiple briefings and they are currently in the MUP process for a modest addition. He said they have a new architectural team – Perkins Will and plan to do another briefing. He said they are preparing a new ARC submittal. He requested an extension to April 3, 2024.

Ms. Sodt said she was comfortable with the extension request and noted the project is in the queue for a briefing. She said this property was in contract with the next door Donahoe / Bergman Luggage building when the owner died, and the contract was terminated. She hoped for a December 20, 2023, full board briefing.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for White Garage, 1915 Third Avenue until April 3, 2024.

MM/SC/BP/RC 9:0:0 Motion carried.

*Ms. Caton joined the meeting.*

111523.36 Donahoe Building / Bergman Luggage  
1901-1911 3rd Avenue  
Request for extension

Ms. Sodt explained the property is in probate and is being cleaned and occupied by an artist studio / gallery space. She said the windows have been repaired. She suggested keeping this building linked with the White Garage schedule.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for Donahoe Building / Bergman Luggage, 1901-1911 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue until April 3, 2024.

MM/SC/KR/DB 10:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.37 Hotel Elliott/Hahn Building  
103 Pike Street  
Request for extension

Ian Morrison, McCullough Hill said they are working on reasonable economic use. He said he has been communicating with Ms. Sodt who has provided citizen comments to him. He requested a 90-day extension.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for Hotel Elliott/Hahn Building, 103 Pike Street for ninety days .

MM/SC/RC/HW 10:0:0 Motion carried.

111523.38 Mama's Mexican Kitchen Building  
2234 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Request for extension

Ian Morrison, McCullough Hill said the MUP should be issued shortly. He said they recently sent in preliminary Certificate of Approval application. He requested a 120-day extension to get the MUP issued and get before the board for approval of preliminary Certificate of Approval.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for Mama's Mexican Kitchen Building, 2234 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue for 120 days.

MM/SC/HW/TC 10:0:0 Motion carried.

*Ms. Caton left the meeting.*

**111523.4 BRIEFINGS**

111523.41 Battelle Memorial Institute / Talaris Conference Center  
4000 NE 41<sup>st</sup> Street  
Briefing on proposed development

Presentation available in DON files.

Dan Miles, Jordan Kiel, Jim Keller, Bob Baldwin, and Nathan Rimmer presented.

Mr. Miles outlined the goals and recapped the process thus far. The project proposes a subdivision and redevelopment of the Talaris Conference Center site. Includes the rehabilitation of five buildings, and the demolition of two buildings plus a small maintenance shed. Includes a proposed addition of approximately 24,000 SF to the east side of Building D, and the addition of approximately 600 SF to the east side of building F. They propose to subdivide the approximately 18-acre site into 53 parcels and 6 tracts of land. Construct 48 single-family detached housing units. Change the use of five existing landmark structures to remain. The existing loop road would be reconfigured and rehabilitated. Includes new domestic water and firewater lines, new stormwater drainage system, new sanitary sewer system, and new electrical and low voltage communication lines. Includes grading for new utilities and preparing the site for construction of single-family homes. A total of 77 surface parking spaces would be provided on site for the historic structures. Approximately 7.1 acres of the existing 17.8-acre landscape or 39% would be cleared or altered. Of the 433 trees on site, 227 are exceptional trees. 65% of the exceptional trees would be retained. Project proposes to plant 216 new trees.

Mr. Kiel said the 17.8-acre site is privately owned and has approximately 56,000 square feet of built space. The site was planned in 1965 by NBBJ and Richard Haag for Battelle Memorial Institute. The buildings and site were landmarked in 2013. The site and building design principles developed by the original design team, the distinctive differences between the two initial design phases, and the maturity of the original site features, plantings and tree canopy were the inspiration for the updated Battelle/Talaris master plan. The site was developed over two phases with Phase 1 planned in 1965 and completed by 1967. NBBJ contemplated expansion to a more densely populated site.

Mr. Keller noted the challenge with the insular site in a busy business district and Rich Haag's design of quick growing plantings to ensure rapid growth and screening and buffering. He said the landscape is an evolving one and invasive species have taken over, the landscape needs help. The proposed site plan includes 48 houses, preserve oak grove, retention of sense of respite and rehabilitation of core landmark buildings. He said out of 430 total trees, there are 227 exceptional trees of which 65% will be retained. He noted the trees continue to fail due to lack of stewardship but also as part of the landscape's life cycle. He proposed additional homes in restored landscaping and maintaining a park-like setting. He discussed proposed planting typologies to restore and enhance the landscape.

