



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 13/22

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, February 8, 2022

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville

Ryan Gilbert

Nella Kwan

Michael Le

Ming Zhang

Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt

Melinda Bloom

Absent

Matt Fujimoto

Chair Andy Yip called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm.

020822.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

020822.2 BOARD BRIEFING

1032 S. Jackson St.

Applicant: Bill Barton, Tiscareno Associates

Briefing on Use and Design proposal for new construction of a mixed-use development (6-7 stories) on a portion of what is now the Asian Plaza site. The project will include 400-450 apartments, two levels of parking and ground floor retail. The proposal includes demolition of two 1-2 story commercial buildings.

Ms. Frestedt introduced the briefing and said the site is zoned DMR/C 75/75-95. The lot area is 80,568. Jackson is a Class I Pedestrian street. This site is located east of I-5 outside of the National Register District. This site is located outside of the Asian Design Character District/Retail Core. There are two buildings on the site that would be demolished. See historic property report for details. Mixed-use, residential and commercial. Approximately 450 units are proposed, with 2-3 levels of parking, and approximately 430 bicycle stalls.

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Bill Barton, Tiscareno Associates provided context and zoning overlay of the site.

Ellen Mirro, Studio TJP, prepared and presented the Historical Resource Report (full report in DON file). She said there are two buildings on the site, Building 1, built in 1960 with an addition in 1967, and Building 2 built in 1900 with alterations dating to 1950-60s. She said a Sanborn Map from 1888 shows some early development around the subject site, with the two blocks between Jackson and Main streets and 10th and 12th Streets containing a half-dozen residences, with attendant outbuildings. Early buildings on the subject blocks included tenements and single-family homes, and businesses including laundries, and stables. She said the site was plagued by landslides.

She said the first mention of 1036 Jackson Street in the Seattle Times was in March 1900, in a classified advertisement offering furnished rooms for rent. By 1906 the residence was advertised as a boarding house, offering 6 rooms. The main floor contained businesses such as the Fox Manufacturing Co. and The Great Northern Billiard Hall. The Great Northern Billiard Hall advertised "Cigars, Tobacco, Soft Drinks and Courteous Treatment" by proprietors Boyd & Williams. Despite the landslides, in 1922 a building permit was issued to C. F. Hing to construct a 165' x 120' store building at 1000 Jackson Street. The building at 1036 S Jackson continued to function as a rooming house for the residential areas above the commercial spaces. By 1946 Ray's Furniture & Hardware, a secondhand dealer had become a tenant. Kuwahara Refrigeration Service was briefly a tenant in 1952. These two tenants were perhaps a prelude to the long-term tenant Connor's Sales, a furniture and Appliance retail store responsible for most of the physical form of both subject buildings today. Connor's Sales was the name of one of the businesses owned by Wilce and Mitsuko Shiomi. Connor's Sales was a tenant of 1032 S Jackson by May of 1953 and stayed at the site until 1985.

Wilce and Mitsuko Shiomi assembled the subject property by purchasing lots from separate property owners in Tract 4 for Terrys Fourth Addition between 1952 and 1973. They purchased the parcels both in their own names and under the name of their business, Connor's Sales. Ms. Mirro said that buildings on the site were demolished or remodeled for subsequent construction of Building 1. She said that Building 1 was constructed in 1960 and expanded in 1967. In 1985 Building 1 underwent a major remodel named the development "Asian Plaza." The 1985 development was spurred by the retirement of Wilce and Mitsuko Shiomi and the management of the subject site by their daughter Sandra and her husband Dennis Chinn. It was during this period that the building was converted for the use of the Viet-Wah grocery store.

Ms. Mirro said by 1980s Building 2 had several tenants including the Saigon Bistro and the Nam Phuong Bookstore, which operated for over three decades. She said that Building 2 may have been part of Jazz Alley but as it stands today, cannot convey that history. She said by 2007 social services nonprofit Helping Link had offices on the second floor.

Ms. Mirro said that John Y. Sato was the architect of the subject building 1 addition in 1967. Sato was a prolific architect and builder, designing many apartment complexes, luxury condominiums, office and commercial buildings, and several low-income housing projects for the elderly. As a minority professional within the Seattle's Japanese

community, he was active in promoting, defending and collaborating with other minority professionals to pursue prospects ranging from the building arts to politics. He worked with L. B. Curry, president of Model Contractors, Inc. in a joint minority contractor venture for an Operation Breakthrough Alcoa contract. He aided and worked with Asian communities and the Seattle Housing Authority to design and build housing for low-income elderly retirees. His practice focused mainly within the city of Seattle and surrounding locations. Many of his works featured a combination of traditional methods and materials, such as wood framing and brick cladding, with systems of construction using precast concrete, pre-stressed concrete beams, concrete blocks, tilt up construction, and prefabricated modules for exterior wall systems and building units. An example of his work in concrete, the Continental House, was cited for a special award in 1970 by the Washington Aggregates and Concrete Association. She said there are better examples of his work. Ms. Mirro concluded by saying the subject buildings are altered and unable to convey their history.

