MINUTES
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Planning and Development Services Department

Date:        March 27, 2013     Location: 747 Market Street, Tacoma Municipal Building, Room 248

Commission Members in Attendance:
    Ken House, Chair
    Ross Buffington
    Katie Chase
    JD Elquist
    Jonah Jensen
    Megan Luce
    Marshall McClintock
    James Steel

Commission Members Absent:
    Commissioners  Daniel Raye, and Duke York

Staff Present:
    Reuben McKnight
    Tonie Cook
    Tansy Hayward

Others Present:
    John Hunt, Ryan Rhodes

Chair Ken House called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Excusal of Absences

Commissioners  Daniel Raye and Duke York were excused.

B. Administrative Review Approvals

The Administrative Review approvals from March 6 through March 20, 2013 were accepted.

2. DESIGN REVIEW

A. 1102 A Street (Federal Building)

Mr Reuben McKnight read the staff report into the meeting record as follows.

Built in 1908-1910, the Tacoma Federal Building originally housed the U.S. Courthouse, Customs as well as the only remaining user, the US Post Office. The Federal Building is listed on the Tacoma, Washington and National Registers of Historic Places. The building is under new ownership and undergoing improvements for new tenants.

In October 2010, the Commission approved a design for proposed improvements to the property including an exterior plaza plan with one new door opening, ramps, steps, pavers, plantings, fencing, and railings. Prior to the approval, a series of meetings were held and one site visit was conducted by the Commission.

The current application includes two components:

1. A sign package for new tenants, including:
   •   (2) monument signs
   •   (1) sign to be mounted on the loading bay canopy
   •   (2) tenant signs to be located on the 12th street elevation, and
1. Tenant directory to be mounted on the 12th street elevation.

2. Revisions to the 2010 plaza design. The approved 2010 design will be constructed in two phases using the same materials and specifications as those original approved, with some revisions, including:
   - South Plaza: an additional stair on the west side of the plaza, in order to access the loading bay area
   - South Plaza: removal of a portion of the proposed planter to allow for more usable space
   - North Plaza: the plaza will be built at street level versus the approved plan the approved design, which proposed the plaza to be at the same level as the main floor, and the addition of a stair with flanked by two granite plinths, to resemble a smaller version of the main entry. The previous design was several feet higher, necessitating the construction of raised planters/retaining wall. The revision is designed to fit better with the existing character of the building, relate better with the sidewalk, and to avoid obscuring the historic railing above the area ways.
   - Removal and replacement of the nonhistoric ADA ramp on the 11th street elevation with a new ramp in the same location, using a similar material palette as that which has been approved previously for the plazas.

Staff has requested additional information to be presented at the meeting regarding sign details (attachment method) as well as a plan set with the revisions clearly called out.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Approval of the sign package and approval of the revisions to the approved plaza plan, including changes to the planter and stair on the south plaza, and the lowering of the north plaza and addition of entry stairs.

**Standards to be considered include the Secretary of Interior’s Standards, specifically, the following:**
1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

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

**Analysis to be considered.**
1. The 1908-1910 constructed Federal Building is historically significant as noted in the nomination narrative, “…[it] is a fine example of the Second Renaissance Revival design style…”; and “…the design reflects…the adherence of the Beaux-Arts design tradition as the appropriate mode for federal architecture”. The property is listed on the Tacoma, Washington and National Registers of Historic Places.

2. Landmarks Preservation Commission has jurisdiction to review and approve, or not approve, changes to this property per TMC 13.07.095, prior to those changes being made, by virtue of its status as a City Landmark.

3. On October 13, 2010, the Commission approved plans for exterior enhancements to the property including an exterior plaza plan with one new door opening, replacement ADA ramp, steps, pavers, plantings, fencing, and railings.

4. The proposal to install three tenant signs and one awning sign on the 12th Street elevation, meets Secretary of Interior’s Standard #9, for, “New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment”

5. The Staff asked the applicant to provide, at the meeting, information on the attachment methods for the three signs on 11th Street elevation.