Mr. Miles said the design involves removal of buildings E and G. He noted the challenges of rehabilitating each and still capturing many of the proposed home sites.

Mr. Miles explained the rails are not meant to be character-defining and proposed replacement of existing rails with glass panels which he said is most respectful to the landmark. It is subtle and differentiated yet does not call attention to itself. He provided photos of landscape design elements including some from the Portland Japanese Garden.

Mr. Kiel provided an overview of the proposed design and noted the clusters of homes and how they were sited to create private spaces that are also public without using hard edges. He said the material palette was used to unify the units. He said there would be 48 owners and noted there would need to be a single body / entity such as HOA to go through for alterations. He said it would be more restrictive but if an owner wanted to go beyond the HOA purview they would have to come to the board. He said the site would be restricted and curated.

Nathan Rimmer recapped their understanding of the code, and the potential property value.

Board Comments/Questions:

Mr. Barnes expressed concerns about the loss of historic and cultural aspects of the site and the number of houses proposed to be built. He said the site was designed as a research facility and training venue. He said that the northeast corner is unique. He asked about the vision for how the addition being used, and if parking would be needed.

Mr. Rimmer said they would reuse a lot of existing parking and he said it would not be visible or noticeable.

Bob Baldwin said buildings D, E, and F would be some form of commercial office with childcare so there would be activation. He said it would meet code.

Mr. Rimmer said there would be 76 parking stalls which is in line with neighborhood ratio and low-density office.

Mr. Barnes noted that a new drive-through was created for 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue homes. He said he was concerned with the number of homes in that space.

Mr. Rimmer said the site was designed to meet underlying zoning. He said the homes are roughly the same size as those across the street.

Mr. Barnes expressed concern that the new drive would destroy eagles nest habitat and negatively impact the eagles. He asked if the 200 exceptional trees noted are healthy.

Mr. Rimmer said some are not.

Mr. Barnes asked how there would be space to add 200 trees with 48 new houses.

Mr. Kiel said with careful tree placement and species choice there would be space.

Mr. Keller said the site was overplanted originally and has been slowly thinned out over time.

Mr. Barnes asked how long the site has been closed.

Mr. Rimmer said since the end of 2019 – 2020.

Mr. Barnes asked about the calculations on values of homes and plots and the size of plots; he noted smaller plot sizes still have high value.

Mr. Rimmer said some are smaller.

Mr. Kiel said the lots are similar size.

Ms. Randall asked why specific uses are necessary and why an addition is necessary to achieve onsite objectives.

Mr. Kiel said the premise was how to build fewer homes on the site with an addition becoming a back of house area, a commercial threshold to get 50,000 square feet. It provides more possibilities and a broader range of tenants along with childcare. The basement has a good chunk of square footage and is now full of equipment; it makes sense to use that space.

Ms. Randall asked if a tenant could be found who would use the space as-is.

Mr. Kiel said childcare on this site was easily imagined given the outdoor access. He noted the basement is a good bit of square footage that already exists; it is full of unused equipment. He said re-using existing square footage means it doesn't have



to be built elsewhere. He explained that punched openings could be added to basement to daylight it.

Ms. Randall asked about exploration about use of Building G.

Mr. Kiel said it is positioned in such a way that retention takes away an entire wedge of homes. It is an odd building in shape, size, and configuration; it needs updating but it doesn't pencil out. He said it can't be added to in a meaningful way nor can the existing floorplate be reused in an economically viable way. He said it started to feel like it was a choice between impacting the oak grove space which they have tried to stay away from, or this building. He said they tried tucking a couple houses around the edges of Building G and making Building G into a recreation or community center, but it ended up impacting the site in a significant way. He explained the need to have enough homeowners and commercial entities on the property to be able to spread out the cost to maintain the site.

Mr. Keller said the owners will become stewards of the site.

Dr. McKinney spoke about the cultural significance of the site and the desire to tell the stories that have lived here. She said that one thing that Battelle did was they allowed women and people of color to do their research at a time when nobody did. She said her mother, Louise 'Lucy' McKinney was one of them. She said it was educational research. She said she just sent off documents to the family archive but noted one of the things that concerned her mother when she was a school principal, she was in charge of early childhood education for the School District. She found a number of children who were behaviorally disordered or accidentally sufficient in some way. Most of them were black kids and most of them were black boys. Her mother trained the teachers to teach according to learning style and all the kids were removed from special education. The School District cut her funds. She had research that showed what they did, what the training was for the teachers, and how they made changes to the curriculum in a way that was supported. Mrs. McKinney went around the country talking about what she had done. It was a big deal.

