

Members

Duke York, *Chair*
Katie Chase, *Vice-Chair*
JD Elquist
Chris Granfield
Jonah Jensen
Daniel Rahe
Lysa Schloesser
James Steel
Jeff Williams

Ross Buffington, *Wedge Neighborhood Ex-Officio*
Marshall McClintock, *North Slope Ex-Officio*

Staff

Reuben McKnight, *Historic Preservation Officer*
Lauren Hoogkamer, *Historic Preservation Coordinator*



MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

Date: July 23, 2014

Location: 747 Market, Tacoma Municipal Bldg, Conference 248

Commission Members in Attendance:

Duke York Chair
Katie Chase, Vice Chair
Chris Granfield
Ross Buffington
Marshall McClintock
James Steel
Jeff Williams

Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight
Lauren Hoogkamer
Elliott Barnett

Others Present:

Kristine Matthews
Chris Storey

Commission Members Absent:

Lysa Schloesser
JD Elquist
Jonah Jensen
Daniel Rahe

Chair Duke York called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

2. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Meeting Minutes (7/9/14)

The minutes of July 9, 2014 were approved as submitted.

B. Administrative Review

i. 1415 N 5th Street (chimney)

The administrative review was approved.

3. SPECIAL TAX VALUATION

A. 820 N Ainsworth (North Slope Historic District)

ANALYSIS

Property Eligibility:

Rehabilitation Cost Claimed:

Assessed Improvement Value Prior to Rehabilitation:

Rehabilitation percentage of assessed value:

Project Period:

Appropriateness of Rehabilitation:

Contributing Property, North Slope Historic District

\$166,292

\$170,200

98%

March 2014 to June 2014 (4 months)

Whole house renovation including removal of vinyl siding, new roof, replaced driveway, new systems, foundation repair, full insulation, partial new windows, and new finishes, including floors, paint, drywall, and fixtures. Work was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on March 12, 2014.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed the itemized expense sheet per the Commission bylaws for STV cost eligibility and recommends approval of this application in the amount of \$166,292.

Jeff Williams recused himself prior to the discussion. There were no questions or comments.

There was a motion:

"I move that the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission approve the special tax valuation application for 820 N Ainsworth."

Motion: Chase

Second: York

Motion carried

4. DESIGN REVIEW

A. 1701 Pacific (Union Station Conservation District)

BACKGROUND

The Tacoma Art Museum (TAM), at 1701 Pacific Avenue, is located in the Union Station Conservation District. The current proposal is for a new sign system, which will include replacing existing signs and adding new signs. The sign scheme includes replacing permanent entrance signs on Pacific Avenue; replacing directional signs on Pacific Avenue and Hood Street; replacing the east-facing sign on the building; as well as a new architectural canopy; three new poster kiosks on Pacific Avenue; and a new sign on the south face of the new museum wing.

ACTION REQUESTED

Approval of the above scope of work.

STANDARDS

The Union Depot/Warehouse District Design Guidelines:

Signs. General: (1) All new exterior signs and all changes in the appearance of existing exterior signs require Landmarks Preservation Commission approval. This includes changes in message or colors on pre-existing signs. (2) If there is a conflict between these standards and the requirements in the City's Sign Code, the more strict requirement shall apply.

Location and Size of Signs: (1) Signs shall not dominate the building facades or obscure their architectural features (arches, transom panels, sills, moldings, cornices, windows, etc.). (2) The size of signs and individual letters shall be of appropriate scale for pedestrians and slow-moving traffic. Projecting signs shall generally not exceed nine square feet on first floor level. (3) Signs on adjacent storefronts shall be coordinated in height and proportion. Use of a continuous sign band extending over adjacent shops within the same building is encouraged as a unifying element. (4) Portable reader board signs located on sidewalks, driveways, or in parking lots are prohibited. (5) Existing historic wall signs are a contributing element within the district and should be restored or preserved in place. New wall signs shall generally be discouraged.

Messages and Lettering Signs: (1) Messages shall be simple and brief. The use of pictorial symbols or logos is encouraged. (2) Lettering should be of a traditional block or curvilinear style which is easy to read and compatible with the style of the building. No more than two different styles should be used on the same sign. (3) Letters shall be carefully formed and properly spaced so as to be neat and uncluttered. Generally, no more than 60 percent of the total sign area shall be occupied by lettering. (4) Lettering shall be generally flat or raised.

Color: (1) Light-colored letters on a dark-colored background are generally required as being more traditional and visually less intrusive in the context of the Union Station District's predominantly red-brick streetscapes. (2) Colors shall be chosen to complement, not clash with, the facade color of the building. Signs should normally contain not more than three different colors.

Materials and Illumination: (1) Use of durable and traditional materials (metal and wood) is strongly encouraged. All new signs shall be prepared in a professional manner. (2) In general, illumination shall be external, non-flashing, and non-glare. (3) Internal illumination is generally discouraged, but may be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as: (i) Individual back-lit letters silhouetted against a softly illuminated wall. (ii) Individual letters with translucent faces, containing soft lighting elements inside each letter. Metal-faced box signs with cut-out letters and soft-glow fluorescent tubes. (iii) However, such signs are generally suitable only on contemporary buildings. (4) Neon signs may be permitted in exceptional cases where they are custom-designed to be compatible with the building's historic and architectural character.

Other Stylistic Points: The shape of a projecting sign shall be compatible with the period of the building to which it is affixed, and shall harmonize with the lettering and symbols chosen for it. (2) Supporting brackets for projecting signs should complement the sign design, and not overwhelm or clash with it. They must be adequately engineered to support the intended load, and generally should conform to a 2:3 vertical-horizontal proportion. (3) Screw holes must be drilled at points where the fasteners will enter masonry joints to avoid damaging bricks, etc.

ANALYSIS

1. The building is located in the Union Station Conservation District and, as such, is subject to review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission pursuant to TMC 13.05.047 for removal or alteration of any existing sign, or installation, or placement of any new sign.
2. Signs involving structures that are under 50 years of age and in Conservation Districts can fall under Administrative Review. However, staff has brought the application to the Commission because of the significance of the proposed sign project and the fact that it is a comprehensive sign/identity plan for an iconic building as opposed to a single sign installation.
3. The Landmarks Preservation Commission may, at its discretion, waive mandatory requirements imposed by Section 13.07.290 of this chapter. In determining whether a waiver is appropriate, the Landmarks Preservation Commission shall require an applicant to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that, because of special circumstances not generally applicable to other property or facilities, including size, shape, design, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of those mandatory requirements of Section 13.07.290 would be unnecessary to further the purposes of this chapter. Such waiver shall not exceed the requirements set forth in the underlying zoning district, except where specifically provided for in TMC 13.06A.070.B. (Ord. 27748 Ex. A; passed Oct. 14, 2008; Ord. 27429 § 3; passed Nov. 15, 2005)
4. Signs will match both the new and old museum materials, color, and scale.
5. The shape of the proposed signs is compatible with the period of the building to which it will be affixed. They harmonize with the lettering and symbols.
6. Proposed kiosks are 8' tall—City of Tacoma sign code restricts kiosks to 6'. However, existing interpretative signs on Pacific are 8' and taller.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the application.

Kristine Matthews of Studio Matthews introduced Dave Bonewitz, Project Manager for the Tacoma Art Museum, and began a discussion of the project. She mentioned the unique configuration of the street and the need for new signage that will help highlight the new entrance of the building. Details of the sign schemes including material palettes and color choices were reviewed. Images illustrating the visibility and design of the signage were shown. Mentioning that the canopy was angled to the north, she commented that the three poster kiosks on the south would help to identify the museum and enliven the pedestrian area. Additional signs meant to guide people to the museum and enhance awareness of the building were also reviewed. Temporary signage, meant to advertise exhibits would be reconfigured with the large sign on the building being removed and replaced with a new sign placed on the glass. Some discussion ensued on the material used for the sign affixed to the glass.

There was a question regarding the poster kiosks showing the name backwards on the opposite side. Ms. Matthews commented that the posters would not be perfect from every angle and that alternative configurations did not work.

There was a question as to if there had been a mockup of the canopy sign done. Ms. Matthews responded that the plan is to do a test section to test the appearance to verify that it is visible enough. Some discussion of alternative configurations ensued in the case the sign was not visible enough. A follow up question asked if lighting would be part of the test and Ms. Matthew responded that it would be.

There was a question as to whether exhibitions lighting had been explored on the new wing. Ms. Matthews answered that they were trying to not obstruct an art piece and that they had experimented with different configurations. Some discussion ensued on the specific configurations.

There was a comment that the current sign that faces 705 is a different font and is silver. Some discussion ensued as to the logistics of changing the sign, that there were significant challenges to placing a different sign at the location.

There was some discussion as to confusion between "TAM" and "Tacoma Art Museum" and if the full name would be used anywhere else instead of the acronym.

There was a motion:

"I move that we approve this as rendered."

Motion: Granfield
Second: Steel
Motion carried.

5. BRIEFINGS

A. Prairie Line Trail design

Mr. Reuben McKnight noted that the portion of the Prairie Line Trail being discussed was within the Union Depot Conservation District and was not technically under that Landmark Preservation Commission's review. The discussion would be an opportunity to provide feedback for the proposed design.

BACKGROUND

The City of Tacoma is finalizing the design for the Prairie Line Trail segment that will connect Pacific Avenue to the waterfront. The project, which converts a portion of a former rail corridor into a pedestrian/bicycle trail and linear park through the heart of downtown, reached conceptual design with extensive public participation in 2013. Now that the conceptual ideas have been translated into buildable engineering designs for the Pacific Avenue Waterfront segment, there are a few changes. Most changes are minor, but some, such as an added retaining wall along Hood Street, will create a different look. Pending finalization of a Burlington Northern Santa Fe land donation, the City will construct this section of the trail in the summer of 2015. It will connect to the University of Washington Tacoma campus trail segment, currently under construction, resulting in two-thirds of the planned trail's completion.

The area is located in the Union Station Conservation District. Formal approval is not required by the Landmarks Preservation Commission for this segment.

ACTION REQUESTED

This is a feedback briefing.

Mr. Chris Storey began with an update to the current status of the project with 90% design completion anticipated in September, final specs in October, and construction anticipated in 1st quarter of 2015. He noted that processing of the final documents that would give them ownership of the land for the trail was still ongoing. Mr. Elliot Barnett gave an overview of the Prairie Line Trail up to efforts of the City to acquire a mile of the trail. He shared information on grants received for the initial development of the trail. He commented that the trail would be an opportunity to spark development along the corridor, many parts of which are currently undeveloped. In 2013 a grant was received from the Puget Sound Regional Council to develop the northern section that connects to the UWT campus. He showed an image of the conceptual design and discussed the different components of the area. Future phases included connecting the brewery district, status on an application for a Historic Interpretation grant. An image was shown of that demonstrated the potential of future phases.

There was a question as to whether the rails are still present in the lower section. Mr. Barnett answered that the rails were still present in the section that they hoped to acquire, but not in the section currently owned.

Mr. Storey shared challenges that were being encountered on the project. He noted that they had been able to acquire a 1.75 million dollar construction budget, while current estimates for construction exceeded 2 million. He also shared that space limitations were adding design challenges. Next he commented on the presence of soil contamination. Finally, the bridge improvements had created additional challenges. Mr. Storey shared some more technical details of construction plans including signage and the additional small challenges posed. He noted a dip in Hood street that required the trail to be elevated and the plans for how to approach it. Mr. Barnett added that the process of acquiring the land had left the presence of a billboard as part of the potential design but Clear Channel had begun the process to remove the billboard.

There was a question about historic notations along the trail and what the content would be. Mr. Storey answered that they would emphasize the trail, but future phases would incorporate a larger scope of Tacoma's history. The exact content for the signs had yet to be determined.

There was a question as to whether discussion of future purchases of land had been for one side of UWT or both. Mr. Barnett answered that land on both sides would be purchased.

There was a question as to whether the trail might continue rather than looping. Mr. Barnett answered that it would be a part of the future phases.

There was a question as to whether a curve in the path would remain if the billboard is removed. Mr. Storey answered that is yet to be determined and that the space may be used for an art installation or planter location.

There was a request for more detail on how the trail sits in relation to the sidewalk. The trail would be about 8 to 9 ½ feet above the sidewalk at its highest point and falls back to the sidewalk at either end. Some discussion about pedestrian traffic from the art museum ensued.

B. Historic Preservation Commercial Loan Program

BACKGROUND

The City recently unveiled a new commercial rehabilitation loan program for City Landmarks. Staff will provide a brief overview of the program (loan information sheet is included in the packet).

ACTION REQUESTED

This is an informational briefing.

Mr. Reuben McKnight reported that a small commercial loan program has recently been greenlight to provide gap financing for up to 50% of project cost. It would be the first direct rehab loan for historic projects in a great deal of time. Mr. McKnight provided further details as to the specifications of the loan and requested any assistance the Commissioners could provide in locating individuals who could benefit from the assistance.

6. CHAIR COMMENTS

Marshall McClintock reported that Historic Tacoma wanted the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Tacoma's Historic Preservation Program mentioned in the charter. The language in the amendment was going to make Commissioners come by district, which was found to have been an oversight. Council amended the language for amendment 7 to what had originally been intended.

7. STAFF COMMENTS/UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

A. Events Updates

Ms. Lauren Hoogkamer gave an update on upcoming activities including a trivia night, a maritime heritage event, and the industrial salvage art show.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:48 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:



Reuben McKnight
Historic Preservation Officer

