



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISR 168/17

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, August 22, 2017

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Bush Asia Center
409 Maynard Avenue S.
Basement meeting room

Board Members Present

Eliza Chan
Sergio Legon-Talamoni
Carol Leong
Tiernan Martin, Chair
Herman Setijono

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Stephanie Hsie, Vice Chair
Valerie Tran

Chair Tiernan Martin called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

082217.1 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

082217.11 706 S. King St. – Bing Kung Bo Leung Building
Applicant: Paul Wu, Wu Architecture

Request for fire escape removal on the alley façade. Scope of work includes removing the anchor bolts, where possible. Where the bolts will remain, the contractors will carefully grind bolts flush with the wall surface. Voids will be patched with masonry grout to match existing grout. Exhibits included photographs and plans. The building is historically called the Norway Hotel/New American Hotel. The Bing Kung Bo Leung Building was constructed in 1916. It is a contributing building within the District. The building is located within the Asian Design Character District. The fire escape appears to be original to the building.

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

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Ms. Leong arrived at 4:35 pm.

Applicant Comment:

Paul Wu explained they want to remove the fire escape to prevent access for taggers. He said that the fire escape is decommissioned, windows are screwed/boarded shut, and it is not needed for life-safety. He said they will remove the fire escape and do some clean up. He said the fire escape is located on a vacated alley on private property.

Mr. Martin asked if there were reasons, other than for mitigating graffiti, to remove the fire escape.

Mr. Wu said that it is unsafe and there is no functional need. He said there are other ornate fire escapes in the district, but this one just has flat bars.

Mr. Martin asked if they explored removing just the lower portion and leaving the rest intact.

Mr. Wu said it is possible to remove the elements, but he didn't see a point in doing so.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said it is straightforward.

Public Comment:

Bernie Kay asked if they had considered covering the lower part so it is not usable.

Mr. Wu reiterated that it no longer qualifies as an escape route, noting the difference with the West Kong Yick, which is a means of egress.

Mr. Martin asked staff about other removals in the district.

Ms. Frestedt said she could think of three considered by the Board in the recent past: the Publix, the Republic, and here. She said in some instances fire escapes can be considered character-defining features. Some have had modifications made so that firefighters know it is not an access / egress stair. She noted that treads/ risers are removed as done at the Milwaukee.

Mr. Martin said considerations include: the location of the fire escape, visibility, prominence; active and repeated vandalism; ornateness of features; and if the fire escape was there at the time of construction of the building.

Ms. Leong asked about Fire Department (SFD) perspective.

Ms. Frestedt said that certification by the SFD is required to maintain it at a certain level of stability. SFD is aware that this is a decommissioned fire escape. She said if it is no longer used as a means of egress the Fire Dept.

referred to removal for fire fighter and resident safety. She said that at the Milwaukee it was modified so that it is clear it is not usable.

Mr. Martin said that safety criteria is not under board purview. He said the board should consider what options have been explored and how visible it is. He said this is a narrow, non-public alley and this fire escape doesn't add much to the character of the building, compared to others.

Ms. Frestedt said each is looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Setijono noted modification may involve lead abatement.

Mr. Martin said the Publix went through the process and explained the reasoning behind that decision.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said the applicant has a logical reason to remove it. He said that vandalism contributes to the deterioration of the building's aesthetics. He said there is sufficient egress and the property to the east could be developed to the property line. He said it is not visible nor is it in the public right of way.

Ms. Leong agreed and said each is reviewed on a case-by-case basis with regard to location and visibility and other qualifications. She said that there are other means of egress here. She said, in terms of future proposals for fire escape removal, she would like to see future applicants speak to safety issues, so that the Board has a comprehensive understanding of other means of egress.

Ms. Chan echoed the other comments. She said removal is appropriate and will help preserve the character of the building by preventing it from being further damaged by graffiti.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for Exterior Alterations. The location of the fire escape is on a private alley; the request for removal comes from vandalism concerns and the condition of the building going forward; board looked at ornateness and the age of feature.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the August 22, 2017 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

The proposed exterior alterations meet the following sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance and applicable Design Guidelines:**

SMC 23.66.030 – Certificates of approval – Application, review and appeals

National Park Service Preservation Brief #17 – Architectural Character - Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character (attached).

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

#2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

MM/SC/SLT/HS 5:0:0 Motion carried.

They are working to address the north side graffiti on the penthouse overrun.

Ming Fung, property owner representative, said the west side of the penthouse is wood; the other sides are brick.

082217.2 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt said that election materials will be mailed soon. She said that three positions are open: two resident/tenant/community member, and one business owner.

Ms. Frestedt asked board members for input on the set up / configuration of the meeting room to enhance visibility and participation by the public. She spoke about implementing use of comment cards, similar to the Design Review Board, which allows individuals who don't wish to give spoken comment at public meetings, an opportunity to submit feedback.

The Board offered the following suggestions: to lay out the process and format of the meeting, so that members of the public better understand the sequence; providing an overview of the criteria considered by the Board (code/guidelines/Standards); providing a recap of past meetings/briefings on a project, and making a staff summary available to the Board in advance.

Adjourn

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