Mr. Kiel said his normal architectural pursuits are usually K-12 facilities and he would look up that research.

Ms. Wasserman appreciated the glass railings. She said it distinguishes the railings as new and helps declutter. She appreciated the improvements to the lower level of Building D following the board's comments. She asked if there had been any consideration of a fourplex or small multiplex in a couple spots.

Mr. Rimmer said they are at the end of a process and once you change one thing it has a cascading effect on the entire project. He said they have spent millions of dollars on the design work on the civil side, architectural side, and tree side. He said it is cheaper to have the site sit empty than have it occupied.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said it is important to keep in mind zoning changes. If a house is removed, it must go somewhere else. Another location could double- or triple-up to get economic return.

Mr. Norman said with new code change it is possible to get up to six units on one single family site. He said the value argument is not working for him in terms of destroying the site, when potentially they could do more dense housing by waiting a year for zoning change.

Mr. Kiel said they can't permit this under future zoning laws.

Mr. Norman said it is hard to look at the design and not think about 'what if'.

Mr. Kiel talked about the challenges of state condo laws and spacing requirements. He said they are already as tightly packed as they can be. He also said he was worried about how the new law would play out, because he doesn't think it will be as intended.

Mr. Norman said single family homes are monolithic; he preferred an upzone to condominium or apartment building; multi-family.

Mr. Rimmer said the neighborhood property owners opposed upzoning.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said she had concerns about the Secretary of Interior Standards, 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 with this design. Number 1, property shall be used for as same purpose or a minimally change the defining characteristics of the environment and it's hard to say that this is meeting those items, and even if we look back at what was said that the original design, and the landscape design talked about adding additional pieces into the landscape as individual buildings. She asked about the rationale for adding an addition to one of the buildings? Because that doesn't exactly meet with that need and then that's kind of using two different rationales to basically just get a square footage in the way that you need to get it. She said Number 2 is pretty much the same thing retain and preserve, you're not supposed to be removing the historic materials with alterations. She said she wasn't sure if they had the full square footage of what's being removed for buildings compared to what's being retained, but it would be nice to have those two numbers just to know what percentage of the built construction is being removed versus what's being retained versus what's being produced new. She said those numbers would be very informative just from a numerical standpoint. Number 10 kind of works together that what's undertaken a lot of times we take into consideration how reversible what's being done is to the landmark. She expressed concern that none of this is very reversible in terms of how impactful it is to the site. If anybody ever wanted to come back to the original design for this site that would be a tall order.

Mr. Kiel said Ms. Pheasant-Reis was not necessarily wrong. He said their hope is to position the site in a way that is sustainable. He said they don't believe that the historic condition, ratio of building to site area is a sustainable thing. He questioned what happens when the standards are contradictory to the ability to make use of a

building. The ability to maintain use of a building is the single best way to keep it keep it in good shape to have it be maintained in terms of the retention of historic materials we look at this as the whole site and the growth it should have more standing than Building G. He said we think landscape elements are part of this landmark just as the buildings are, and so that was the calculation they made in the case of Building, but they are retaining a good deal of the site. He used the analogy of the historic school buildings and how we often add to them. The old gyms don't meet the new gym standards. He said you end up inevitably attaching to an old historic structure and pick the less important façade.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said the difference is that for a school addition there is a programmatic need to make that change versus the rationale that was provided for addition to Building D – which was a good place to put square footage. She said that is not the same rationale as a programmatic need for educational use.

Mr. Kiel said if the Building D addition cannot be built, they will propose to build four or five more new homes, which would impact the distinctive open meadow area next to the pond.

Mr. Miles said the standards are very clear and they need to be consistent with the historic character of the structures where applicable, and the standards could be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. He said they have been trying to do that for two years, as they balance removal of key buildings that they know are important to the landmark but noting that the landscaping is just as important. He said there is a tension between retaining structures and retaining landscape, while making a project that is economically viable and sustainable in perpetuity. He said they have presented changes based on input from the board and happy the board has weighed in, but it has been challenging and detailed exploration of choices they have made.

Mr. Keller talked about the standards applying to public spaces and noted this site is private. He noted the challenge of maintenance staff who may not care about the site as an owner would.

