



The City of Seattle

## Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

PSB 311/22

### Staff REPORT

for Board meeting January 4, 2023

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

**010423.34      Drexel Building  
Rojo's Mexican Food  
217 James St**

Installation of signage  
Paint storefront

Staff report: This is a storefront that has already been painted. This would be changing the color. The signage requests an exception to the letter height for one letter "R" at 16 inches in the sign band. The four other letters are at 10 inches and one at 12 inches. Also to allow the signage in the sign band to extend beyond the sign band frame to be consistent with the company logo, which is the name on a curve. The storefront next door has a sign on a background that is larger than the sign band. However, the guidelines do say that the individual letters are preferred. Staff did ask if the applicant had considered alternatives to the location of the signage so that the "Rojo's" was not over the straight sign band but the applicant chose to stick with their original proposal. Granting an exception calls for a reduced sign package, in this case there is just the one larger sign on the sign band and door sign with hours and the one window sign. The application includes repainting the storefront Cool Rain. The Secretary of Interior Standards do not recommend painting unpainted brick, but this brick has been painted previously along with three other storefronts on the James frontage of the building. The other colors are red, gold and white.

Draft Motion: I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for: Installation of signage (as proposed or if amended, specify the amendment) Including allowing one letter larger than 12 inches. Painting the storefront Cool Rain.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the *January 4, 2023* public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

SMC 23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

- A. Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.160 - Signs

- B. To ensure that flags, banners and signs are of a scale, color, shape and type compatible with the Pioneer Square Preservation District objectives stated in Section 23.66.100 and with the character of the District and the buildings in the District, to reduce driver distraction and visual blight, to ensure that the messages of signs are not lost through undue proliferation, and to enhance views and sight lines into and down streets, the overall design of a sign, flag, or banner, including size, shape, typeface, texture, method of attachment, color, graphics and lighting, and the number and location of signs, flags, and banners, shall be reviewed by the Board and are regulated as set out in this Section 23.66.160. Building owners are encouraged to develop an overall signage plan for their buildings.
- C. In determining the appropriateness of signs, including flags and banners used as signs as defined in Section 23.84A.036, the Preservation Board shall consider the following:
  - 1. Signs Attached or Applied to Structures.
    - a. The relationship of the shape of the proposed sign to the architecture of the building and with the shape of other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
    - b. The relationship of the texture of the proposed sign to the building for which it is proposed, and with other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
    - c. The possibility of physical damage to the structure and the degree to which the method of attachment would conceal or disfigure desirable architectural features or details of the structure (the method of attachment shall be approved by the Director);
    - d. The relationship of the proposed colors and graphics with the colors of the building and with other approved signs on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;

- e. The relationship of the proposed sign with existing lights and lighting standards, and with the architectural and design motifs of the building;
  - f. Whether the proposed sign lighting will detract from the character of the building; and
  - g. The compatibility of the colors and graphics of the proposed sign with the character of the District.
4. When determining the appropriate size of a sign the Board and the Director of Neighborhoods shall also consider the function of the sign and the character and scale of buildings in the immediate vicinity, the character and scale of the building for which the sign is proposed, the proposed location of the sign on the building's exterior, and the total number and size of signs proposed or existing on the building.

### **Pioneer Square Preservation District Rules**

#### **III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION**

The following architectural elements are typical throughout the District and will be used by the Board in the evaluation of requests for design approval:

- A. Color. Building facades are primarily composed of varied tones of red brick masonry or gray sandstone. Unfinished brick, stone, or concrete masonry unit surfaces may not be painted. Painted color is typically applied to wooden window sash, sheet metal ornament and wooden or cast iron storefronts. Paint colors shall be appropriate to ensure compatibility within the District. (7/99)

#### **XX. RULES FOR TRANSPARENCY, SIGNS, AWNINGS AND CANOPIES**

The Pioneer Square Preservation Ordinance reflects a policy to focus on structures, individually and collectively, so that they can be seen and appreciated. Sign proliferation or inconsistent paint colors, for example, are incompatible with this focus, and are expressly to be avoided. (8/93)

##### **B. General Signage Regulations**

All signs on or hanging from buildings, in windows, or applied to windows, are subject to review and approval by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board. (8/93) Locations for signs shall be in accordance with all other regulations for signage. (12/94)

The intent of sign regulations is to ensure that signs relate physically and visually to their location; that signs not hide, damage or obscure the architectural elements of the building; that signs be oriented toward and promote a pedestrian environment; and that the products or services offered be the focus, rather than signs. (8/93)

Sign Materials: Wood or wood products are the preferred materials for rigid hanging and projecting (blade) signs and individual signage letters applied to building facades. (7/99)

C. Specific Signage Regulations

1. Letter Size. Letter size in windows, awnings and hanging signs shall be consistent with the scale of the architectural elements of the building (as per SMC 23.66.160), but shall not exceed a maximum height of 10 inches unless an exception has been approved as set forth in this paragraph. Exceptions to the 10-inch height limitation will be considered for individual letters in the business name (subject to a limit of no more than three letters) only if both of the following conditions are satisfied: a) the exception is sought as part of a reduced overall sign package or plan for the business; and b) the size of the letters for which an exception is requested is consistent with the scale and character of the building, the frontage of the business, the transparency requirements of the regulations, and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160. An overall sign package or plan will be considered reduced for purposes of the exception if it calls for approval of signage that is substantially less than what would otherwise be allowable under the regulations. (12/94)
2. Sign bands. A sign band is an area located on some buildings in the zone above storefront windows and below second floor windows designed to display signage. (7/99) Letter size in sign bands shall be permitted to a maximum of 12 inches. Letters shall be painted or applied and shall not be neon. (12/94)

Issued: December 28, 2022

Genna Nashem  
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator