



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

ISRD 190/21

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, December 14, 2021

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville
Matt Fujimoto, Chair
Ryan Gilbert
Nella Kwan
Michael Le
Ming Zhang
Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Chair Matt Fujimoto called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Ms. Frestedt welcomed the new incoming Board members.

121421.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

Lund Chinn said he has been in the district for 56 years and said parking should be included with the 701 S. Jackson St. project. He said in the 1960s-80's the district was a better place. He said he has provided free parking to his patients for 50 years. He said that driving is not going away. He said the streets are full of boarded windows and questioned why anyone would come into district.

Jesse Tam said she has been in the District for 40 years; She is a past president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, past president of SCIDPDA and a member of the Rotary Club. She said she knows the area well. She said the development will bring 240 units that are meaningful for singles in a helpful location. She said a lot of older people live in district and would enjoy walkable retail, grocery, nearby services.

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Marnie Mar said supported the project. She said she is the granddaughter of Frank Mar and niece of the late Barry Mar, the previous owner of the property. She said it has been a challenge to find a good use for the property and she is glad for this project. She said Barry Mar was involved in finding a use for the property and focused on commercial and residential. She said the project is a possible step for community family support.

121421.2 BOARD BRIEFING

121421.21 701 S. Jackson St.

Presenter: Anton Dekom, Neiman Taber Architects

Briefing on Use and Design proposal for new construction of a 9-story mixed-use building, to include approximately 245 apartments, 76 congregate dwellings, 169 small scale efficiency units and ground floor retail. No parking is proposed. The lot size is 13,439 sq. ft. The proposal includes demolition of a one-story non-contributing commercial building and related service station island. The focus of this briefing will be on evolution of the proposed massing and building configuration.

Brad Padden, O.Z. Navigator/Housing Diversity and co-developer, said they have been working on outreach efforts to get as broad a reach as possible.

Presentation report in DON file.

David Neiman, Neiman Taber Architects, provided an overview of feedback received from the board at earlier meeting. He said they hoped to learn from this briefing if the board is comfortable with them moving ahead with the project. He provided context of the site and neighborhood. He said the site housed a former gas station and that removal of buildings and soil remediation is needed.

He said the proposed project is an 8-story, approximately 100,000 SF mixed use building with small-scale efficiency residential units (SEDUs) and congregate throughout and 3,000 SF of commercial tenant space at street level. The building will be constructed as 5 stories of Type IIIA wood construction on top of 4 stories of Type IA concrete construction with one basement story below. No parking is provided.

He said the adjacent Republic Hotel was built in 1920. With 75 single room occupancy units. It was built as a workforce hotel to house immigrants arriving in Seattle and people employed in seasonal labor. The second floor was designed to house the Chiu Lum Family Association headquarters. In 1934 the headquarters was replaced with the Little Harlem Club and later with the Twin Dragon's Cafe in 1939. The street level spaces supported retail businesses until 2016. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places nomination as a primary contributing structure. It was purchased by RAC Investments, LLC in 2015 and will be going through an exterior and interior rehabilitation in the near future.

He said to ensure that the development of this project reflects the unique history and relevance of the Chinatown-ID neighborhood, the development team has contracted with David Della, Eco-Ready, LLC to assist in conducting comprehensive community

outreach/engagement of all stakeholders including, non-profit organizations, businesses, community associations, property owners and residents prior to and during the design review process of the International Special Review District. Thus far, he said they have held twenty-four preliminary development briefings with community organizations, groups, and individuals. They have taken community members on tours of residential units similar to those proposed on this development and have toured various C-ID properties and developments to look at similarly sized residential units in the neighborhood. He said they are planning to meet with more in the immediate future.

KEY COMMENTS/ TAKEAWAYS

- Accessible to people who live in the community i.e., mixed income levels, diverse ages, business owners and employees of neighborhood businesses and agencies
- Affordable retail spaces that cater to small local businesses that serve community needs and desires
- Spaces for community benefit – use for meetings, gatherings for non-profit organizations and community groups
- Positive street activity and access. Pedestrian friendly sidewalk presence that is walkable and safe.

Mr. Neiman went through refinement of massing plans and proposed floor plans. He said the Board was clear at the last meeting that they wanted to see a building that was simple in design (not complex), heavy (not thin) and unified (not fragmented). He said many of the tall buildings within the Chinatown-International District are directly adjacent and even share party walls with much smaller developments. How these buildings of different scales interact with and respond to one another is an important aspect of the urban fabric. In many instances, the middle tier of the taller structure is in dialogue architecturally with the middle or upper tier of the adjacent shorter structure.

He said utilities would be placed at back of house, including bike storage. He went over programming at each floor. He said small efficiency dwelling units (SEDU) are complete studio apartments. Congregate housing units are small units with living and kitchenette to provide living space, but rest of activity is focused outside. The units provide affordable living in the City core. He said there is a 12' grade change and commercial spaces step as they go. He said there would be a separate entrance for community access with an elevator to the community room.

The project team has begun talking with curators at the Wing Luke Museum about developing interpretive content that would tell the stories of Barry Mar and Pat Abe and would convey the history of the 701 S Jackson St site. While conversations are still in early stages, the project team anticipates incorporating these narratives into an interpretive display located at the proposed building.

He summarized additions to the historic property report. He said Barry Mar was an important member of the Chinatown community, as well as a representative of his family as the owner of the 701 S Jackson St property. The Mar family has owned the subject property for four generations. Born and raised in Seattle, Barry Mar attended the University of Washington and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry and Chinese History and a master's in Educational Psychology. He later received a doctor's

degree in Urban Education and established a management company in Seattle providing organizational leadership and consultant services. He also served on the Washington State Commission of Utilities and Transportation. Mr. Mar resided in the Atlas Hotel for nearly four decades, after having managed its rehabilitation in the 1970s into housing for low-income residents. He generously offered up his time mentoring the community youth in basketball and martial arts. He was known by his family as the “Mayor of Chinatown,” and he personally knew many in Chinatown including tenants of the hotel and the subject property.

He continued: Pat Abe operated the 7th Street Garage from 1973 to 2015. He was born and raised in Seattle as the eldest son of Mitsuji Abe who owned and ran the Dearborn Cash Grocery and Meat Market. At a young age he showed an interest in everything cars, teaching himself everything about them, from how they ran to how to race. In 1973 he purchased the shop from Ted Imanake and quickly won over the patronage of those in the area. After almost 70 years, Pat closed the 7th Street Garage in 2015.

He said that parking is expensive to build and would add to the rent and displace most affordable units. In a number of outreach meetings, the project team heard from community groups that parking should be provided for the new commercial and residential uses. While the code (SMC 23.49.019) does not require that on-site parking be provided, the team has developed a strategy to voluntarily provide off-site parking for the project and has worked out an agreement to provide 50 off-site parking stalls at the Union Station Garage to be used by commercial tenants and their patrons as well as residential tenants. The project is also located very close to the Interim CDA operated surface parking lot located off of Jackson underneath the I-5 overpass. The parking lot is available for community use and is a short walking distance from the project site. This strategy of providing parking off-site and reducing automobile trips into the core of the C-ID is in keeping with the goals of the ISRD as outlined in SMC 23.66.302 B and D, “Protecting the area and its periphery from the proliferation of parking lots and other automobile-oriented use” and “Discouraging traffic and parking resulting from athletic stadium events and commuters working outside the district.”

He said they conducted an urban analysis of the built environment around the site, the fabric to weave the design into. He said the noted window groupings, repetitive window and door openings, simple masses, subtle base, middle and top, simple, quiet, heavy and unified. He showed examples of contemporary use of masonry. He said the board wants to see a building that belongs in the district – simple, quiet, thick and heavy, and unified.

Anton Dekon showed the proposed massing options and further refinements made since last briefing. He said the allowable structure height in the IDR-75/85 zone is 85’ for residential uses. While setbacks are not required, the building mass will be offset from the east property line by 10’ to allow for increased window area on that side of the building and to set back from potential future development. An upper-level setback is also provided on the west side of the building to reduce the structure height along 7th Avenue. A central courtyard provides access to light and air for the building’s interior-facing residential units. The massing takes the form of a U-shape in plan with the courtyard opening up to the south in order to maximize daylight during winter months when the sun is low in the sky and traces a more southern arc. The upper-level setback results in a

building with a stepped roof line and creates an opportunity for breaking down the mass of the building.

