



Seattle Design Commission

Approved

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

March 16 2006

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Pam Beyette

Adam Christiansen

John Hoffman

Karen Kiest

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

Woodland Park Zoo Garage
South Forest Street – Partial Street Vacation
Commission Business

Commissioners Present

Nic Rossouw, Acting Chair
Pam Beyette
Adam Christiansen
John Hoffman
Karen Kiest
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 12:30pm

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Valerie Felts



Department of Planning and
Development

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16 March 2006 Project: Woodland Park Zoo Parking Garage

Phase: Concept Design
Previous Reviews: Jan. 2006, March 2004, June 2004
Presenters: Paul Diedrich, KPFF
David Hewitt, Hewitt Architects
Dan Phillips, Woodland Park Zoo
Scott Ringgold, DPD
Attendees: Anne Davis, Save Our Zoo
Diane Duthweiler, Save Our Zoo/neighbor
Irene Wall, Phinney Community Council
Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221/RSO612)

Actions

The Commission appreciates the thoughtful approach to the presentation of concept design for the Woodland Park Zoo Garage. In a vote of 5 to 2 the Commission approves Scheme D, with the following comments:

- **expects that this option will be more fully developed**
- **concerned that the east screen could be eliminated over time**
- **finds that the west screen with vines needs more detail**
- **notes the alternate entrance with a walkway or views is intriguing, but needs more detail and exploration**
- **recommends team reconsider co-location options to enhance the project**
- **requests existing photos of site, especially of trees on the northwest side of the building and views from all directions**
- **recommends further study of architectural solutions to the design challenges identified by the team**
- **encourages team to look at acoustical impacts of garage**

Note: 2 dissenting votes were based on concern with building a garage at all and not the design at hand.

Proponents Presentation

The Commission appreciates the concept design presentation of the proposed Zoo parking garage. The team responded to the Commission's earlier advice to integrate the design of the garage into the Zoo's larger Master Plan. The importance of softening the appearance of the West Entry was described as an important design element as it is the first and last impression held by visitors. This will be achieved by the use of transparency and landscape. It was also noted the North Meadow deserves special attention. Internal and external impacts of the garage were considered as primary design concerns especially in protecting the Zoo environment. Internal impacts are: safety; circulation and pathways to allow easy wayfinding; visitor convenience; and orientation to exterior light. External impacts are: noise; scale; lights; and car/vehicle traffic

Public outreach efforts were discussed. Two community workshops were held, in early January and late February, and each was attended by approximately 50 community members and other stakeholders. Results of the meetings are posted to the Zoo website and reflect a mix of opinions. A subsequent Open House will be held April 8, 2006.



Concept D Phase 1

Public Comments

Diane Duthweiler, who lives across from the Zoo:

- noted that since that first review, one council member has come out against the zoo garage, and at least one other has expressed a willingness to re-examine the issue and reconsider his position
- refuted the premise that the garage plan has community support and believes there is no real need for a garage
- reminds the Commission that in 2004 the underground garage was the preferred alternative and asks the Commission to push for this
- believes there has been insufficient public input in the process and expects public outcry if the west garage is built
- reminded the Commission that the Zoo is a public, not private entity
- would like to see a supplemental EIS

Irene Wall, of the Phinney Community Council stated:

- garage is not a great idea
- public agreed to an underground garage at the south main entrance
- Commission has a responsibility to do thorough review, giving approval to height, bulk, and scale of project is exercising SEPA authority, would like to see supplemental EIS
- she is concerned over piecemeal approach
- cited need for additional study including models, photos, and renderings that show full future buildout of the Master Plan
- has more detailed comments on these points in a written handout which was provided to the Commission

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- How is the height of the garage measured?
 - 10 feet floor-to-floor, 34 feet from ground
- Explain how Scheme D is presented to the public, it seems to be the preferred alternative.

