

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*



MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Commission Planning and Development Services Department

Date: May 28, 2014

Location: 747 Market, Tacoma Municipal Bldg, Conference 248

Commission Members in Attendance:

Duke York *Chair*
 Katie Chase, *Vice Chair*
 Chris Granfield
 Ross Buffington
 Marsall McClintock
 James Steel
 Jeff Williams
 Lysa Schloesser
 JD Elquist

Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight
 Brian Boudet
 Kris Bertucci
 Allison Barker

Others Present:

Mike Fleming
 Mike Geglia
 Steve Navarro
 Joe Quilici
 Dean Wilson

Commission Members Absent:

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. Excusal of Absences**

Commissioners Jensen and Rahe were excused.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of April 23, 2014 were approved as submitted.

C. Administrative Review

- i. 715 N J (windows) 5/13/14
- ii. 1105 N 4th (heat pump type 2) 5/13/14
- iii. 1421 S 5th (deck/porch) 5/19/14

There were no comments.

3. DESIGN REVIEW**A. 2121 Pacific Avenue (Cunningham Electric Company Building)**

Mr. Reuben McKnight read the staff report.

BACKGROUND

The Cunningham Electric Company Building was constructed in 1927 as an electrical and machine shop and was occupied by the same parent company until 1991. It was rehabilitated two house two restaurant tenants in 2002 and was added to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places in 2003. The building is a utilitarian brick warehouse structure with very little ornamentation aside from a decorative brick course below the parapet and a Flemish stretcher bond brick pattern.

The existing signs and awning were approved by the Commission in 2002 (under the requirements of the Union Station Conservation District at the time).

This is an application for: 1) one new 3'6" square internally illuminated blade sign, to be mounted to the parapet above the decorative course, centered on mortar joints; 2) one new internally illuminated 25' X 3'2" cabinet sign to be mounted below the decorative course on the rear elevation, anchored between the mortar joints; and 3) recovering the existing fabric awning in black. The cabinet sign will be illuminated at night and is intended to increase visibility from the freeway and off ramp. It will overlook the rear parking area.

Based on City sign code, the wall sign may need to be reduced by a few inches to comply with zoning.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of the above scope of work.

STANDARDS

Staff recommends the following Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

ANALYSIS

1. The Cunningham Electric Company is a City Landmark, designated in 2003.
2. Pursuant to TMC 13.05.047, by virtue of its status as a Landmark, exterior changes require the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission prior to those changes being made.
3. The recovering of the existing awning will have negligible impact on the historic integrity of the building, and thus meets the SOI standards.
4. The proposed blade sign has been located to avoid obscuring or damaging character defining features, and the arm bracket has been designed to appear historically appropriate, based on staff input. The sign will be anchored on existing mortar joints to avoid damaging the brick face. An electrical conduit will be required; the exact location has not been determined at the time of this staff report.
5. The proposed wall sign is on a secondary elevation facing a parking lot and the freeway. It has been positioned to avoid obscuring the decorative course of brickwork below the parapet and will be anchored to the wall within the mortar joints. An electrical conduit will be required; the exact location has not been determined at the time of this staff report.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

There was a motion:

"I move that this item be approved as recommended by staff".

Motion:

Second:

Mr. McKnight commented to Mr. Geglia that he would inform Land Use staff that the work was ready to permit.

B. 402 N K Street (North Slope Historic District)

Mr. Reuben McKnight proceeded with the design review item in Ms. Susan Hoover's absence and read the staff report. He stated that he would forward any feedback from the Commission.

BACKGROUND

The home at 402 N K Street was constructed in 1891 and is a contributing structure within the North Slope Historic District. Currently a multifamily building, over the years it has been extensively modified, including the

addition of non-historic siding, replacement of most all of the windows, and enclosure of the porch and main entry.

This request is to replace an existing non-historic vinyl awning window on the second story with a new larger egress casement window, as well as restoration and installation of an original casement window discovered during interior construction, in its original location. The long term objective is to restore the exterior appearance of the home to be similar to the attached photo of a nearby house by the same builder that has a mirror floor plan. The new egress window will be aligned with the headers of the other windows on the house.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of the above scope of work.

