



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 119/24

ARC/Staff Report

ARC meeting May 8, 2024

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.

050824.23 600 Alaskan

Applicant: Ron Wright, architect

Proposed: Placement of waste dumpsters and construction of screening

ARC/ Staff report: Staff had originally reported the use of the vacant parcel on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way for a notice of violation last year for using the site for garbage and recycling storage without a Certificate of Approval and which is prohibited as a street level use in the preservation district. In addition, code requires garbage to be stored on the lot in which it is produced. After the Notice of Violation was issued by SDCI, the property owner asked the for violation to be reconsidered. SDCI determined that because the parcels were all owned by the same property owner that the garbage was an accessory use rather than a primary use and that together the parcels were a lot. They determined that locating the garbage on the parcel was not a violation but not screening the garbage was a violation. Note that SDCI did not establish the use or determine that the dumpster had to be in this location only that they had to be screened.

The proposed location of the garbage storage is is on private property adjacent to the refurbished Alaskan way. It is on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way and is across from the entry and exit for the Seattle Ferry. The applicant claims that the location of the garbage storage was dictated by the Office of the Waterfront however the office of the Waterfront says they did not dictate where the garbage would be stored but they were required to accommodate the garbage pick. They installed a ramp at a location based on where the garbage was stored next to the 619 Western building and provided me with a site plan showing that. Google images also show that is where garbage the garbage was stored before being located to this location. The Office of the Waterfront has also reached out to me because the current location that garbage dumpsters was causing damage because the

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pick was using the ADA ramp instead of the ramp and was a potential safety issue. When SDCI determined that the location was not a violation the Office of the Waterfront submitted for a Certificate of Approval for installation of bollards next to the ADA ramp so that pedestrians could pass through, but the ADA ramp could not be used for the dumpster pick up.

The applicant is proposing to leave the back side of the garbage dumpsters unscreened. They are interpreting that the requirement for the screening only require screening on the side where there is a public right of way, however the code say the garbage storage has to be screened from “public view” rather than from the public right of way. The application does not contain any photos or renderings from Yesler looking across the patio to the side only from the angles where they proposed to screen. The greenery put in by the hotel would not be considered screening as the property owner is responsible for providing their own screening and we would not be able to require the hotel to keep the greenery in place to screen the garbage dumpsters.

The applicant is proposing the material and colors used in another location along the Waterfront but outside of the Pioneer Square Preservation District. The Board could consider if this material is compatible with Pioneer Square and specific context of this location. I am not aware of any other location screened garbage dumpsters in the District for examples. Most of Pioneer Square is “dumpster free” meaning garbage and recycling is stored inside they put out bags or bins for pick up just before the pick up arrives but I do not know why this area is not “dumpster free”. In addition, all new construction and significant rehabilitations are required to have interior garbage rooms.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

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.

23.66.100 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 23.66.100¹ and on the Official Land Use Map.

C. Reasons for Designating the Pioneer Square Preservation District.

1. **Historic Significance.** The Pioneer Square Preservation District is unique because it is the site of the beginning of The City of Seattle. The area also retains much of the original architecture and artifacts of its early history. The District has played a significant role in the development of Seattle, the Puget Sound region and The State of Washington. It was the first location of industry, business and homes in early Seattle and the focus of commerce and transportation for more than a half century.
 2. **Architectural Significance.** As a collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings of similar materials, construction techniques and architectural style, the District is unique, not only to the City but to the country as well. Most of the buildings within the District embody the distinctive characteristics of the Late Victorian style. Many buildings are the work of one architect, Elmer H. Fisher. For these and other reasons, the buildings combine to create an outstanding example of an area that is distinguishable in style, form, character and construction representative of its era.
 3. **Social Diversity.** The District represents an area of unique social diversity where people from many income levels and social strata live, shop and work. It is an
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area in which social services, including missions, low-income housing and service agencies exist.

4. **Business Environment.** The District is an area of remarkable business diversity. The street level of the area north of S. King Street is pedestrian-oriented, with its storefronts occupied primarily by specialty retail shops, art galleries, restaurants and taverns. The upper floors of buildings in the historic core are occupied by professional offices, various types of light manufacturing, and housing for persons of many income groups. The area south of S. King Street includes the stadium's north parking lot, a number of structures occupied by light manufacturing and warehousing use, and several structures converted to office, residential and mixed use. The stadium's north parking lot may be redeveloped to accommodate a mix of uses, including a substantial amount of housing. The ongoing restoration and sensitive rehabilitation of many District structures, combined with proposed compatible new construction, will continue to enhance the District's economic climate.
5. **Educational Value.** The restoration and preservation of the District will yield information of educational significance regarding the way of life and the architecture of the late nineteenth-century as well as adding interest and color to the City. Restoration of the District will preserve the environment that was characteristic of an important era of Seattle's history.
6. **Geographic Location.** The District is uniquely situated adjacent to Seattle's waterfront, the central business district, the International District, and sports stadium and exhibition center facilities.

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:
 - a. Any use occupying more than 50 percent of any block front;

- b. Any of the following with gross floor area over 3,000 square feet: general sales and services uses, eating and drinking establishment uses, and lodging uses;
 - c. All other uses with gross floor area over 10,000 square feet;
 - d. Professional services establishments or offices that occupy more than 20 percent of any block front; and
 - e. Parking garages that are not accessory to preferred uses.
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;

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

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.

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.

Issued: May 2, 2024
Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator