

Members

Mark McIntire, *Chair*
Ross Buffington, *Vice Chair*
Edward Echtele
Ken House
Imad Al Janabi, PhD.
Fred King
Megan Luce
Bret Maddox, S.E.
Ha Pham
Pamela Sundell

Marshall McClintock, North Slope Ex-Officio

Staff

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer



MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Commission Community and Economic Development Department

Date: January 26, 2011

LPC 25/11

Location: 728 St. Helens, Tacoma Municipal Bldg North, Room 16

Commission Members in Attendance:

Ross Buffington
Edward Echtele
Ken House (late arrival)
Imad Al Janabi, PhD.
Fred King
Megan Luce
Bret Maddox, S.E.
Mark McIntire
Pamela Sundell

Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight
Tonie Cook
Ramie Pierce

Others Present:

Sharon Winters, Patrick McNurney, Erich Petschke,
Jeff Williams, Caroline Swope

Commission Members Excused:

Ha Pham

Chair Mark McIntire called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Excusal of Absences

Commissioner Ha Pham was excused.

B. Approval of Minutes

The December 8, 2010 meeting minutes were approved as amended, to include Ms. Kathryn Ursich in attendance at that meeting.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION – Historic Tacoma

Ms. Sharon Winters introduced Jeff Williams and Caroline Swope, Historic Tacoma members. She then reported on Historic Tacoma's plans and projects, and current policy paper. She discussed the Historic Preservation Plan, proposed Wedge Historic District, building codes, neighborhoods, Public Development Authorities, and dangerous buildings. She commented on Historic Tacoma working together with the Commission on advocacy, preservation, education and information.

There was discussion about PDAs, partnerships, building on success, communicating at all levels on pressing issues, including Commission members' visibility and voice on preservation in the City; in addition, other topics included having conversations on code compliance and demolition by neglect. It was recommended that Historic Tacoma provide comments on Commission's agenda topics.

3. DESIGN REVIEW

A. Spanish Steps (Old City Hall Special Review District)

Mr. Reuben McKnight presented the Staff Report on the proposed irrigation and landscape plan that was previously presented to the Commission on November 10, 2010.

He introduced Ramie Pierce, Urban Forester for City of Tacoma, and the McMenamins' landscaping staff, Erich Petschke and Patrick McNurney.

He reviewed the comments from the November 10th Commission meeting, which follows:

1. Need to have visuals of what the mature plants will look like (i.e. 3D renderings that show accurately plant heights and planting densities)
2. Would like to be able to compare modern proposal with photographs of the historic landscaping – suggesting that the renderings would be most useful if overlaid onto historic photographs or done from the same perspective as historic images.
3. The Commission prefers native plants not only for appearance, but because they require less intervention (watering, maintenance)
4. In general, some Commissioners thought the design was too busy and were concerned that the architecture of the stairs could be obscured by the plantings. It was also noted that there are a lot of plants in the proposed design.
5. The Commission would like Darius Thompson and Ramie Pierce (or other appropriate staff) to attend a future meeting to discuss the design and maintenance, and relationship between McMenamins and this property and the City.
6. Before the Commission formally votes on the landscape design, the Commission wants to be assured that the City project management, urban forester, streets and grounds, and McMenamins are in full agreement on the design and long term maintenance (and that it is formal).

He stated that in response to the above comments, the McMenamins' design team has provided additional information about the landscaping design; in addition, city Staff will also be available to clarify questions relating to the maintenance agreement and project management.

Enclosed with the meeting packets: Updated Species List, 01/2011 visuals of the mature plants, and November 2010 meeting materials.

Mr. Petschke and Mr. McNurney talked about the Spanish Steps area as an inviting garden versus a utilitarian landscape approach, noting the watering/maintenance program and creating a good visual dynamism, noting that the height approximations are more generous in the computer generated visuals, whereby some plantings will be less tall at maturity. They emphasized working with Landmarks and the City to accomplish their desires, and working with the City. They continued by saying that the City did not have a specific framework and approached the current design based on McMenamins' other properties, and noted their openness to feedback and comments.

Ms. Ramie Pierce stated her concern with about ten to fifteen plants' hardiness (on the plant list provided to the City) emphasizing Tacoma's climate, which is colder than both Seattle and Portland, and mentioned that she is not informed on the maintenance agreement. Reuben McKnight stated that there is an agreement and the Commission's interest includes the long term stability and appropriateness of the plan for the property.

There was discussion on the upkeep, ties into the Elk's Building and McMenamins as new owner and their aggressiveness on upkeep, including 100% horticultural and professional crews; concerns were expressed on

litter-wet leaves upkeep with high interest in keeping the area beautiful.

There was discussion about the Monkey Puzzle Tree, past care and maintenance, and irrigation installation plan protecting the root mass; McMenamins' representatives reported on the above ground irrigation system.

Commissioner Ken House made the following comments and questions:

1. Would McMenamins' business use interfere with the Spanish Steps public use;
2. Would like to hear more about maintenance of the area;
3. What is the ratio of native vs. other plants;
4. Like to see sustainable landscaping;
5. Would like to see historic photos; he mentioned photos showing grass 20-30 yrs;
6. best landscape would highlight the building;
7. Would like to see the plantings sustainable;

McMenamins representatives confirmed there was grass and some boxwood in the past, and goal was for the Spanish Steps to remain public right of way. There was also information provided on the plant selections and the institutional experience in Portland's weather, and all plants on the list are proven for regional compatibility.

Commissioner Pamela Sundell discussed the historic appearance of the site; the steps and building provide a sense of a formal garden; suggestion to scale back the proposal to ensure the Spanish Steps are the prominent feature; provide for an inviting and enhancing modern take on a "slightly" formal garden.

Commissioner Megan Luce discussed the use of native plants and referenced the Secretary of Interior's Standards National Park Service Preservation Brief #36 to provide protection of cultural landscapes.

Commissioner Al Janabi discussed the approach, which is to enhance and not to compete (with the Steps).

Commissioner Ed Echtle asked about availability of the Spanish Steps' original plans; he stated the Steps are very sparse; maybe it was a plan unrealized and never completed the landscape plan (at the time of the Steps original construction).

Mr. McNurvey talked about the Spanish Steps in Rome, which were completely stark, and the City of Rome use huge pots of azaleas, but no landscape in the original plan.

Commissioner Bret Maddox stated that he would like to see relationship of the joint use agreement, to understand who controls what; he stated that there was much care & energy put into this plan; and noted, historically the Spanish Steps has been turf. He added that he did not want to see just grass; noting that maybe the lower level is a missed opportunity, if it was grass for public space, the landscape might want to be more formal for the emulation of the historic steps. His concern was using plant landscapes from other places that may be out of context for the Spanish Steps.

Commissioner Fred King noted that it was unfortunate if the landscape of the Steps recreated the grass; he added the proposed renderings are more complex and textured than what might be the best approach for the Steps; he suggested viewing the bottom slope as a carpet with low growing plantings with uniform texture and color.

Commissioner Ken House talked about the exaggerated elk head on the building could perhaps be an analogy to this plan by taking the grass as a base and to do something more than the grass.

Ms. Ramie Pierce stated that she did like the placement of the two beech trees, which frame the view and have a nice red color.

Vice chair Ross Buffington offered that he would recommend removal of the two beech trees.

Mr. Petschke and Mr. McNurney stated that they could take some of the ideas and create different versions of the

comments and suggestions, for a more focused future discussion by the Commission.

Commissioner Pamela Sundell suggested scheduling a special meeting to discuss the landscaping ideas.

It was agreed to return to the Commission for further review.

4. NOMINATIONS – Tacoma Register of Historic Places (preliminary)

Mr. Reuben McKnight cited the general procedural notes, followed by the staff report:

Tacoma Register listing follows procedures defined in TMC 13.07.050, and consists of a minimum of two separate Commission meetings. The initial meeting will determine whether the property meets the threshold criteria in the ordinance for age and integrity. If the Commission finds that the age and integrity standards are met, then the Commission may move to have the nomination scheduled for a public hearing and comment period, at which the public may enter comments into the record for consideration. Following the comment period, the Commission may deliberate on the nomination for up to 45 days before recommending to City Council, listing on the register or denying the nomination. Owner consent is not required for the Commission to recommend designation. The purpose of the meeting was to determine whether or not the property met the threshold criteria and should be scheduled for public testimony at a public hearing.

A. 3419 N 27TH Street – Semple Residence

Mr. McKnight read the Staff Report which follows:

Constructed between 1890 and 1896, the one and a half story Shingle Style residence at 3419 North 27th Street is located in one of Tacoma's oldest areas, originally platted in 1869. The nomination states, "The Semple Residence has significance through its broader connection to the planning development patterns in Tacoma, Criterion A, and its Shingle Style architectural form, Criterion C, of the six criteria of eligibility on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places.

Standards to be considered:

The threshold criteria for Tacoma Register listing are listed at 13.07.040B(1), and include:

1. Property is at least 50 years old at the time of nomination; and
2. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association such that it is able to convey its historical, cultural, or architectural significance.

Analysis to be considered:

The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to determine that the age and integrity standards are met. The building was constructed between 1890 and 1896; the 1892 Sanborn maps do not show this region of Tacoma. The north elevation was added prior to 1925 and the side deck and French doors are late 20th century additions, according to the nomination. The plan and original cladding are intact; the building appears to meet the threshold criteria for consideration.

Staff recommended scheduling the nomination for public testimony at a hearing on March 9, 2011.

Ms. Caroline Swope, Kingstree Studios, presented the Semple Residence nomination.

There was a motion:

"I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, find the Semple Residence at 3419 N 27th Street, meets special criteria for age and significance and schedule March 9, 2011, for public hearing on the nomination".

MOTION: King

SECOND: House
MOTION: Carried

5. BOARD BRIEFINGS

A. Historic Preservation Plan and Code Update

Mr. McKnight stated that the proposal for public release of the plan was submitted this week to the Planning Commission and announced that when the final documents are issued, copies of the documents will be sent to the Commission; he briefly outlined the proposed plan and code.

6. BOARD BUSINESS/PRESERVATION PLANNING

A. Officer nominations and election.

Mr. McKnight reported that the appointments committee had not met. There was agreement to move forward with nominations and elections of current Commission members, at this meeting. Mark McIntire was nominated as Chair and Bret Maddox as Vice Chair.

There was a motion:

"I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, elect Mark McIntire as Chair and Bret Maddox as Vice Chair by acclamation".

MOTION: Sundell
SECOND: King
MOTION: Carried (by acclamation)

Mr. Reuben McKnight stated that the open Commission position of architect was the category yet to be filled in the recent Commission selection process.

B. Preservation Month Committee

The Commission postponed establishing the Preservation Month committee to a future meeting.

C. Other

Ms. Tonie Cook provided information on the letter inviting the Commission to help develop the City's Urban Trees' policy.

Ms. Cook also announced the details of a proposed Commission van tour of the Old Town Neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:

Reuben McKnight
Historic Preservation Officer