David Della, Eco-Ready, provided an overview of community engagement and outreach to gather information and input to assist with project conceptualization. Target groups included Friends of Little Saigon, CIDBIA, Viet-Wah Group, owner, Asian Plaza Shopping Center, SCIDpda, and Interim CDA. He said he found that there is no objection to demolition of existing building or to the redevelopment plan. He noted commenters expressed concern about crime and safety in the area.

Dr. Dennis Chinn said his family has been deeply involved in the Seattle International District for four generations, and that involvement will hopefully continue into a fifth generation with his grandchildren. He said his father Andrew Chinn was born in Seattle; he was a prominent local artist who was deeply involved in the Chinese community his adult whole life. He served as the president of the Gee Oak Tin Association for many years, was a founding member of the Seattle Chinese Art Club, was the Scoutmaster and moving force behind Boy Scouts Troop 254 that met at the Chinese Baptist church and was the president of the Kong Yick Investment Club.

Dr. Chinn said his wife, Sandra Shiomi, was the daughter of Wilce and Mitsuko Shiomi. He said after her parents were released from incarceration after the war, they returned to Seattle and established their retail business, Connors Appliance and Furniture, at 12th and Jackson in the late 1940s which they ran for over 40 years. Over a period of time starting in the 1940s, they bought individual lots from local owners and created the combined lot that now is the Asian Plaza. Both Will and Mitsi were active in the Japanese American organizations like JAACL and were prominent members of the International District business community.

Dr. Chinn said he became involved with the property when Will and Mitsi decided to retire in the late 1980s. He put in the parking lot, remodeled the building, and in 1989 leased the first floor to Duc Tran, who opened the Viet Wah Supermarket. Other businesses followed and for years the Asian Plaza served as the economic center of the International District Business community, until increasing land values and rents caused the business community to move down toward Rainier Avenue and MLK Way.

Dr. Chinn said he supports redevelopment and noted concerns about crime and homelessness in the area. He said Mr. Tran will close the store before the sale of the property and has no interest continuing in this location. He said Mr. Tran will retain one store in Renton which will be run by his daughter. Dr. Chinn said he hopes to do a retail center for local and small retail on site.

Ms. Frestedt reported there were technological challenges with the simultaneous interpretation and that it was not functioning as it is supposed to. She apologized to the community and said she would find out what went array.

Mr. Gilbert appreciated Ms. Mirro's presentation illustrating how significantly the buildings have changed. He said he was supportive of demolition.

Mr. Le thanked the presenters and appreciated the history of the site and Dr. Chinn's story. He said the project will be beneficial to the community.

Ms. Baskerville asked for clarification on existing businesses on site.

Dr. Chinn said the bookstore, who knows about the redevelopment, and Helping Link.

Mr. Zhang asked if there was a jazz club there.

Ms. Mirro said the Great Northern Billiard may have been coded language for jazz club.

Mr. Yip suggested noting this history in some way.

Ms. Kwan appreciated the perspective and said the buildings are in poor condition and are a risk without change.

Mr. Yip said he agreed with Mr. Gilbert's comments. He appreciated hearing the history and noted there have been lots of changes to the buildings.

Ms. Baskerville said the outcomes of community outreach were helpful and asked for continued reports back.

Mr. Della said the report was high-level and there are more to come. He said community engagement will continue as the project moves forward. He said there was no objection to demolition and community looks forward to new project.

Mr. Zhang said it is good to see the support of the community.

Ms. Frestedt thanked the design team for the reports. She explained that early design outreach is not required in historic districts in the same way it is in other areas.

Ms. Kwan asked what stakeholders think will revitalize the neighborhood.

Mr. Gilbert noted historical significance of the site was reported and noted that this is the land of the Coast Salish people – Tulalip, Duwamish, Lummi. He identified the need to acknowledge we are on indigenous land.

Mr. Yip said that while community input cannot be mandated, outreach is helpful to the project. He said that the project will help with crime in the area.

Mr. Barton explained the zoning of the site prompts departure request and said the grade change requires a stepped building with each side maximum height 95'. He said Jackson Street is an arterial but is the best and only option for trash pickup / services. He said 10th Ave S. is too steep for service. He said Main Street is 40-50' above Jackson Street.

He presented photos of inspiration for height bulk and scale. He said that Jackson will be filled with pedestrian friendly elements and Main will be more residential; 10th will be a mix of the two. He said dumpsters would not be visible and parking will be off street. He said pedestrian-scaled lighting would be employed. He noted wide walkway in front of storefronts. Two massing options were presented: The Frame and The Ellipse.