- The preferred scheme is essentially the same as a rotated square version seen at the public hearing. The rotational shift was made to better accommodate future long-range plan elements as voiced by stakeholders at the zoo and in the public. This is the preferred alternative after analysis of the site and input.
- Has there been public scrutiny, evaluation of the overall master plan or Long Range Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?
 - It has gone through one challenge and was upheld
- How does the garage serve as an entry to the Zoo? The Commission recommends it be hidden from view as it is a concern of neighbors living on the west side of Zoo
 - Entry to the garage will be moved to Phinney; team is less convinced west is a good entry
- Concerned that Scheme D compromises the berm idea, look again at other alternatives.
- Any thought to collocation and multiple uses for site or alternatives for top deck?
 - Still being considered.
- If public face on West is issue, best to focus screening there and less on interior of zoo, so find Scheme D not so successful or resolved yet and need to see green trellis wall and planting plan, to be convinced that West edge and north side works
- Regarding public comments on screening garage from view – what has been done toward that?
 - A stand of trees is existing and new landscaping will be added.
- Commission recommends photos of stand of trees to show the public
 - Yes, photos will be provided. This is at concept stage, schematics will come later
- What is the size of the service trucks entering the service area and future events center?
 - Midsize and small rental trucks that will come and go mostly during off-hours; hope to design path to be more integrated with overall site and also serve occasional loading needs.
- Have you considered moving the berm to prevent the public from viewing the service area?
 - The berm could possibly be moved
- Alternative B seems like best solution; try to incorporate some key elements in newest Scheme D.
- It would be helpful if in the future team would bring examples of architectural treatment imagined to make Scheme D more compelling, including that of the berm, and design principles, in general.
- The location of the ramps and their proximity to Phinney raises the issue of acoustics and noise impacts which will need to be addressed
- Appreciate intro with design criteria for site, but concerned identify of Zoo seems to be missing
- The size of this project is still too big, especially by Scheme D, Phase II. To do this to an Olmsted park is somewhat sad. A better approach might be to ask what can be done to integrate buildings into the incursion taking place?
 - The goal today is to show the logic of this location
- Will project still be sunken into landscape in Scheme D?
 - Yes, site itself has slope, so will build up from there. Recognize that berm is not only method to screen, want to elevate surrounding landscape and balance cut and fill on site.
- A big garage like this is not a good idea environmentally. A street car is a better idea. If this garage happens it should have a good design. Twisting the building will not help or gain much of a buffer, you need architectural solutions. Landscaping will not cover it, be judicious about use of berms.

- Wonders should we as a City build this at all? Knows that Council has acted though.
- Scheme D may be best siting option, not convinced that canted schemes gain anything site-wise. Not a fan of berms, so would caution against overuse as they could work against or overpower the building design.
- The Commission appreciates the level floorplates of the garage, making it more airy and creating a feeling of added safety
- Alternative D has deviated from citizen comments, so good to explain why. Other alternatives seem not flushed out as well.
- If entry is associated with the garage, then it should be presented in context of the garage; context issues should be addressed.
- The Design Commission does not have SEPA authority.
 - DPD Land Use staff clarified that aesthetics are a SEPA issue; the Commission has an opportunity to weigh in the height, bulk and scale of project and advise DPD on SEPA decisions.

16 March 2006 Project: South Forest Street – Partial Street Vacation

Phase: Street Vacation Follow Up
Previous Reviews: 02 February 2006 (briefing)
Presenters: George Blomberg, Port of Seattle
Peter Hummell, Anchor Environmental
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Department of Transportation
Attendees: Koya Tsukiji, Port of Seattle
Ticson Mach, Port of Seattle
Joe Taskey, Seattle Department of Transportation
Lisa De Alva, resident
Nigel Day, resident

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 170)

Action

The Commission appreciates the comments made and changes to the public benefits package associated with the street vacation since the last briefing. In a vote of 6 to 1, it recommends approval of the public benefits. The Commission:

- **Appreciates how much has changed since the last review**
- **Agrees the community members did a good job of conveying concern for lack of safety in the neighborhood**
- **Agrees the public benefit package is adequate as presented today with the following comments:**
- **On-site Benefits:**
 - **streetscape connections and improvements should relate to existing trail at north/south**
 - **bridge guardrail should be as low as possible and more of a screening element than opaque to respond to concern for views**
- **Off-site Benefits:**
 - **encourage greater public access to shoreline with improvements that are appropriate**
 - **recommends team simplify design relative to setting**
 - **supports long term, connection to Riverside Drive over time it will strengthen safety in the future, but understands it is not immediately practical**
 - **recognizes that safety, not design is key issue, so encourage team to look at site from CPTED principles**
 - **urges team to consider more pedestrian oriented materials at turn around**
 - **agrees long-term maintenance and lighting is key to safety**

Note: 1 dissenting opinion from a Commissioner who believes public benefits are not commensurate with the vacation.