Ms. Randall appreciated the information provided. She said they are in an environment of trying to determine the reasonableness of the alterations, considering other alternatives available to achieve objectives of the owner and the applicant, and that's directly from the code. She said she was getting a bit hung up around evidence that other alternatives are not workable. She requested the operating performance information be distributed. She said she hasn't seen that and it would be helpful to see the economics, and what is the income that needs to be generated to maintain this site going forward, and then a version of that that reduces the square footage of buildings. How does that impact income, and from her perspective she was still not fully understanding that these lots are as small as they can possibly be. If there were a high-level analysis, if the homes were smaller, or how does that impact the return. She said that would help her understand how this needs to be to work long term.

Mr. Kiel appreciated the specificity of the request and said they would come up with something to share.

Mr. Macleod said the market value makes sense again if for looking at the full market value before your position of controls and incentives, a complete redevelopment of the site. He asked what the financials look like before this was considered, and how much of a loss was accruing while it was running as the Institute.

Mr. Rimmer said the loss is several hundred thousand dollars per year.

Ms. Wasserman said appropriate maintenance has not been happening in that period and bad things were happening. She thinks the real cost may have been higher than that.

Mr. Rimmer said the proforma put together proper landscaping, maintenance budget, a proper reserve for the roads and keeping the site at a high standard spread across 48 homes, 6 townhomes in the ABC buildings and 48,000 square feet of office space. He said what they charge must be within the market for office and common area charges. He said there is nowhere to cut anymore.

Mr. Miles said Ms. Doherty has all past presentations available for board members to review.

Ms. Chang said Ms. Doherty did send archival presentations to board members. She said that the size of some of the lots aren't compatible with the site or the homes. She expressed ongoing concern about the five proposed "pond" homes and the way they sit on the site and encroach into the heart of the site. She said she has seen little change to that part of the design, and now hears that the design is down a path too far to go back. She urged the design team to consider that the new design is "louder" and doesn't meet the Secretary of Interiors Standards. She said it just looks like everything looks out a lot more into the center of the site, an area they were working to preserve. She said it feels intrusive, when they've tried to keep development to the perimeter. She asked if the "pond" homes could be reduced in size. She appreciated the project recap.

Mr. Baldwin said the "pond" home location provides valuable real estate to the overall development. He said making them smaller may be a challenge, but they would explore it.

Mr. Rimmer said they have tried to keep them low-slung. They could go taller but that isn't a good design trade off. He said for the rest of the neighborhood these are modest homes. He said whenever they push in one place, they must pull in another.

Ms. Randall asked the applicants to show the board the impact of operating, and value to the owner if the "pond" homes are smaller. It is hard to appreciate the impacts to value and to overall operations.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said she agreed with Ms. Chang. She said the image caused heartache – it seemed busy and a distinct change. She noted the complexity of the roof forms. She said tweaking the image would be helpful, if it is not accurate

Mr. Kiel indicated roofs shown in the photo are behind the “pond” homes. He said providing movement – a video may be helpful to see the site as one moves around.

Ms. Pheasant-Reis said tweaking the image would be helpful. She said the concrete podium is a hardy base. It is important that there is a difference between a concrete podium based and a concrete walled ground floor. There is a bit of overlap happening between those two and it almost takes away from the concrete base. She said seeing the concrete as a punched opening material is jarring.

Mr. Kiel said they want to continue the datum of the elevated ground plane at Building D. He said with the planter boxes and railings it will be glassy and transparent in direct contrast to the big heavy base.

Mr. Macleod asked how the site would be subdivided and who would retain ownership of the commercial buildings.

Mr. Baldwin said they would be part of the owners’ association with all contributing to the same pot of money to maintain the shared site.

Mr. Rimmer said they are on their own lots and can either be retained by existing ownership or sold. He said the commercial portion would carry the outsized load of the cost.

Mr. Macleod said the proposed architecture considered is wonderful and well-considered. He appreciated the intentionality. He said this is an interesting site that was intended to have more development. He said the site can support new development, but echoed Ms. Chang’s comments about the “pond” homes and Building G as being the heart of the site. He said Building G doesn’t have the architectural glitz that Building D has, but it has historic merit in how it is integrated into the landscape. He said he didn’t feel the homes are a good analog. He said the proposed public space will be more activated when it was an introverted space and the change from that into a sort of wall to the residential is a big shift. He said it’s unfortunate to be locked into what we have here. He said he didn’t think board members were so much opposed to a specific number of houses as they were interested in preserving view lines and landscape spaces. He said his biggest sticking point is the loss of Building G.

## **111523.5**

### **BOARD BUSINESS**