STANDARDS

North Slope Historic District Design Guidelines for Windows:

2. Repair Original Windows Where Possible. Original wood windows that are in disrepair should be repaired if feasible. The feasibility of different approaches depends on the conditions, estimated cost, and total project scope. Examples of substandard conditions that do not necessarily warrant replacement include: failed glazing compound, broken glass panes, windows painted shut, deteriorated paint surface (interior or exterior) and loose joinery. These conditions alone do not justify window replacement

4. Non-historic existing windows do not require "upgrading." Sometimes the original windows were replaced prior to the formation of the historic district, and now must be replaced again. Although it is highly encouraged, there is no requirement to "upgrade" a non-historic window to a historically appropriate wood window. For example, a vinyl replacement window may be an acceptable replacement for a nonhistoric aluminum horizontal slider window, especially if the historic configuration (vertically operated sash) is restored.

5. New Window Openings/Changing Window Openings

- Enlargement or changes to the configurations of existing window openings is to be avoided on the primary elevation(s) of a historic building within the district. In specific cases, such as an egress requirement, this may not be avoidable, but steps should be taken to minimize the visual impact
- In general, openings on buildings in the historic district are vertically oriented and are aligned along the same height as the headers and transoms of other windows and doors, and may engage the fascia or belly band that runs above the window course. This pattern should be maintained for new windows.

ANALYSIS

1. The home at 402 N K Street is a contributing building in the North Slope Historic District.
2. Exterior changes to the building require Landmarks Preservation Commission approval prior to the changes being made pursuant to TMC 13.05.047.
3. The home has been extensively modified, including replacement of most of the windows and the addition of siding over the original siding. The owner intends to restore as much of the historic appearance as is feasible.
4. The repair and re-installation of the historic casement window meets Windows guideline #2.
5. The replacement of the non-historic vinyl awning window with a vinyl casement window for egress is consistent with Guideline #4, as there is no requirement to "upgrade" non-historic windows. Although guideline #5 discourages enlargement of openings on primary elevations, in this case, based upon photographs of a comparable home it is probable that the existing opening is not the original size. In addition, the enlargement is for egress purposes. The placement of the new opening directly beneath the belly band is architecturally appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

There was a question as to what kind of window would be replacing the old one. Mr. McKnight responded that it would be a casement window. The commissioner expressed concern that the window would not look right. Some discussion ensued.

There was a question on how the window would fit within the overall plan, specifically if there were any plans to alter the porch. Mr. McKnight was not certain, but believed there were no current plans to open the porch. He stated that the plans were to take the siding off and to orient the windows correctly to the belly band of the

house.

There was a question as to what the surrounding material would be. Mr. McKnight responded that it would be a flat 5 inch wood casing.

There was a question if the current exit window was intended to be an egress window. Mr. McKnight responded that it had not been discussed with plan reviewers yet. Some discussion ensued among the commissioners regarding the egress requirements to meet code. One commissioner recommended that it the window could be larger and double hung, which would be preferred.

There was a motion.

"I move to approve the application for 402 N K Street with the caveat that if egress width is the reason the homeowner is choosing the casement that a double hung window would be recommended that met the egress width requirement."

Motion: Steel
Second: Williams.

Mr. McKnight clarified that he would speak with the owner and convey the Commission's recommendations.

C. 615 Commerce Street (Old City Hall Historic District)

Mr. Reuben McKnight read the staff report.

BACKGROUND

The City Police Stable/Annex Building was constructed in 1907 and rehabilitated in 1983 as offices. The building fronts both Commerce Street (west elevation) and Pacific Avenue (east elevation). The first floor, which opens onto Pacific Avenue, is currently being renovated to hold the Pacific Brewing and Malting Company brewery and tasting room.

On January 8, 2014, the Commission approved a new entry door. The current application is for a new non-illuminated blade sign showing the company logo, with external illumination. The blade will be 36" in diameter, hung from an ornamental 48" long arm.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of the above scope of work.

