

Seattle Design Commission

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

07 July 2005

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Karen Kiest

Hannah McIntosh

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Transportation Projects
Broadview Library Expansion
Four Seasons Hotel

Convened: 9:30am

Adjourned: 2:30pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Pam Beyette
Karen Kiest
Hannah McIntosh
Anindita Mitra
Sheri Olson
Nic Rossouw
Dennis Ryan
Darrell Vange

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Joan James
Tom Iurino
Emily Podolak



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Development

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07 July 2005 Project: Transportation Projects

Phase: Staff Briefings

Previous Reviews:

Presenters: Design Commission Staff

Attendees: Katherine Fountain, Legislative – Council Staff

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 219/169)

SR 520 Improvement Project

The Commission reviewed the Council's proposed legislation on the SR 520 Project Guiding Principles and agreed to compose a memo to Richard Conlin, Chair of the Council Transportation Committee encouraging the Transportation Committee to consider adding several clauses to the Council legislation that reinforces the Commission's role of design review and key concerns with the project to date.

Monorail

The Commission's Monorail Review Panel (MRP) members provided an overview of the MRP meeting held on June 27, 2005. The Commission reviewed the letter written by MRP to the Mayor and Council and, by a vote of 8 to 1, agreed to compose a separate letter from the Commission focused on their design concerns with the project. They could use the letter to support the issues addressed by MRP. They also discussed the future of the MRP, its role and the full Commission's role in the design review process of the Monorail Project. They decided to leave the MRP as it currently exists and revisit the issue after further information is available regarding the fate of the Monorail Project.

Viaduct/Seawall

The planned discussion for the Viaduct/Seawall Project was tabled until next meeting due to lack of time.

07 July 2005 Project: Broadview Library Expansion

Phase: Pre Design

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Brad Miller, Miller Hayashi Architects
Justine Kim, Seattle Public Library
Alex Harris, Seattle Public Library

Attendees:

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221)

Action: The Commission recommends approval of early concept design and has the following comments and suggestions :

- appreciates the proponents thorough analysis of the broader context, the site and the existing building;
- encourages the proponents to explore ways to integrate the landscape into the library, strengthening the connection between the building inside and the site outside;
- encourages creating buffers between the parking area and the library, and the library and the existing residential properties;
- supports the proponents' design direction towards creating a civic presence both physical and visual on Greenwood Ave. and encourages the proponents' proposal to create a new pedestrian entry off of Greenwood Ave;
- encourages exploring sidewalk and street improvements to enhance a civic presence. The Commission commends the proposed placement of public spaces within the building expansion as they maximize the building volume and create a civic space on the inside of the building as well as on the outside;
- encourages preserving the unique character of the existing building but suggests increasing the amount of natural light, where feasible, into the old building either by lifting the flaps of the roof line or puncturing windows into the existing masonry;
- supports the proponents' efforts to reduce the amount of impervious materials on the site recognizing how it would support the Piper Creek Watershed's health;
- encourages proponents to explore sustainable design approaches including the use of solar panels or construction of a green roof.

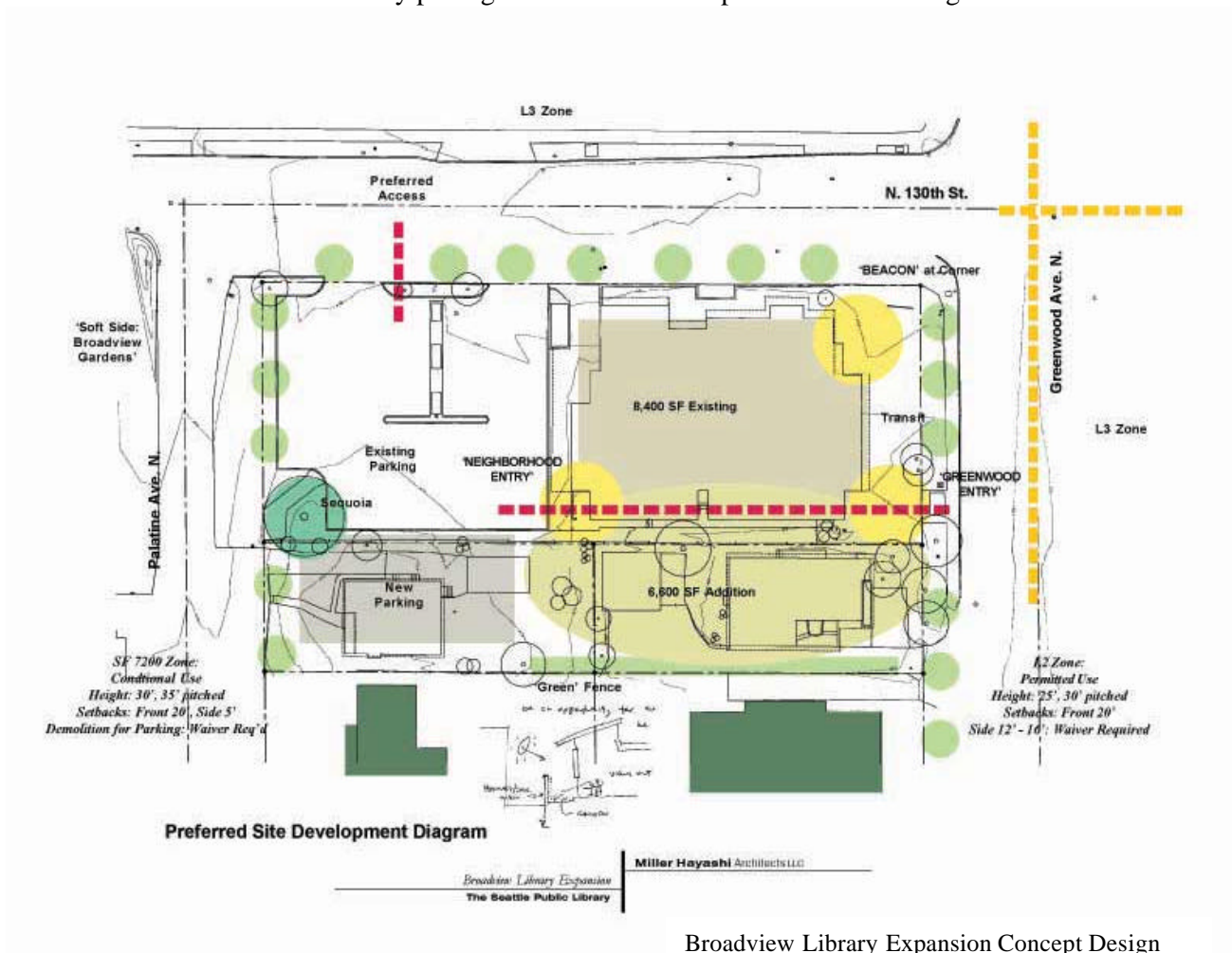
Presentation

The site is located at 130th St. and Greenwood Ave. in an area with changing demographics. West side of Greenwood is mainly single family residential houses built during the 1950s and 1960s. The east side of Greenwood is increasingly multifamily, 3-4 story units. There is also a concentration of retirement communities and extended care facilities in the area. The change in demographics has influenced the needs of the library and they hope to improve facilities for an older population and multilingual population. The proponents design goal is for the proposed

15,000 sq.ft. library to meet the needs of the community for the next 30-40 years. The expansion adds 6,595 sq.ft to the building.

The existing building was built in 1976 during a period of exploring vernacular; it sits off of Greenwood Ave 25 feet, blending in with the single family residential homes at the time. The building structure and interior should be updated, it is under-insulated and needs an envelope redo, and the mechanical system must be replaced. The natural lighting in the building is also poor and will be addressed in the new design either through lifting the roof line or puncturing windows into the existing mortar. The building is often referred to as a long house because of the artwork inside the building.

The design goals include creating a civic sense to the property and building by strengthening entrance and arrival. The Broadview neighborhood has a strong tradition of gardening; desire to reflect this in the design by including garden look around building and softening the distinction between inside and outside by pulling elements of landscape inside the building.



Broadview Library Expansion Concept Design

The existing entrance to the library is from the parking lot. The site is currently split in zoning and is conditional use with the parking lot on a site that was once residential.

The proponents explored two massing options:

1. Expansion to the west: major drawback was that exit out of parking lot would be on to Palatine St. a residential street
2. Expansion to the south: the preferred option

The expansion to the south will include a new pedestrian entry off of Greenwood Ave to increase civic sense: accessibility and transparency. The proponents also want to decrease the amount of impervious surface on the site and explore natural drainage strategies, as it is located in the Piper Creek Watershed.

The Seattle Public Libraries is currently working with Seattle Department of Transportation as to preferred street improvements and will provide an update during the next presentation as to their progress.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Asks if the massing studies fit to existing zoning requirements
 - Yes
- Suggests puncturing walls to allow more natural light in the library or lifting flaps of roof lines
- Asks about public process
 - They held Hopes and Dreams meeting in February 2005 to get feedback from the community. Feedback from community included more daylight, larger presence on Greenwood Ave, and larger community room and will hold second public meeting.
- Asks for clarification on the library programming
 - Plans to double the size of the facility, meet users needs of present and have flexibility to meet users needs until 2025
- Asks how library will respond to needs of older populations
 - Through library collections and services, not much change to the structure of the building itself but small gestures addressing acoustics, shading,
- Expresses appreciation for thorough site analysis and context
- Asks if there will be artist involvement
 - Yes, the selection process will start tomorrow
- Believes that the linear scheme of the expansion to the south has pros and cons: it shields parking better but the desired central site line through building is challenged
- Asks to explain streetscape approach
 - It will include parking curbs and sidewalks but need to be strategic about how much and where they are most appropriate because of tight budget, will extend sidewalks if they can
- Asks if proponents have pursued LEED or included a sustainability approach/technique
 - Do not have plans to pursue LEED certification because of the lengthiness of the process and the cost; also it is difficult on expansions to make major changes. Does want to incorporate sustainability into design and will explore techniques in construction process and explore natural drainage techniques
- Suggests considering a partnership with City Light to acquire solar panels

07 July 2005 Project: Four Seasons Hotel

Phase: Street Use Permit Exceptions

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Tony Puma, Seattle Hotel Group
Robert Bruckner, NBBJ
Jim Tully, NBBJ
Tom Berger, Berger Partnership

Attendees: Paula Raso, 98 Union Resident and Board Member
Roger Nyhus, Seattle Hotel Group
Keith Miller, Seattle Department of Transportation
George Dragseth, Seattle Department of Transportation
Stan Gent, Seattle Steam
Julie Carpenter, Seattle Department of Transportation
Guy Michaelson, Berger Partnership
Nick McDaniel, NBBJ
John Hempelmann, Cairncross & Hempelmann
Bill Bain, NBBJ

Time: 1.5 hours

(SDC Ref. # 170)

Action: The Commission recommends conditional approval of the street use permit exceptions based on the following considerations and recommendations, but would like to see the refinements to the project in a follow up review prior to making their recommendation final. The Commission:

- **supports the proposed public stair design and appreciates the proponents' clear, thorough presentation and rigorous investigation of how to create a span across the alley as an architectural element, as opposed to just providing a foot bridge connection;**
- **asks that proponents explore ways to amplify the public nature of Union Street and to clarify the public right of way and use of the space;**
- **asks that the proponents consider widening the sidewalk on the south side of Union St. to match the existing 12 foot width, and keeping the north side sidewalk at a similar width;**
- **encourages proponents to simplify the design elements of the space in a way that will clarify the space as public space and provide some clear way of attracting people from 1st Avenue west to the edge of the platform and to the great view beyond**

Project Presentation

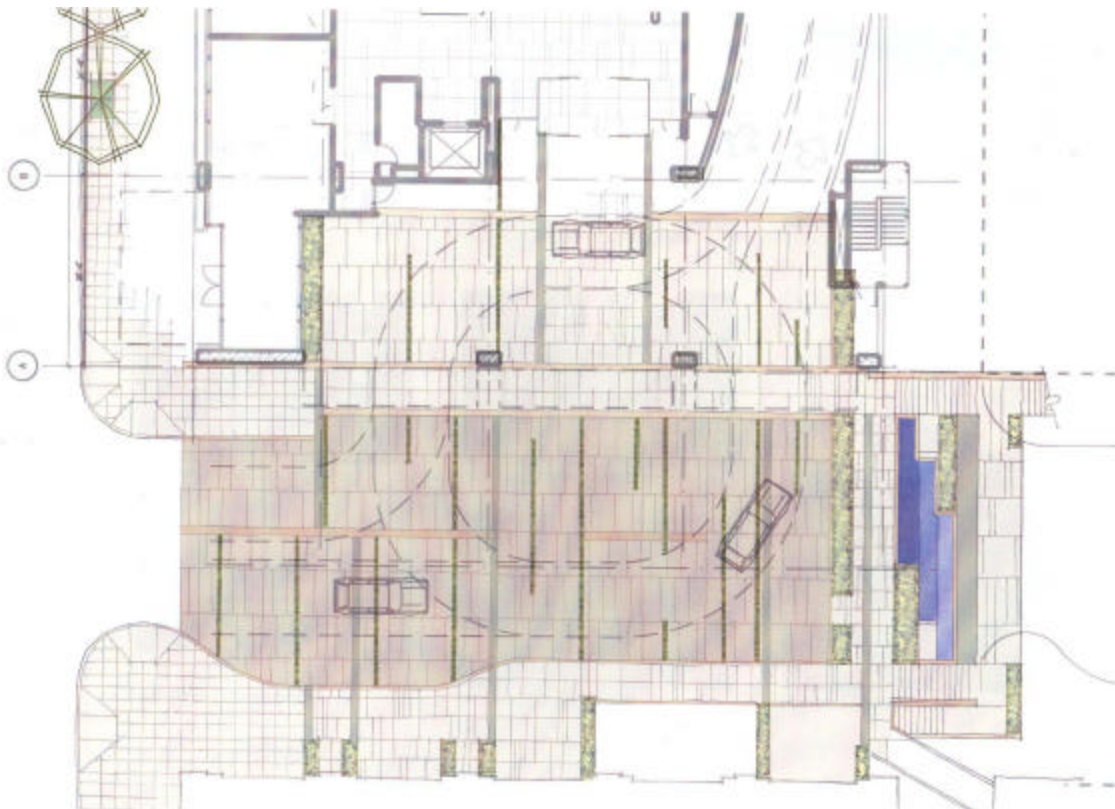
The project has been reviewed five times by the Downtown Design Review Board and this is the first presentation to the Design Commission. The proposal includes a 21 story building 10 floors containing a total of 150 hotel rooms and approximately 35-40 residential units on floors above the hotel floors. Parking for 100 vehicles will be accessible off of Union and an additional 100

spaces will be accessible off of Post Alley. The site is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Union street and 1st Ave, bounded by 1st Ave, Unions Street, Post Alley and a developed commercial building on the parcel to the south. There is an approximate elevation drop of 40 feet on Union Street east of Post Alley.

The mayor asked for pedestrian improvements including a hill climb and public stair to connect to the waterfront. The proposed public stairs would span across Post Alley and connect to the south side of lower Union Street adjacent to the City of Seattle Transfer Station and across the street from 98 Union. The proposed stairs would replace existing public stairs currently located on the north side of Union Street.

Proposed Concept Design for Union Plaza

The plaza proposed for the upper level of Union St. would serve as valet entry to the hotel. The design responds to two expected types of traffic that enter the area, 1. traffic that makes a mistake and 2. traffic that arrives with a purpose, to enter hotel/valet parking. The proponents suggest a loop drive for the plaza that would allow the traffic that makes a mistake to circle around and return to 1st Avenue and provides a pull out area for valet parking to admit cars. The material of the plaza and streetscape is extended out from the hotel lobby to create a balcony courtyard feel overlooking the waterfront. Green seams of either grass or green stone extend lines between the lobby and the plaza creating further connection between the spaces. Street lighting runs perpendicular to the plaza material at ground level and lights connection from 1st Ave. west towards the balcony and stair way. Plantings create green edges along the buildings and at the balcony end where they embrace a water feature and provide a buffer between the plaza and the public stairs down to the waterfront.



Union Plaza Concept Design

The proponents explored three design concepts for the public stairs: staggered, switchback, and long narrow. The preferred concept was the long narrow staircase as it was narrower and less intrusive than the other options and provided more drama and experience for the user than the standard switchback approach. The stairs would be composed of glass and concrete and a clump of trees would be sited at the landing of the stairs on Union St. and Western Ave. The proposed stairs would be built ideally without columns increasing safety, visibility, and allowing a lighter presence on the site.



Concept design of hill climb assist and connection to the water front

Public Comments

Paula Raso, 98 Union Resident and Board Member, is looking forward to the demolition of the existing stairs and the creation of the open plaza/courtyard area that will be more positive for resident use.

Stan Gent, President of Seattle Steam, is very supportive of everything that is going on in the project but asks that the project not limit/constrain vehicle access to their site.

Commissioner Comments and Questions

- Asks if the existing stairway is public
 - Yes, it is a required public access
- Asks how design will invite visitors and what are the visual cues
 - The balcony and water's edge is visible from 1st Ave.
- Suggests that proponents explore ways to attract people from 1st Avenue west to the edge of the platform and to the great view beyond

- Believes that the design signals private not public use
- Agrees, encourages proponents to explore the pedestrian/public relationship of the plaza
- Believes that it is over designed and suggests editing it back towards clear public space qualities
- Believes that it is an improvement over the existing stair situation/orientation
- Suggests getting rid of flower planters because they are distracting
- Asks what are the existing streetscape conditions
 - There is a 4' wide sidewalk to the north, 8' at the overlook and a 12' wide sidewalk on the south side of street.
- Asks if there is existing ADA access
 - There is in an elevator between floors
- Asks who maintains the site
 - The private owner will be responsible through an agreement with SDOT
- Questions the location of the clump of trees at the base of the stairway