



The City of Seattle

## Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 166/20

### Staff REPORT

For Board meeting October 21, 2020

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.

**102120.21**      **165 S Washington St**

Jay Jannett

The Board has reviewed this project at an introductory Board briefing on the context, and height and bulk on Nov 20, 2019, a design briefing to the ARC on February 12, 2020 and final design presentation to the ARC on September 30, 2020.

During the introductory Board briefing, the Board members in attendance commented that the height at 85 feet was acceptable and appreciated the step down from the height of the Weyerhaeuser building across the alley. At the design briefing on February 12, 2020, the ARC indicated that the design was too differentiated from the surrounding historic buildings. They asked the applicant to further study the vocabulary of historic buildings, especially the buildings on the same block and to adjust the design to be more compatible with historic buildings. ARC members suggested the applicant look especially at vertical patterns, articulation and brick at the base and how alley facades are different than street facades. There were comments on whether the gasket element should be included and concern that it divided the building in half out of proportion of other existing. The Board/ARC has supported the residential use at each meeting.

ARC reviewed the application for final design during the meeting of September 30, 2020. The ARC said the change to the alley façade design and the addition of the brick at the base was a start to making the building more compatible with Pioneer Square but overall the design lacked compatibility. They said that even though the applicant had studied historic buildings qualities in Pioneer Square, it did not appear that the proposed design took cues from elements of historic buildings shown in the study. The ARC identified that the studies showed that buildings in Pioneer Square had a one or two story base and that for tall

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buildings, the base portion of the building was shorter in proportion to the building above it; contrarily, this proposed design visually divides the building in half. The applicant had said they chose the three-story base to nod to the two three story buildings that had once been on that site. ARC said they did not think the nod was successful and that the three story base made the proposed building out of scale with the other existing historic buildings with a one or two story base, and the building next door which is only one story. ARC thought the gasket did not have a relationship to the other existing buildings. ARC asked for an alternative design with the gasket lowered at least a floor or otherwise change the proportion of the base and top to be more similar to historic buildings. ARC indicated that the proposed building was not divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays nor did it have repetitive window sizes and placement as shown in the applicants building studies and indicated in the District Rules. ARC asked for an alternative with repetitive bays. ARC said that the proposed building is not a scale compatible with surrounding structures, especially the historic buildings. They did not see window proportions, floor heights, and street elevations and other elements of the building facades relate to the scale of the buildings in the immediate area as required by the code other than the datum line of the canopies. ARC pointed to previous scale studies in the applicant's packet that appeared more compatible with the District. While the project proposed a brick veneer on part of the façade, the ARC thought the color of the brick seems more white or a cold grey in many images and that that the existing buildings, even those that were lighter color had a warmer tone. They suggested providing an alternative brick in a warmer tone. The applicant said it may have been the color of the renderings. ARC acknowledged the applicant's argument to use hardy panels, a cheaper material, in order to produce a residential building. The ARC noted that the south façade is very prominent and asked that they consider either adding art or adjusting the colors or materials to improve the appearance of that façade.

ARC supported the Departures. They thought that it was important to maintain the historic alley width, they thought that a canopy only at the entrance emphasized the entrance similar to other buildings in the district and that most buildings did not have continuous canopies. They thought that the adjustment to the setback of the rooftop features made little visual difference.

ARC said that the building might be fine in another neighborhood, but the code requires proposed buildings to complement the historic character of the Pioneer Square Preservation District and this proposed building did not. They said there were too many elements that made the proposed building differentiated to the extent that the building design did not fit in to Pioneer Square; the design was not compatible. The ARC supported residential use so they hoped the applicant would continue to work with the Board on improved designs. The four ARC members present said that they would not recommend approval of the design as proposed.

The application has been revised. This application does not include the landscaping but does show the intention of adding a curbside garden to achieve the green factor: specifics of the landscaping will come back in a follow up application. The application also does not include artwork, but it shows the intention of the size and placement of the artwork, which will be a follow up application. Lighting and signage will also be a follow-up application. ARC members should specify where additional information or alternatives are needed or make a recommendation to the full board for approval or denial.

The goals of the District are also to preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the Pioneer Square area and the buildings therein, and to improve visual and urban relationships between existing and future buildings and structures. The ARC should consider how the design achieves or could better achieve those goals generally as well as the alignment with specific Rules and Regulations. The Board should make sure that to comment on all, but not limited to, the following topics in relation to Pioneer Square:

**Massing and Scale (of façade and details)**

“To complement and enhance the historic character of the District and to retain the quality and continuity of existing buildings.” How is the scale, including height of the proposed building, compatible with surrounding structures? How do window proportions, floor height, cornice line, street elevations, alley elevations and other elements of the building facades relate to the scale of the buildings in the immediate area, including the McCoys Firehouse building next door as well as other historic buildings within at least a block of the site? Are the height and setbacks of the rooftop features within the allowed height above the roof? (See departures below)

**Design**

“To complement and enhance the historic character of the District and to retain the quality and continuity of existing buildings.” Does the proposed building have horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels and are those division in proportion to the existing historic buildings? Does the proposed building have vertical division by pilasters or wide piers that form repetitive window bays? Does the street facade have common features such as heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement? Have other cues for design been taken from historic buildings in the District? While not duplicating historic buildings, discuss what makes this proposed building “visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District” and what makes it differentiated. Is it both compatible and differentiated?

**Materials and Colors**

Are the colors and materials of a quality and compatible with the neighboring buildings and the District generally.

## Uses

Are the uses allowed uses and preferred uses at street level?

## Views from Kobe Terrace

Are there impacts to views from Kobe Terrace?

## Departures

Alley width: Would ARC make a recommendation to keep the alley width as existing because there is one or more contributing building on the block that would not likely be demolished to complete the widening of the alley, or that the original historic width of the alley is part of the historic character of the District which should be maintained.

Modifications to rooftop features setbacks: setbacks can be modified after a sight line review by the Preservation Board to ensure that the features are minimally visible from public streets and parks within 300 feet of the structure. The applicant is asking for a modification to the set back of a rooftop feature that is 15 feet in height above the parapet to be less than 30 feet from the street and they are asking for the Board to not require a set back at the common wall line. Would ARC find that the rooftop feature is minimally visible and recommend the modification of the setback requirements?

Overhead weather protection: Does the Board find that most canopies in the District are not continuous and are limited storefront bays and entries and that other buildings have features such as canopies to identify the entry? Would the Board make a recommendation for a departure to continuous canopies to have the canopy limited to the entry?

**Draft Motion:** I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for:

Final design for new construction of an 85-foot tall building.

Uses: Ground floor – eating and drinking, lobby and building services

Upper floor - 77 residential units

Basement – eating and drinking, bike parking and storage

Rooftop deck

Materials: Grey brick veneer, black metal, fiber cement, vinyl windows

All per the plans, renderings and material and color samples shown.

This approval does not include the landscaping but does include the intention of adding a curbside garden to achieve the green factor: specifics of the landscaping at street level and rooftop will come back in a follow up application. The approval also does not include artwork, but it shows the intention of the size and placement of the artwork, the specific artwork will come back in a follow up application. Lighting and signage will also come back in a follow-up application.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the *October 21, 2020*

public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

**Code Citations:**

SMC 23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

SMC 23.66.100 - Creation of district, legislative findings and purpose

A. During the City of Seattle's relatively brief history, it has had little time in which to develop areas of consistent historical or architectural character. It is recognized that the Pioneer Square area of Seattle contains many of these rare attributes and consequently is an area of great historical and cultural significance. Further, the regional sports stadiums, constructed in and near the Pioneer Square area, and the traffic and activities that they generate have resulted in adverse impacts upon the social, cultural, historic and ethnic values of the Pioneer Square area. To preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the Pioneer Square area and the buildings therein; to return unproductive structures to useful purposes; to attract visitors to the City; to avoid a proliferation of vehicular parking and vehicular-oriented uses; to provide regulations for existing on-street and off-street parking; to stabilize existing housing, and encourage a variety of new and rehabilitated housing types for all income groups; to encourage the use of transportation modes other than the private automobile; to protect existing commercial vehicle access; to improve visual and urban relationships between existing and future buildings and structures, parking spaces and public improvements within the area; and to encourage pedestrian uses, there is established as a special review district, the Pioneer Square Preservation District. The boundaries of the District are shown on Map A for [23.66.100](#)<sup>[22]</sup> and on the Official Land Use Map.