STANDARDS

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

ANALYSIS

1. The City Hall Stables/Annex is a contributing structure in the Old City Hall Historic District.
2. Changes that affect the exterior appearance of the building are subject to Landmarks Preservation Commission review per TMC 13.06.047.
3. The proposed sign will not obscure or destroy any character defining features, but will serve as a visual identifier for the business within the building.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

There was a question as to where the sign was to be attached. Mr. Navarro showed a picture of which corner of the building the sign would be attached to. There were no further questions or comments.

There was a motion

"I move to approve the signage as submitted."

Motion: Williams

Second: Chase

4. BOARD BUSINESS/PRESERVATION PLANNING

A. West Slope Neighborhood Conservation District

Mr. Reuben McKnight cited the general procedural notes, noting that there were no actions being requested and read the staff report.

BACKGROUND

The West Slope Neighborhood Coalition is proposing to establish a conservation district overlay in the West End area of Tacoma. This is a briefing to introduce the proposal to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, as well as to receive early feedback from the Commission. Following this briefing, staff will ask the Commission for authorization to formally begin the review process.

About the Neighborhood

- The West Slope Neighborhood consists of four plats and was initially established in 1941. The proposed conservation district includes approximately 279 homes and 286 lots, constructed predominantly during the 1940s through the 1960s. Most houses are simple 2 story homes (the lower floor being a daylight basement) located on their lots to maximize views of the Tacoma Narrows.
- In order to preserve the neighborhood's views and character, the original developer established covenants placing restrictions on the design and construction of homes within the plats.
- The neighborhood association has faced difficulty enforcing or amending the covenant restrictions, resulting in teardowns, out of scale development, and view disputes. Consequently, they are seeking a land-use based approach to resolve these issues

History of the Proposal

- In 2007, at the request of the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition, former Mayor Bill Baarsma and the City Council provided funding to the Historic Preservation Program to conduct a study of the feasibility of creating a new midcentury historic district in the West Slope Neighborhood.
- In 2009, the consultant retained by the City released a report that recommended not designating a historic district in the neighborhood, due to lack of historic integrity and lack of neighborhood consensus. The report recommended revising the City's "conservation district overlay" to allow for standalone conservation districts.
- In 2011, with the support of the neighborhood, the City modified both the comprehensive plan and regulatory code to allow the conservation district overlay to be used as a standalone district (previously it was only used as a buffer zone around historic districts).
- The neighborhood retained a consultant to develop an application to become a conservation district and formally submitted a proposal and application for Area-Wide Rezone in December, 2013.

About Conservation Districts

General Information

A conservation district is an overlay zone that is designed to protect historic neighborhood character, when a neighborhood either lacks the integrity to qualify as a historic district or doesn't desire the requirements that come with a historic district.

The objective of a conservation district is to protect a neighborhood from unnecessary demolition, inappropriate new construction, and inappropriate additions. Unlike in a historic district, design review is not required for most exterior alterations to buildings.

Criteria for Conservation District Designation

Conservation districts must meet the criteria for suitability and historic significance within the municipal code

(TMC 13.07.040). The prevailing age of the structures within the proposed district must be 50 years or greater, and the area must be geographically distinct and possess a "clearly established existing character related to historical development patterns or the overall appearance of building types in a defined period of time."

The following are the criteria for determining the suitability of a conservation district for a neighborhood:

- a. Appropriate documentation of eligibility is readily available. Survey documentation is already prepared or could be easily prepared by an outside party in a timely manner; and
- b. For proposed conservation districts, preliminary analysis indicates that the area appears to have a distinctive character that is desirable to maintain; and
- c. A demonstrated substantial number of property owners appear to support such a designation, as evidenced by letters, petitions or feedback from public workshops; and
- d. Creation of the district is compatible with and supports community and neighborhood plans; or
- e. The area abuts another area already listed as a historic district or conservation district; or
- f. The objectives of the community cannot be adequately achieved using other land use tools.

The following are the criteria for determining the historic eligibility/significance of a potential conservation district:

- a. The area is part of, adjacent to, or related to an existing or proposed historic district or other distinctive area which should be redeveloped or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif; or
- b. It possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
- c. Although it shall possess historic character based upon an intact development pattern and a prevailing historic architectural character expressed through its assemblage of buildings, a Conservation District is not required to meet the criteria for landmark designation as outlined above.

Boundaries for a Conservation District

The municipal code states that the boundaries should be based on a definable geographic area based upon age, building types, density, and historical development patterns to the extent feasible.

Effects of Designation

In general, a conservation district has less of an effect on property owners within the district than the effect of a historic district. Per TMC 13.05.047, design review within a conservation district is required only for 1) construction of a new building, or 2) an addition to an existing building. Approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission is also required for demolition of an existing building. Lastly, properties within a conservation district do not qualify outright for the Special Tax Valuation incentive – to qualify for the program, a property within a conservation district must be designated by City Council individually.

When a conservation district is established, the Landmarks Preservation Commission must adopt design guidelines to review the appropriateness of projects that are subject to review. The guidelines must address, where applicable, height, scale, massing, exterior cladding and materials, building form and shape, roof shape, fenestration patterns and window materials, architectural details, additions, parking, main entrances, rhythm of openings, accessory structures, streetscape and sustainable design.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The items below are proposed for regulation under the proposed conservation district. Some of these areas likely cannot be regulated by the City under the conservation district code, and some others will require additional clarification of language to be effective. These items will be topics of discussion later Commission meetings.

Building Height

Buildings in the Narrowmoor Additions shall be restricted to no taller in height than the existing ridgelines and or rooflines for reconstruction, remodels, and additions. New construction shall be no higher than the average roof line of the primary structures on adjacent properties so long as those structures are representative of original Narrowmoor construction. If an adjacent home has been structurally altered in a manner that increased its roof height or it consists of 3 levels includes of a daylight basement, the nearest residence representative of original construction shall be used for the measurement.

The application suggests that exceptions to this guideline should require a variance.

Roofs

1. Low pitched gable and hipped roofs shall be the norm, and may vary in degrees of pitch depending on various factors, including where a structure is sited on the sloping topography of the lot, its roofline height and orientation, comparative height of adjacent homes, etc. Roof pitch shall not exceed 5:12.
2. No cupolas, railings, decorative railings, or accessory items such as roof-mounted solar panels, wind-energy devices, or the like shall extend the allowable roof height, nor shall such items be allowed if they are reflective of the sun and disruptive to the view. Normal and necessary items, such as vent stacks, chimneys, and safety railings on decks are exempted so long as they are designed to be of minimal impact on the view, consistent with their essential functions.

Building Form

1. New and remodeled homes shall be consistent and compatible with existing structures in style and features. A-frames, flat-roofed, unmodulated "commercial looking" structures, and similar unsympathetic construction should be considered inappropriate for the area (see appendices for examples of "incompatible construction").
2. Residential structures shall not exceed a single, main level and a daylight basement.

Lot Layout

1. The cumulative footprint of the residence, garage, and outbuildings shall not exceed 25% of the square footage of the residential lot.
2. No residential parcels or lot shall be less than 12,500 square feet, to include individual existing lots, Assessor segregations, short plats or re-plats.
3. Where an original lot extends street-to-street, so shall any lots subdivided from the original.

Trees

Trees or tall growing vegetation shall not obstruct views and shall not exceed the rooftop height of the residential structure on the property.

Garages and Accessory Buildings

1. Minimal, detached accessory buildings may be allowed to include garages so long as their cumulative footprint does not exceed 1,000 square feet and do not exceed 15 feet in height or otherwise impair views.
2. Detached buildings should be of similar materials and colors to the residence (with the exception of greenhouses).

Other Regulations

There are no requirements proposed for parking configurations, windows or window patterning, or other building elements.

KEY ISSUES/NEXT STEPS

To evaluate this proposal, the Commission will need to focus on several key areas:

1. Eligibility. Does the West Slope Neighborhood, based on the criteria in the municipal code and the overall character of the area, appear to meet the requirements for the establishment of a conservation district? This includes both the appropriateness of the conservation district overlay as a tool to address neighborhood concerns as well as the criteria for determining historic significance.
2. Are the proposed regulations suitable or adequate for a conservation district based on the municipal code definition?
3. Completeness of application. Are there additional types of information that the Commission needs to review this proposal and to make a determination as to whether the aforementioned criteria are met?

Review Process and Schedule

The initial step is review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider the merits of the proposal in terms of designation criteria, followed by Planning Commission review and finally, review by City Council.

There was a question as to whether there was a way to process matters such as new construction through an administrative process or if such things would have to go before the Commission. Mr. McKnight answered that the Conservation District code would require things like construction or demolition to be reviewed by the commission unless there was a specific exemption added to the code. He added that smaller changes like remodels would not require design review.

At the conclusion of the staff notes, Chair Duke York invited representatives from the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition to provide comments. Dean Wilson introduced Mike Fleming and gave a quick background as to the reason for the move to a Conservation District, commenting that the neighborhood covenants are limited in their ability to protect the character of the neighborhood. He commented on issues such as trees impacting views and the need to find a city process to deal with the ongoing issues. Mike Fleming commented on being a long time resident of the area and the history of his involvement in the West Slope Neighborhood Coalition. Some accomplishments of the Coalition were enumerated including involvement in the creation of the View Sensitive Overlay Zone. He added that the overlay zone was not much aid to view impact issues on the West Slope due to the max height allowance being higher than the average height of homes in the area. Mr. Fleming provided a brief history of the evolution of the existing concerns to the creation of the Conservation District proposal. He noted that they had already sought and received feedback from the neighborhood on the proposal.

A Commissioner commented that an argument could be made that some of the goals of the Conservation District proposal would be better addressed with a more aggressive Land Use regulatory code. In response it was stated that there had been a lot of work to reach a compromise between homeowners and businesses to agree on a building height and that the City had not been amenable to a more restrictive height. He added that there is a lot of variation in what heights would impact views based on location. A Conservation District provided that most flexibility in dealing with those issues.

A Commissioner expressed concern that there would be conflict over every new house. In response it was stated that there were only several vacant lots remaining and that new construction would be minimal. Discussion ensued about possible teardowns leading to more new construction and the impact to the neighborhood.

A Commissioner asked if they had looked into changing the covenants and the response was that it had been looked into extensively and found to not be an appropriate solution. There was additional discussion as to different avenues that had been explored and the appropriateness of the Conservation District.

Mr. Reuben McKnight clarified that there would be design guidelines to ensure consistent and less subjective determinations for buildings brought in for review and that minor changes would not require the attention of the Commission. He reiterated that the intent would be to preserve the character of the neighborhood and it was up to the Commission to determine if a Conservation District is the best way to do it.

There was a comment from the Commission that typically in Conservation Districts you will see one cohesive style of architecture, but that the Painter study had found a highly diverse number of styles in the proposed area. The response was that the diversity of architecture is recognized, but that there are some styles that would clearly not be in character with it. He added that the Commission would be able to make a non-biased decision on when a new home was clearly outside of the existing range of diverse character. Discussion ensued on the subjective nature of design guidelines and the challenge inherent in applying them fairly.

Mr. McKnight commented that the language in the proposal would need to be improved, but that there are clear architecture styles that do not fit in with the pattern of the neighborhood. He added that there would still be subjective things that would require design review and would not be appropriate for Land Use code. Things like lot size and building height are clear things that would not require design review and staff would articulate to the commission which things would necessitate a higher level of scrutiny from the Commission.

Mr. Brian Boudet commented that finding the balancing point of what should be handled by zoning versus what should be handled through preservation was something that the Commission was going to have to assess as the conversation moved forward. There needs to be a strong component of what key characteristics should be preserved as the zoning code alone would not prevent anything from being torn down and replaced.

There was a question as to whether or not they could simply put a zoning overlay on top of the area and set more specific restrictions on height, since that would handle most of the concerns. The response that the height limit is affected by topography and other factors, when homes were originally constructed there was some oversight that ensured that view corridors were not affected. Some discussion ensued. Commissioners expressed concerns about the legal ramifications of a discretionary height restriction.

Chair Duke York thanked Mr. Wilson and Mr. Fleming for providing their input and commented that there would be more discussions of the proposal in the future.

B. Preservation Month updates

Mr. Reuben McKnight gave an update on upcoming activities

5. CHAIR COMMENTS

There were no comments from the chair.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:12 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:



Reuben McKnight
Historic Preservation Officer