Mr. Barton said The Frame is made of three articulated masses with courtyard, roof deck, and amenity space. He said a departure would be needed due to width limit. He said The Ellipse is code compliant. He said this design holds the 10th and Jackson corner; it is setback with similar floor plans to The Frame. He provided shadow studies for each design. He explained to board members they were looking for input on demolition of existing buildings, vehicular access, and width departure request.

Ms. Frestedt explained that there would be no vote since the application is incomplete, but that this is an opportunity for the Board members to provide feedback to inform the evolution of the building. She said there is an active application and briefings will continue. She said SEPA is triggered, and the board can't take action until SEPA decision has been published.

Ms. Baskerville thanked the design team and noted a preference for Scheme 1, The Frame. She asked how this option interacts with the north end.

Mr. Barton said the site is challenging because of the slope. He said they are setting the building back from Main. He said there is vacant land to the north; the site slopes up to meet the street there and they are invested in making that a nice area.

Ms. Baskerville asked about the courtyard in Scheme 2, The Ellipse.

Mr. Barton said both schemes have elevated courtyard that doesn't connect to the street.

Ms. Baskerville said regarding service access on Jackson Street, there is already vehicular access on 10th where a lot of traffic goes in. She noted competing traffic with Pacific Rim.

Mr. Gilbert said 10th Avenue is congested as it is and with a steep grade and this project would add more traffic. He said he supported the general direction of the project, and it is time for some investment in the area.

Mr. Barton said they have to obtain approvals for access with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) as well.

Ms. Frestedt said Jackson is a Class 1 Pedestrian street with minimized pedestrian access there. There was discussion about how SDOT prioritizes vehicular access. She said she can invite SDOT to brief the board.

Mr. Zhang said Option 1 is more responsive to the hillside, daylight and breaks up with smaller scale at the storefront level. He said it is good to keep the streetscape. He said the street front of Option 2 is massive. He supported demolition of the existing buildings. He expressed concern about trucks along Jackson and suggested trying to find a way to move vehicle and truck access to 10th to allow continuation of pedestrian realm. He said trucks on Jackson is not a good idea.

Mr. Yip said departures could garner support if for the right reasons. He said Scheme 2 massing is too big and noted preference for Scheme 1. He said he had no issue with demolition of existing structures. Regarding vehicle access he said that 10th is steep and turning into Pacific Rim garage is challenging.

Mr. Barton said they are setting back from the sidewalk for that reason. He said they are not proposing to take access off Main, only off 10th and Jackson. He said trash truck can't go up grade on 10th and they need to take the service off of S. Jackson St.

Mr. Yip asked about using the space between the two parcels.

Mr. Barton said they are in early stages of design. He said that Main Street is not conducive to retail street environment; Jackson is the retail corridor where retail has the best chance of thriving.

Ms. Kwan asked about east side of the building and why retail isn't proposed there.

Mr. Barton said it is challenging from a grading perspective. Main is more residential in character. The building is setting back from the property line to allow for windows and overhead clearances.

Ms. Kwan asked about access to Tamarind Tree.

Mr. Barton said there will be a curb cut with access to parking.

Ms. Frestedt asked about staging and what the community might expect during construction. This may be of interest going forward.

Mr. Yip said he looks forward to seeing cultural elements.

Mr. Zhang wanted to see a cut section to see elevation difference and the possibility for service on Main Street.

Mr. Barton said they received answers to their questions and said board members seem to be leaning toward Scheme 1 and generally support the project but want more information about massing and service access.

020822.3 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt explained that interviews for Matt Fujimoto's position have been done and appointment recommendations will be forwarded to the Mayor's Office for consideration.

Ms. Frestedt said she expects several new project briefings coming up.

She apologized for the interpretation snafu and said she is committed to resolving it. She asked that community members contact her, and she will connect them to Community Liaison to get an in-language summary of the meeting.

Ms. Baskerville asked when discussions would start about cultural identity and sense of place and about promoting a pedestrian-friendly community, cross walks, lighting. She referred to the lighting study conducted along the S. Jackson St. corridor.

Ms. Frestedt said SCIDpda conducted a lighting analysis along with SparkLab and provided recommendations. She said that report has been forwarded to each new construction team, so those considerations are being taken into account.

Mr. Yip said the lighting study shows best practices and he noted the value of 'brushing up' on items as a lot is coming up.

Ms. Frestedt said if there are other topics of value to board members, she can make space on agenda to fill in a range of information. She said she has invited Friends of Little Saigon to brief the board and there are other community organizations and stakeholders that could brief the board as well. She said so much is happening, and it is all relevant to the board's review.

Ms. Frestedt wished all a Happy Lunar New Year.

Adjourn

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