SMC 23.66.120 - Permitted uses

A. All uses are permitted outright except those that are specifically prohibited by [Section 23.66.122](#) and those that are subject to special review as provided in [Section 23.66.124](#).

SMC 23.66.130 - Street-level uses

A.

1. Uses at street level in the area designated on Map B for [23.66.130](#) require the approval of the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board.

B. Preferred Street-level Uses.

1. Preferred uses at street level must be highly visible and pedestrian oriented. Preferred street-level uses either display merchandise in a manner that

contributes to the character and activity of the area, and/or promote residential uses, including but not limited to the following uses:

- a. Any of the following uses under 3,000 square feet in size: art galleries and other general sales and service uses, restaurants and other eating and drinking establishment uses, and lodging uses;

#### SMC 23.66.140 – Height

A. Maximum Height. Maximum structure height is regulated by [Section 23.49.178](#) Pioneer Square Mixed, structure height.

#### C. Rooftop features and additions to structures

1. The height limits established for the rooftop features described in this Section 23.66.140 may be increased by the average height of the existing street parapet or a historically substantiated reconstructed parapet on the building on which the rooftop feature is proposed.

3. The setbacks required for rooftop features may be modified by the Department of Neighborhoods Director, after a sight line review by the Preservation Board to ensure that the features are minimally visible from public streets and parks within 300 feet of the structure.

#### 4. Height limits for rooftop features

b. For existing structures, open railings, planters, clerestories, skylights, play equipment, parapets, and firewalls may extend up to 4 feet above the roof of the structure or the maximum height limit, whichever is less. For new structures, such features may extend up to 4 feet above the maximum height limit. No rooftop coverage limits apply to such features regardless of whether the structure is existing or new.

c. Solar collectors, excluding greenhouses, may extend up to 7 feet above the roof of the structure or the maximum height limit, whichever is less, with unlimited rooftop coverage, provided they are a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines. For new structures, solar collectors may extend up to 7 feet above the maximum height limit, except as provided in subsection 23.66.140.C.4.j.1, and provided that they are a minimum of 10 feet from all lot lines.

d. The following rooftop features may extend up to 8 feet above the roof or maximum height limit, whichever is less, if they are set back a minimum of 15 feet from the street and 3 feet from an alley. They may extend up to 15 feet above the roof if set back a minimum of 30 feet from the street. A setback may not be required at common wall lines subject to review by the Preservation Board and approval by the Department of Neighborhoods Director. The combined coverage of the

following listed rooftop features shall not exceed 15 percent of the roof area:

- 1) solar collectors, excluding greenhouses;
- 2) stair and elevator penthouses;
- 3) mechanical equipment;
- 4) minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices, except that height is regulated according to the provisions of [Section 23.57.014](#).

Additional combined coverage of these rooftop features, not to exceed 25 percent of the roof area, may be permitted subject to review by the Preservation Board and approval by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

g. Screening of rooftop features. Measures may be taken to screen rooftop features from public view subject to review by the Preservation Board and approval by the Department of Neighborhoods Director. The amount of rooftop area enclosed by rooftop screening may exceed the maximum percentage of the combined coverage of rooftop features listed in subsection 23.66.140.C.4.d. In no circumstances shall the height of rooftop screening exceed 15 feet above the maximum height limit or height of an addition permitted according to subsection 23.66.140.C.4.i or otherwise, whichever is higher.

D. New Structures. When new structures are proposed in the District, the Preservation Board shall review the proposed height of the structure and make recommendations to the Department of Neighborhoods Director who may require design changes to assure reasonable protection of views from Kobe Terrace Park.

SMC 23.66.150 - Structure setbacks

C. New structures or portions of structures located within Subarea C on Map C for [23.66.122](#) and [23.66.150](#) shall cover the full width of the lot along street lot lines and have street-facing facades that abut street lot lines for the full width of portions of a structure that are up to 100 feet in height. For structures that exceed 100 feet in height, all portions that exceed 100 feet in height shall be set back at least 15 feet from street lot lines.

D. For all Subareas, modifications to setback standards may be permitted by the Director of Neighborhoods following review and recommendation by the Preservation Board if the following criteria are met:

1. A larger or smaller setback will be compatible with and not adversely affect the streetscape or publicly-owned open space; and
2. A larger or smaller setback will be compatible with other design elements, such as bulk, size and profile, of the proposed building.

SMC23.53.030 G. Alley setbacks allows SDOT to waive or modify the alley dedication to widen the alley if “5. The alley is in a historic district or special review

district, and the Department of Neighborhoods Director finds, after review and recommendation by the appropriate review board, that the widening and/or improvement would be detrimental to the character and goals of the district; or 8. One (1) or more substantial principal structures on the same side of the block as the proposed project are located in the area needed for future expansion of the right-of-way and the structure(s)' condition and size make future widening of the remainder of the right-of-way unlikely,”

SMC 23.66.190 - Streets and sidewalks.

A. Review by the Preservation Board shall be required before any changes are permitted to sidewalk prism lights, sidewalk widths or street paving and curbs.

SMC 23.66.180 - Exterior building design.

To complement and enhance the historic character of the District and to retain the quality and continuity of existing buildings, the following requirements shall apply to exterior building design:

A. Materials. Unless an alternative material is approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director following Board review and recommendation, exterior building facades shall be brick, concrete tinted a subdued or earthen color, sandstone or similar stone facing material commonly used in the District. Aluminum, painted metal, wood and other materials may be used for signs, window and door sashes and trim, and for similar purposes when approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director as compatible with adjacent or original uses, following Board review and recommendation.

B. Scale. Exterior building facades shall be of a scale compatible with surrounding structures. Window proportions, floor height, cornice line, street elevations and other elements of the building facades shall relate to the scale of the buildings in the immediate area.

C. Awnings. Awnings shall be functional, serving as weather protection for pedestrians at street level, and shall overhang the sidewalk a minimum of five feet (5'). Awnings may be permitted on upper floors for the purpose of climate control. All awnings shall be of a design compatible with the architecture of buildings in the area.

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

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

In addition to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance and Rules, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the complete series of Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs developed by the National Park Service shall serve as guidelines for proposed exterior alterations and treatments, rehabilitation projects, and new construction. (7/99)



New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District. (7/99)  
Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

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. Site. The property line is the line of the building mass. Street facades are uniformly located at the front property lines, thus there is a strong street edge definition. Building cornices, bay windows and ornament project beyond the main wall surface of some facades.
- B. Design. Building design is generally typified by horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels. Facades may also be divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays. Street facades are also distinguished by heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement.
- C. Building materials. The most common facing materials are brick masonry and cut or rusticated sandstone, with limited use of terra cotta and tile. Wooden window sash, ornamental sheet metal, carved stone and wooden or cast iron storefronts are also typically used throughout the District. Synthetic stucco siding materials are generally not permitted. (7/99)
- D. 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)
- E. Building Base. Buildings are allowed a base of approximately 18-24 inches. Base materials should be concrete, sandstone, or granite, and may be poured, cut to fit or unit-paved. The color relationship between the sidewalk and building must be considered. Brick or tile materials should not be used except when existing walks are of the same material.
- H. Curbs. Where granite curbing presently exists, it will be the required replacement material. In other instances the same concrete and lampblack mixture used for the sidewalk will be used.

#### VIII. MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

The preferred location for mechanical systems is in the building interior. In cases where locating systems in the interior is not possible, exterior mechanical systems equipment, including but not limited to air conditioning units, compressors, boilers, generators, ductwork, louvers, wiring and pipes, shall be installed on non-primary building facades and/or roof tops. Mechanical equipment shall be installed in such a

manner that character-defining features of the building are not radically changed, damaged, obscured, or destroyed. Screening and/or painting of equipment may be required to diminish negative visual impacts. (7/99)

#### XVII. SIDEWALK TREATMENT

##### A. Standards

Sidewalk paving and improvements shall be completed with one pound lamp-black per cubic yard of concrete, scored at two-foot intervals. This material shall be used for all projects of 1/4 block or greater size. On small projects, if it is feasible, sidewalk material may be selected as for all projects of 1/4 block or greater size. On small projects, if it is feasible, sidewalk material may be selected to match adjacent sidewalks in color, pattern and texture.

#### XVIII. ALLEYS

##### A. Alley Paving. Alleys are to be paved with unit paving materials.

Three types are acceptable in the District: remolded paving bricks, cobbles, and interlocking brick-tone pavers. Alleys should be repaired or re-paved in the original unit material when these materials remain available. All other alleys should be paved with remolded brick. The center drainage swale, peculiar to alleys, should be preserved as part of alley re-paving. Unit paved alleys should not be patched with any material other than approved unit paving.

##### B. Alley Lighting. Wall mounted fixtures shall be installed at appropriate heights on alley building facades to improve public safety and encourage positive activity and uses in alleys. (7/03) The Board may require a project to include alley lighting in the redevelopment.

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

##### E. AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies are structures attached to buildings above storefront windows and entrances to provide weather protection. Awnings are light-weight structures constructed of metal framing with fabric or vinyl covering. Canopies are heavier, more permanent structures constructed of rigid materials such as metal or metal framing with glass. (7/99) Those buildings wishing to use awnings or canopies shall adhere to the following requirements:

3. Canopies that are compatible in design, scale, materials, color, details, and method of attachment with the building and that do not display a false historical appearance are permitted. (7/03)
4. Awnings and canopies covering more than one story are not allowed. Distinctive architectural features shall not be covered, nor shall installation damage the structure.
5. Awnings and canopies must serve a functional purpose, and therefore shall project a minimum of five (5) feet horizontally. (7/03)
6. Internally illuminated awnings or canopies are not permitted. Neon is not allowed on awnings or canopies. (7/03)

## Secretary of Interior's Standards

9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

### Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings Concerns

#### As it applies to adding a building to a historic district

*Inherent in all of the guidance is the concept that an addition needs to be subordinate to the historic building.*

A new addition must **preserve significant historic materials, features and form, and it must be compatible but differentiated from the historic building.** To achieve this, it is necessary to carefully consider the placement or location of the new addition, and its **size, scale and massing** when planning a new addition. To preserve a property's historic character, a new addition must be visually distinguishable from the historic building. This does not mean that the addition and the historic building should be glaringly different in terms of design, materials and other visual qualities. Instead, the new addition should take its design cues from, but not copy, the historic building.

Other ways of differentiating a new addition from the historic building may be used as long as they maintain the primacy of the historic building. Working within these basic principles still allows for a broad range of architectural expression that can range from stylistic similarity to contemporary distinction. The recommended design approach for an addition is one that neither copies the historic building exactly nor stands in stark contrast to it.

### Applying the Standards to common rehabilitation concerns - New Construction within the Boundaries of Historic Properties

#### As it applies to adding a building to a historic district

It is possible to add new construction within the boundaries of historic properties if site conditions allow and if the design, density, and placement of the new construction respect the overall character of the site. According to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation – Standard 9](#) in particular – and the [Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](#), new construction needs to be built in a manner that protects the integrity of the historic building(s) and the property's setting.

In addition, the following must be considered:

- Related new construction – including buildings, driveways, parking lots, landscape improvements and other new features – must not alter the historic character of a property. A property's historic function must be evident even if there is a change of use.

- The location of new construction should be considered carefully in order to follow the setbacks of historic buildings and to avoid blocking their primary elevations. New construction should be placed away from or at the side or rear of historic buildings and must avoid obscuring, damaging, or destroying character-defining features of these buildings or the site.
- Protecting the historic setting and context of a property, including the degree of open space and building density, must always be considered when planning new construction on an historic site. This entails identifying the formal or informal arrangements of buildings on the site, and whether they have a distinctive urban, suburban, or rural character. For example, a historic building traditionally surrounded by open space must not be crowded with dense development.
- In properties with multiple historic buildings, the historic relationship between buildings must also be protected. Contributing buildings must not be isolated from one another by the insertion of new construction.
- As with new additions, the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of new construction on the site of a historic building must be compatible with those of the historic building. When visible and in close proximity to historic buildings, the new construction must be subordinate to these buildings. New construction should also be distinct from the old and must not attempt to replicate historic buildings elsewhere on site and to avoid creating a false sense of historic development.
- The limitations on the size, scale, and design of new construction may be less critical the farther it is located from historic buildings.
- As with additions, maximizing the advantage of existing site conditions, such as wooded areas or drops in grade, that limit visibility is highly recommended.
- Historic landscapes and significant viewsheds must be preserved. Also, significant archeological resources should be taken into account when evaluating the placement of new construction, and, as appropriate, mitigation measures should be implemented if the archeological resources will be disturbed.

Issued: October 14, 2020

Genna Nashem  
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