Proponents Presentation

The Commission appreciated the follow up presentation of a February 2006 briefing. The project involves both on-site urban design improvements and off-site elements that together comprise the public benefits package. At the earlier briefing the Commission recommended approval of Step 1,

from an urban design perspective, the vacation makes sense but requested additional details and refinement before reevaluating Step 2 – the public benefits package. The Commission’s concerns were related to public access and maintenance of existing views. The public benefits package is the issue to be focused on today. The project contains 3 elements on-site: 1) bridge design 2) bike/pedestrian path and 3) new shoreline habitat to replace pilings along bank of Terminal 25. The last item was cited not to be part of the public benefits package since it is required overwater mitigation. Graphics were presented illustrating screening on the transparent side of the proposed bridge. Willow, Alder and Madrone trees would be planted along the shoreline to improve food sources for fish and wildlife at the site.

Regarding off-site improvements, the Commission previously flagged six items of concern. The context was explained through site and aerial photos and connections to other recreation and habitat sites were explained. Many Port sites long Duwamish are both public access points and shoreline habitat sites. City is doing lots to improve shoreline near 1st Avenue Bridge plus has planned improvements in the larger south industrial area. The selected site contributes to larger regional vision for shoreline habitat. Site design changes include: a new connection to Riverside Drive through a future extended path and changes to layout of play area and materials to avoid false marine artifacts. The issue of using false artifacts was addressed. The site now incorporates Port bridge gears, making reference to historic drawbridge that used to be on site. The team noted that iconic relics such as logs, driftwood, gravel, and boulders, bracket the pathway and give a feeling of shoreline to the project. The team has attempted to make the site plan consistent with neighborhood needs, but lacks the resources to do all that’s desired.



Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Regarding maintenance, the street lights are in the street Right-of-Way – would this be SDOT’s maintenance responsibility? Lighting as a crime deterrent is important.
- Regarding the open railing on the bridge, it may not be a good idea. A railing needs to be able to stop trucks veering off the side
 - The Port will possibly maintain street lights. SDOT is currently discussing lighting maintenance responsibilities with the Port. The park is maintained by the Parks Department.
- Maintenance is important. Without surveillance, what is the public benefit?
- Citizen access to the waterfront should be encouraged, but it makes no sense to provide a path to an area that is not accessible to the public.
 - SDOT staff clarified that at this time there is no specific action for Riverside Drive; a connection is precluded by an existing street use permit

Public Comments

Nigel Day, a resident of the neighborhood, encourages greater access to the park. He believes more, new people will displace problem people and bring a more positive character and use to the area. He noted that better access to the river is included in the South Park Neighborhood Plan. He also called for more equity around the city with public street ends. He noted that the street end on Riverside Drive is currently not truly public, but is permitted for use by one company – for parking.

Lisa De Alva, a resident of Riverside Drive, objected to the proposed connection. She cited an existing high level of crime and believes such a connection would create a “crime highway” in and out of the neighborhood. She also feels an environment so close to industry is not good for children. She urged that improvements to the site be nominal and would prefer to see improvements made to existing park, Duwamish Waterway Park, to the due south.

16 March 2006 Project

Commission Business

Action Items

A. Timesheets

B. Minutes from 02/16/06/Felts

Discussion Items

C. DC Annual Report/Iurino

D. Report on Councilmember Steinbrueck meeting/Spiker

E. Councilmember and Mayor's Office Meetings/Cubell

F. Advocacy Campaign for Waterfront/Viaduct/Romano

G. Get Engaged Mentorship Program/Christiansen

H. Prep for Council UDP Briefing on April 12, 2:00 pm/Cubell

Announcements

I. South Lake Union Open House 4/4 6-8:30pm, Unity Church