



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Raymond Gastil
Planning Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

Lauren Hauck

John Hoffmann

Julie Parrett

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

January 21, 2010

Convened 1:30 pm
Adjourned 4:38 pm

Projects Reviewed

Alaskan Way Viaduct Seawall Replacement
Fire Station 9 - Fremont

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Brendan Connolly
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Lauren Hauck
Julie Parrett
Norie Sato

Incoming Commissioners Present

Laurel Kunkler
Donald Vehige

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Tim Trujillo



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January 21, 2010

Project: Fire Station 9 - Fremont

Phase: Schematic Design

Last Reviewed: October 1, 2009

Presenters: Teresa Rodriguez, Fleets and Facilities Department
Craig Skipton, Mithun
Doug Lee, Mithun
Casey Huang, Mithun

Attendees:

David Kunselman, FFD

AJ Yang, SCDPDA

Larry Wick, Fire Department

David Jackson, FFD

Valerie Bunn, Fremont

Historical Society

Dove Alberg, FFD

Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

Peter Reiquam, artist

Scott Kemp, DPD

Eric Pihl, Fremont Neighborhood Council

Time: 3:15pm – 4:38 pm

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ACTION

The Design Commission thanked the Fire Station 9 design team for their presentation and approved the Schematic Design on a four to two vote with the following recommendations:

- The building design is austere in a way not suited to its location in Fremont. Consider using greater articulation and further integration of the art to bring more character to the building. Also consider incorporating some unexpected qualities/elements to the landscape.
- Provide a stronger and more authentic acknowledgement of the historic annex building that must be demolished. This might be accomplished through the landscape design or through reuse of existing building materials.
- Of the two brick samples that were presented, the Commission preferred the textured brick over the smooth brick for this site.
- Consider extending the more naturalistic landscape of the buffer area into the polished, predictable landscape of the site to punctuate it with an element of surprise. Incorporate plants that provide year-round interest.
- The Commission encourages both the designers and artist to work together to further integrate artwork into the building design.

Note: The two opposing votes were because of an expressed desire to see more character in the designs.

Project Presentation

Project Manager for the City, Teresa Rodriguez, began by presenting some background to the project as well as some history. This new fire station will replace the existing new mid-century modern style building that currently serves as the fire station. The Fire Department has had a station at this site since 1901. Fire station 9's first structure, made of concrete, was constructed in 1921. 1953 saw the construction of the structure that is currently used.

During the predesign stage, studies found that it was not possible to meet the programmatic needs of a new facility and also retain the existing annex building. The annex building was presented to the Landmarks Preservation Board and it was determined not to be a landmark. Therefore, the plan is to replace the structures on the site with a larger two-bay facility. There were historic artifacts located in the annex that are being looked into for incorporation into the new design.

The community's concerns include parking and coordination during construction, station design, and the historic annex building.

The existing 5,700 sq ft building will be replaced by an 8,500 square foot structure to meet programmatic needs. There will be air fill services at this facility to service the north end, as well as the trucks. The project looks to achieve a LEED rating of silver or higher. The project is late in the schematic design phase.



Figure 5: Site Plan

Across the street and to both sides of the site is single family residential development. There is a skyline view from the site. The back of the site contains a steep slope buffer. In the winter when trees are bare the new building will be visible from Fremont Way.

At the last Commission meeting, the Commission encouraged the project team to work freely, integrate soft and hardscapes, integrate art throughout the site, and make a gesture toward the existing historic building.

Craig Skipton, of Mithun, presented the site plan. There is a thread of native plantings that leads from the zoo in the north and terminates at the site. Native plants are proposed on this site also. The site slopes in two directions and the team looked at ways to capture and slow the flow of stormwater on site. Accent walls are being explored to integrate the natural elements with the structure.

The site will include the following elements:

- Street trees
- Rain garden in planter strip
- Stormwater planters
- Native plantings
- Fire Station 9 mascot in concrete paving
- Relocate existing Fire Station 9 mascot neon art
- Fire Station 9 historical exhibit

The idea is to be playful in the use of native plantings while reducing water use and maintenance needs as was requested by the firefighters.

The walls will be concrete on the east west directional and metal from north to south. Craig provided examples of where these elements have been used.

At the previous meeting, the Design Commission recommended exploration of the massing. A few options were explored. The design team looked into creating a sculptural form or two. Next, the design team looked at using a series of box-like shapes. They felt it became too chaotic and, therefore, simplified the design into two elements: the apparatus bay and the station house. The design team aimed to create transparency through the apparatus bay while using brick on the façade to link the architecture with local vernacular.

The interior is being designed for ease of access as the pole has been eliminated from the design. The team feels as though the transparency is the key feature along with the welcoming and transparent entrance. The goal is to create a timeless building with a civic presence that will last for the next 50 years but which also fits within the fabric of the neighborhood.

The north and south elevations are quieter due to proximity to nearby residential structures. The neighboring property to the south has a single family house located right on the property line.

The design team is exploring brick types for the façade including a smooth brick and a textured brick as well as a larger scale brick. BF Day School served as an example for the design team as well as some of the other existing buildings in the Fremont neighborhood.

According to Doug Lee of Mithun, it is going to be important to attach the art element to the building due to the site restraints. The artist feels it should be big and bold and contain a sense of humor. However, he noted that the artwork has not yet been review by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Doug explained that eight departures are necessary to get approval from the City. These departures are necessary to fit the building into the small, constrained site. The departures include ones for noise, parking, and building height. Also, the team is asking to not be required to provide improvements, including a turn around, to Fremont Lane, which runs behind the site.

Public and Department Comments:

Scott Kemp, DPD

The requested departures seem necessary and reasonable.

Valerie Bunn, Fremont Historical Society

She questioned the location of this size and type of facility in a residential neighborhood with such narrow streets. Encourages looking for a site on an arterial.

Eric Pihl, Fremont neighborhood council

Pointed out that the project had not yet been brought to the Fremont Community Council for review and would like to see more effort to engage the community than just an open house.



Figure 6: Fire Station 9 Building Elevations

Peter Reiquam, project artist

Will take the project to the Public Art Advisory Committee in February for review. The design team and firefighters are happy with the concept for the art.

Larry Wick, Seattle Fire Department

Explained that he has an understanding of the location and that analysis has been completed on the site that show that it is the best site from an operational standpoint.

Commissioners' Comments & Questions

Concerning stormwater planters to catch run-off, are you talking about water reuse for landscaping?

We priced out planters and rain gardens as well as cisterns to be used for landscape irrigation and/or non potable uses. We have a range of options that need refinement.

The rain garden on the planting strip will pick up street runoff.

Is the idea to do large masses of natural planting or a mix of plantings?

We are aiming for naturalistic plantings.

What is the historic exhibit and what might it include?

The design team is still working to determine what the exhibit might be as well as placement.

Concerning the metal versus concrete site walls, is there something happening to the north along the property line? Are the weirs higher or lower than the sidewalk?

The border between the edge is a continuing site wall. We're proposing a bench as well. A trench grate may cross the entrance walkway. The weirs would be flush but be above grade to the south end of the site.

Have you investigated amending the site to include permeable surfaces?

Permeability is an issue due to drainage with the slope. The other issue is we need an exemption. We are trying to stay out of the buffer and keep runoff off the slope.

Along the south end, is there a patio and is it open to the sky?

It is open to the sky.

Is the height of the support portion of the apparatus bay a function of keeping a single box or a function of what needs to happen in the bay?

We're trying to simplify that form. We want to use bay windows for daylighting. The height is determined by the 14-foot high requirement for the space. If the air fill goes away, the space can be reconfigured at a later date to allow for another truck.

Why was the pole eliminated from the design?

It is a safety-related trend.

Disappointed in the austerity of the building, especially with relation to the neighborhood. Maybe there could be some further merging of the artwork and the building. The building could have some exuberance of its own. It may help to soften the texture of the façade. The historic display needs to be carefully thought about. Consider showing its delineation/location in the site design. Maybe the artist can work with the historic society.

I believe that the brick detailing should be reconsidered. I would warn against the flat brick.

Think about possibly grading the driveway to direct stormwater flow into the wiers.

I am struggling with the massing of the building. This design may be too institutional in style for the neighborhood. May need more character. Excited about the landscape, although the renderings make it appear overly predictable. Consider year-round interests when designing the landscape. The street tree appears to cover the signage on the façade.

Disappointment that the existing annex building wasn't honored more. Consider doing something more daring with the new building: "funkify." Is there a way of reusing the concrete? Maybe it could be horizontal. Is there a sunscreen over the windows?

Yes.

Because of the sedate nature of the structure, maybe add an element of surprise to the landscape.

The artwork is aimed toward that end.