6. The proposal to install two concrete monument style signs appears to meet Secretary of Interior’s Standard #9, for, “New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated
from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment”

7. The revision to the North Plaza plan at the 11th Street elevation includes two concrete plinths matching the style of the historic front elevation plinths, however they appear to be reduced in size, and appears this new work is differentiated from the old, meeting Secretary of Interior’s Standard #9, specifically, for, “The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment”

8. The revision also includes the addition of a west staircase on the South Plaza plan, which adds access to the plaza and tenants, along the 12th Street Elevation; the staircase appears to be minimally visible, thus, meeting Secretary of Interior’s Standard #1, A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships”

Staff recommended approval of the above as findings and recommended approval of the proposal pending information presented at the Commission meeting.

Mr. John Hunt added that the monument sign on A Street is a higher priority than the proposed 11th Street monument sign shown in the design sheets.

Commissioners discussed the proposed canopy sign’s attachment methods, preference of installing the sign on the above versus the face of the canopy and to repair versus replacement of the canopy.

Mr. Reuben McKnight explained that the sign code preference is to install signs on the face and not the top of awnings and canopies, however the Commission’s opinion, based on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards can take priority over the sign policy. It was noted that the horizontal lines achieved by the buildout of the canopy the sign mounted on the top protects the appearance; in addition, if the signs are repaired or removed in the future, the canopy fascia will be protected.

There was clarification on the first level tenant’s signage, which will most likely be white, the sign will be about eight to 10 inches in height; the attachment methods for tenant directory preference will be anchored into the mortar joints.

Mr. Reuben McKnight described the proposed plaza changes on the North elevation at the new door entrance which is to maintain the street level for the proposed plaza, which appears to protect the view of the pipe railing.

Commissioner Marshall McClintock, North Slope Ex Officio asked the proponents to return with the final script, size and color selections.

Mr. Reuben McKnight summarized the discussion, including the general placement of the signs is acceptable, the fabrication drawings prepared at a later date can be shown to the Commission, the letter sign be eight to ten inches in height, and there is agreement for mounting above the canopy.

In addition, there was clarification on the purpose of the Post Office Commons right justified lettering which aligns the tenant’s location with the signage.

There was a motion:

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, approve the proposal as submitted to include two monument signs, one sign on the 12th Street loading bay canopy which will be eight to 10 inches in height without bracing; signs will be anchored at the mortar joints, and the manufacturer drawings be submitted for color and detail final approval by the Commission”.

MOTION: Steel
SECOND: Jensen
MOTION: Carried
Mr Reuben McKnight explained the approval decision will be issued with the condition to return with final sign details to the Commission at a later date.

There was a motion.

“I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, approve the application at 1102 A Street, in regards to the north elevation’s plaza as proposed”

MOTION: Jensen
SECOND: Steel
MOTION: Carried

3. BOARD BRIEFING

Ms. Tansy Hayward presented a report on the condition of the Old City Hall building, including distributing a copy of a letter to the property owner outlining the City’s previous actions, current efforts and next steps to address the conditions on the property.

Mr. Reuben McKnight reported on the current condition and levels of repair and maintenance necessary for the building’s protection and stabilization; in addition, there was discussion about the timing and addressing the conditions before the next poor weather cycles begin, nuisance abatement, funding sources for abatement, financial tax incentives and specific understanding of costs such as the copper roof.

Chair Ken House complimented the proactiveness taken by the City.

Ms. Tansy Hayward stated that protecting the integrity of the building and securing the city’s safety to prevent more serious issues are the priority in working towards solutions.

There was a recommendation to return no later than early to mid-summer to report to the Commission.

There was discussion on the Commission’s potential role, such as approving the recommendations prepared by the City.

4. BOARD BUSINESS/PRESERVATION PLANNING

A. Historic Preservation Month

Mr. Reuben McKnight described the previous award plans and possible improvements the Commission can propose.
Commissioner Ross Buffington suggested hosting a reception prior to the City Council meeting at or outside City Hall.

B. 1017 North K Street

There was discussion on this 1955 building that is listed as a contributing structure and concern with the failure of the aluminum windows.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct