



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 12/23

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, January 24, 2023

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville
Nella Kwan
Adrian Lam
Michael Le
Ming Zhang

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Ryan Gilbert
Andy Yip

Chair Adrian Lam called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

012423.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 10, 2022

MM/SC/LB/ML 4:0:1 Minutes approved. Ms. Kwan abstained.

September 27, 2022

MM/SC/MZ/ML 4:0:1 Minutes approved. Ms. Baskerville abstained.

October 11, 2022

MM/SC/LB/MZ 3:0:2 Minutes approved. Ms. Kwan and Mr. Le abstained.

012423.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

012423.3 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

012423.31 519 6th Ave S. – Nagomi Tea House

Applicant: Paul Nunn and Alexandra Nason, Urban Artworks

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed application of a mural applied to the south façade. The mural will be painted on to a series of boards and adhered to the building. Exhibits included plans. She said the site is located within the Asian Design Character District. The building is a non-contributing building.

Alexandra Nason and Paul Nunn, Urban Artworks, presented. Presentation materials in DON file.

Ms. Nason provided an overview of the project and noted Comcast approached them with a team project. The Nagomi Tea House said the art would be painted on plywood panels and then attached to building when done. She noted the proposed location of the murals on site plan and said there are four sections to work with; murals would attach within framed blocks. She said the 4' x 8' panels would be cut to fit within framing on elevation. She said the images would be in uplifting, bright colors and provide a nod to the four seasons and the passing of time. Attachment details were provided showing screw placement. She said Comcast employees will paint panels in a studio during Lunar New Year and then community will be invited to participate. Anti-graffiti coating will be applied. She said she was grateful to YK and the Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA) for assistance in determining the location of the mural. She said the Tea House was selected due to its central location and volume of foot traffic. They worked with Tori Shao, a local artist. She said the design is intended to connect the Pacific Northwest to Japan and other Asian cultures and will feature Mt. Rainier, great blue heron, cherry blossoms, pine trees and a red crowned crane.

Mr. Lam cited SMC 23.66.336 and noted that transparency was not an issue at this location, since there is not glazing here.

Ms. Frestedt advised that murals are reviewed not based on art / content, but more about attachment and materials. She noted that the subject building is non-contributing.

Mr. Zhang appreciated the project and said that art is very important. He said the building owners are Japanese and questioned if the art should be Japanese.

Ms. Frestedt said content is not in board purview. The applicant worked with the property owner to determine content. She said it is not a regulatory requirement to represent multi-culturalism.

Ms. Baskerville appreciated the work and asked how the site was chosen and what process they went through. She said the building is minimalist Japanese architecture and putting a mural on it changes it significantly.

Mr. Nunn said the process started last spring and 4-5 locations were selected. He said they narrowed content with property owners and this site and design were the easiest to get on board with.

Ms. Frestedt said the CIDBIA reached out last year and vetted a couple locations with staff. Historic masonry buildings would not have been appropriate. She said the applicants found the best fit with location and property owner.

Ms. Nason said some property owners they talked to were not interested.

Mr. Nunn said minimalist Japanese architecture is a great aesthetic but the long stretch of wall attracts graffiti. He said the hope is the murals will brighten the space and curb graffiti.

Mr. Zhang asked what other locations were explored.

Mr. Nunn noted Pacific Rim, Happy Lamb, Rex Apartments amongst others. He said this building and location were a good fit and less restrictive.

Mr. Zhang said location is important. He wondered about longevity of adjacent structure. He thought the murals should be placed higher and out of reach of pedestrians to curb graffiti.

Ms. Nason said graffiti is less common on artwork. She said the graffiti coating is useful in cleaning and deters graffiti. She said because the work is on panels, the artwork can be rehomed.

Mr. Le asked if the owner has seen the design.

Ms. Nason said yes.

Ms. Frestedt said it is a requirement of the Certificate of Approval process that the owner sign the application form.

Mr. Le said artwork is better than graffiti. He appreciated the message in the art and said the design was beautiful.

Mr. Nunn said during de-install, screws would be removed and holes filled with silicon.

Mr. Lam appreciated the presentation and said the art would enliven that stretch of the street. He appreciated the stylistic approach, content and colors. He suggested using cleats for installation.

Mr. Nunn said it is more complex to engineer a cleat and straighten and align panels. He said the panels would be set further out from the building. He said they would paint screwheads so they won't be so distracting.

Mr. Lam asked if the plywood would be inset with millwork.

Mr. Nunn said it would be flush with millwork; art painted onto 5/8" plywood.

Mr. Lam asked if lighting was considered.

Mr. Nunn said no.

Mr. Zhang asked if the board can only approve or if it can select the site.

Ms. Frestedt said the board does not select location. It is up to the community and applicant.

Mr. Lam said to be clear in how the panels are attached into the millwork frames so it doesn't feel like an afterthought. He preferred cleat installation if possible.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for exterior alterations – artwork on the south façade of the building, at 519 6th Ave S.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the January 24, 2023 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

This action is based on the **following applicable sections of the International Special Review District Ordinance:**

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior Building Finishes

- A. General Requirements**
- B. Asian Design Character District**

Secretary of the Interior Standard #9

MM/SC/ML/LB 5:0:0 Motion carried.

Mr. Nunn said a small Dibond informational plaque will be installed. He said placement would be thoughtful.

012423.4 STAFF SUMMARY and BOARD BUSINESS

Administrative approvals since January 10, 2023

Ms. Frestedt went over administrative approvals.

Ms. Frestedt appreciated Board questions and comments regarding art. She said each project is different and is considered on an individual basis. She said lots is happening following lockdown, damage to buildings, graffiti and attempts to beautify the

neighborhood. She said the CIDBIA is working with entities to look at opportunities for artwork. She said she would invite Historic South Downtown to speak to board about what is coming and they can share thoughts about location.

Mr. Zhang said the Board should have purview over where art should be located and given a choice about placement.

Ms. Frestedt said the governing ordinance for the historic district gives no authority to pick location. Early in planning the Board can provide feedback about proposed siting. She noted some artworks have been installed in the neighborhood without prior review/approval and are in violation. Without prior approval, property owner will have to come back to board for review / approval; if denied, property owner would have to correct / remove it.

There was a comment from the Board about selection of locations of publicly-funded art.

Ms. Frestedt said this project was a special project funded by Comcast and is not being done with public funds. She noted that some property owners contacted about this project declined to participate. Acknowledging Board member concerns, she said there should be transparency in the selection process.

Ms. Frestedt said the notice for Ms. Baskerville's position has been posted. The deadline has been extended due to low response.

Ms. Frestedt said the administrative review legislation is working its way through City Council.

Adjourn

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator
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