



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 129/22

Staff REPORT

for Board meeting July 6, 2022

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.

070622.21 **Nordic Cold Storage**
548 1st Ave S

Briefing on proposed rehabilitation of the existing building and two-story addition.

Staff report: There was a briefing before the Board on April 20th. The Board requested more street level view studies from looking down the block. The Nordic Cold storage/Carston's Brothers Cold Storage is listed as historic contributing to the Pioneer Square Skid Row National Register District.

The building did not have additional floors that were removed.

The proposed addition is not a penthouse per SMC 23.66.140

Preservation Brief 14 suggests:

- A new addition should be simple and unobtrusive in design and should be distinguished from the historic building—a recessed connector can help to differentiate the new from the old.
- A new addition should not be highly visible from the public right of way; a rear or other secondary elevation is usually the best location for a new addition.
- The construction materials and the color of the new addition should be harmonious with the historic building materials.
- The new addition should be smaller than the historic building—it should be subordinate in both size and design to the historic building.

The same guidance should be applied when designing a compatible **rooftop** addition, plus the following:

- A rooftop addition is generally not appropriate for a one, two or three-story building—and often is not appropriate for taller buildings.
- A rooftop addition should be minimally visible.
- Generally, a rooftop addition must be set back at least one full bay from the primary elevation of the building, as well as from the other elevations if the building is freestanding or highly visible.

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

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- Generally, a rooftop addition should not be more than one story in height.
- Generally, a rooftop addition is more likely to be compatible on a building that is adjacent to similarly sized or taller buildings.

Note: Seen in the existing conditions photos is an addition on a neighboring building, the Redoo/Washington Shoe at 542 1st Ave S. The record is not clear as to how addition was approved. The minutes reflect that the Board considered it a unique project within a unique circumstance. The building was heavily damaged in the earthquake. There were several ARC meetings and at least three Certificates of Approval changing the approach to the earthquake repairs eventually including the rebuilding of the third floor. A 4th floor addition was eventually approved at 18 feet tall, one floor with a mezzanine that reads as two story. It is set back 12 ft. The minutes reflect that the applicant said the building was “neither landmarked nor historic, it is just part of the historic fabric of Pioneer Square.” The building is a historic, contributing building to the national register district and there is no evidence that the Board found the building to the contrary. There was also a statement that implied that the addition complied with the code for penthouses when it does not. While parking is no longer required, it appears most of the conversation in the minutes was about the Board waiving required parking that was triggered by the addition.

While the minutes do not reflect consideration of Preservation Brief 14, the addition may have been considered compliant in that it was mid-block and had taller building to each side and that the building with the addition was not taller than the other existing buildings though it is highly visible.

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.

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;
- C. Discouraged Street-level Uses.
 - 1. The following are discouraged at street level in the area designated on Map B for 23.66.130:
 - 2. Discouraged uses may be approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director after review and recommendation by the Preservation Board if an applicant demonstrates that the proposed use is compatible with uses preferred at street level.
- D. Conditions on Street-level Uses. Approved street level uses in the area designated on Map B for 23.66.130 are subject to the following conditions:
 - 1. No use may occupy more than 50 percent of the street-level frontage of a block that is 20,000 square feet or more in area;

23.66.140 - 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
 - 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;
 - f. Residential and office penthouses
 - 1) Residential penthouses may cover a maximum of 50 percent of the total roof surface and may extend up to 8 feet above the roof if set back a

minimum of 15 feet from the street property line, or 12 feet above the roof if set back a minimum of 30 feet from the street property line.

- 2) Office penthouses are permitted only if the footprint of the existing structure is greater than 10,000 square feet and the structure is at least 60 feet in height. When permitted, office penthouses shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from all property lines and may cover a maximum of 50 percent of the total roof surface. Office penthouses may extend up to 12 feet above the roof of the structure and shall be functionally integrated into the existing structure.
- 3) The combined height of the structure and a residential penthouse or office penthouse, if permitted, shall not exceed the maximum height limit for that area of the District in which the structure is located.

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)

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or

features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. (7/99) In considering rehabilitation projects, what is critical is the stabilization of significant historical detailing, respect for the original architectural style, and compatibility of scale and materials.

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

- 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)
- F. Additions. Additional stories to existing buildings are discouraged unless they were original to the structure.

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards will be applied taking into consideration the economic and technical feasibility of each project.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding

conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
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.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Preservation Briefs

[Preservation Brief 9 The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows](#)

[Preservation Brief 14 Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings](#)

Interpreting the Standards

[Altered or Missing Storefronts](#)

[New openings in secondary elevations or introducing new openings in blank walls](#)

[Adding new openings in secondary elevations](#)

[Rooftop Additions](#)

Designing compatible storefronts

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