Mr. Dekon said the height of the building creates an opportunity for this project to make connections with taller buildings being developed east of I-5, helping to knit together the urban fabric of the C-ID. The lot size and need for a south-facing light well constrain alternative options for the building massing.

He said the “floating” volumes are connected to the ground by extending the brick cladding down to the lower levels. Additional canopies are provided to increase weather protection. Large garage door openings are inserted into the storefront glazing to enhance the connection between the commercial spaces and the sidewalk. Enhanced pedestrian realm. He said the location of the split in the massing along Jackson is modified to improve the proportions of the volumes and bring them more in alignment with the proportions of nearby buildings. Proportions are more in harmony with surrounding residential buildings

Mr. Dekon said in keeping with masonry traditions of the C-ID, the facade of the building is expressed as three tiers -- a base, a middle, and a top. The upper tier is differentiated from the middle tier in order to reduce the perceived height of the building. The middle tier relates closely to the historic fabric in its scale, color, detailing, and fenestration, while the upper tier feels one step removed. Three-tier design relates to District architectural traditions. Demarcation between middle and top tiers reduces building’s apparent height.

He said they explored how to design to relate to existing buildings in cornice line, sill course and window patterning in a modern way. He said Asian character and cultural meaning manifests at street level. He noted opportunity for under canopy artwork.

Mr. Gilbert said he appreciated the presentation and depth of perception. He encouraged the design team to think about ways the project could contribute to the safety of the area. He said economic vitality and increased presence of people are mentioned but he encouraged thinking about ways the project can contribute to safety. He said under I-5 parking is not safe and for a single parent it could be unsafe and frightening.

Ms. Baskerville agreed with safety needs. Referring to written public comment, she asked about sidewalk bump outs related to safety of seniors.

Mr. Padden said the curb bulb purview is under SDOT. He said it is intended as a traffic calming element and that it is important to engage seniors in that message.

Ms. Frestedt said members of the community have expressed concern about curb bulbs for other projects. She said she will share comments with SDOT colleagues.

Mr. Yip said Option C massing is a good jump off point. He said he was concerned with the canyon effect and suggested modulation. He said he has heard that parking is an issue and noted 50 offsite parking spaces for 240 units and retail. He said the community sees it as irresponsible and needs more input. He suggested talking to the developer and family about it.

Mr. Dekom said the 50 stalls are at Union Station garage, not under I-5.

Mr. Fujimoto noted concern from community regarding parking and said people who might use vehicles are not the most mobile people and to consider ADA parking. He asked the team to show, in the plan, where parking will be provided. And where it will be provided for less mobile individuals.

Mr. Zhang said it is an impressive project. He said the building is contemporary, but in character with the District. He said it is a small site and parking is not easy to add but it would be nice to see if it can be addressed for ADA. He suggested exploring taking advantage of the grade change and put parking on the second floor. He said the progress in design makes sense. He suggested having some relief on the Jackson façade and more pedestrian connection. He said you can tell this is one building. He said the building looks more elegant as a single building rather than pretending to be two. He asked if the team has thought about varying brick color at the base to highlight it.

Ms. Baskerville appreciated all the work since last meeting and said she appreciated the community outreach. She appreciated the diagrams on how buildings relate to one another. She said the building is taller next to Republic Hotel and asked if thought had been put into an art opportunity to deter graffiti. She said pedestrian-oriented art would be beneficial to pedestrian experience and noted the proposed awning art. She said she appreciated the thoughtfulness about community space and suggested that having a separate entrance would allow greater access for users and be safer for residents.

Mr. Yip said the community space is important and having an exterior entrance from the street is important. He noted safety concerns and asked if there is a lighting scheme, especially at night when businesses are closed.

Mr. Le thanked the community for allowing him to be part of the Board. He echoed comments from Mr. Gilbert about safety and lighting. He asked where loading will occur.

Ms. Kwan agreed with many of the comments made by fellow Board members and added that walking nine minutes from parking spaces to building would be a turn-off.

Mr. Fujimoto said he would like to see a lighting plan; at street level he would like to see safety goals, circulation of people and drop off and loading plans. He said street level with art opportunities is appreciated. He said he has a great respect for building and how the building is organized – quiet, unified, thickness and authenticity in brick. He noted the brick bond patterning turning the corner from west to south façade and asked if thought had been given to that elevation in keeping with the reference and urban fabric of other building which is itself art. He asked if the spandrel as artwork would fit with a quiet narrative that has been developed.

Ms. Frestedt said she had suggested that the developer explore an alternate treatment to break up massing. She said she appreciated the team's intent to explore material approach to massing. She asked board to address if more discussion on this project is needed.

Mr. Fujimoto said he admired the progression of massing moves provided and the presence in the pedestrian realm. He said this is a successful strategy to reduce apparent height.

Mr. Gilbert said he echoed Mr. Fujimoto's comments about the artistry in masonry and that he likes the direction the project is going; he appreciated how it is represented in presentation. He wanted to see more about safety and lighting and potential solution.

Ms. Baskerville noted that prior Board members had concern about the massing and canyon effect. She said the brick treatment breaks down the sense of scale. The applicant has done a good job of making it feel less massive. She said she wants to see the pedestrian experience, art and lighting and the art for the upper brick wall noting that graffiti is an issue in CID.

Mr. Zhang supports the project's direction and design. He said art at the top would be too much (referring to alternate scheme presented by the applicant). He said to keep the building quiet and sophisticated.

Mr. Le appreciated the respect given to culture and the district and the research that has been done. He said he liked Ms. Baskerville's idea for artwork on upper brick wall and asked if a future project might cover that up. He noted the subtle art under the canopy.

Mr. Yip said the general direction is good. He said the hotel next door is being restored so the height won't change. He said he had mixed feelings about the awning artwork and suggested the team explore vertical banners for seasonal celebrations; he noted there are lots of seasonal celebrations in the district. He suggested considering rotating art.

Ms. Kwan said a parking solution would be good. She noted public comment about social and community engagement and said she wanted more community engagement about how to use the community room. She suggested giving more thought to art.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciated the presentation and analysis and said the team captured the richness of the CID and adjacent buildings. He said powerful cues have been picked up on. He said Asian character is often not in the brick above but mostly in tenants at ground floor. He said there are a lot of interesting motifs in the Republic Building – Asian ornamentation, thoughts, and how brick is done in a way only found in the district. He said there is opportunity to show illustrative images and suggested a lighting plan. He said he wanted to see a street level plan to see thought given to streetscape. He said a top-down view offers ways to view bump outs and drop off, etc.

Ms. Zhang said the building needs more color modulation so beige and it needs more lift to it. He said an alternate treatment at the base is an opportunity.

Ms. Frestedt appreciated the progression, and the way project was presented with massing and context. She said there is much interest by other design teams and this approach provides a good example. She noted the base understanding of context, breakdown, detail that further refines, massing headed in the right direction. Further

articulation in design detail. Overall mass direction headed in right direction with solid to void ratio.

Mr. Neiman said the feedback was clear and will help them as they move to the next stage. He said he was grateful for the help and clarity.

Ms. Frestedt said parking is an issue throughout the City, not just this neighborhood. She noted the impacts on business and the reliance on availability of parking on businesses. She said the district struggles more broadly but as more large projects come online the demand will increase.

121421.3 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt reported the 2022 ISRD meeting schedule is posted on the website; meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays and there is just one meeting in September. She said she would send meeting appointments to board members. She said agendas are sent out a week in advance of the meeting. She said 2022 will be busy when design teams are ready to come before the board. She said Matt Fujimoto's term concludes December 31, 2021 and notice has been put out for filling the position. She said the deadline for submissions will be extended. She said it may take a while for Boards and Commissions to process. She said Mr. Fujimoto will continue to serve through January while awaiting replacement.

Ms. Frestedt thanked interpreters Qingci and Lillian for their work. She noted that meetings are not recorded in language because of licensing constraints but that she is working to change that.

Adjourn 6:20 pm.

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator
206-684-0226
rebecca.frestedt@seattle.gov