



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 62/24

Staff REPORT

for Board meeting March 6, 2024

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior’s Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

030624.51	<u>Washington Street Boat Landing</u> 199 Alaskan Way Applicant: Noreen Shinohara, Graham Baba Briefing regarding sign plan for the Molly Moon’s
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Staff report: The Washington Street Boat Landing, originally known as the Seattle Harbor Department is within the Pioneer Square Preservation District boundaries but is also independently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2013 the Pergola structure was temporarily removed for the rebuilding of the seawall. In 2016 Rehabilitation of the building began while in storage and was then moved back to the site in 2017 where the rehabilitation was completed.

At the October 18, 2023 meeting the Board had a briefing which included proposed signage. The Board asked for view studies of the structure with signage, alternatives, and night views. This briefing includes view studies of the size of the signs as previously proposed but not view studies of the signs at a size that complies with the guidelines. This briefing only provide alternatives to the proposed blade sign. Staff noticed that the night views provided seemed dark so staff verified with SDOT that the previously approved lighting was installed and is turned on however they thought the temporary black security fencing is making it appear darker than it will be.

The proposal includes three neon signs, and a blade sign. The proposal for the blade sign is revised to be a 6 square feet externally lit blade sign.

The neon sign “Molly Moon’s” includes letters “ll” are 1’ 3 7/8” and the “y” is 1’ 4½” as previously presented. The rest of the letters are 9 ¾ inches. The guidelines provide an exception of up to three letters larger than 10 inches, the exception requires there to be a reduced sign plan. There are four signs proposed and three of the four are asking for exceptions to the rules for larger letter size.

The neon sign "Ice Cream" on the front façade letters size are 1' 2 ½" all larger than 10 inches.

The neon sign "Ice Cream" on the north façade are 1' 7" (19 inches).

The letters are all larger than the maximum allowed 10 inch in the guidelines for most signs and the maximum 12 inches allowed in the sign bands. While not yet adopted the Board has drafted a change to allow letter size up to 18 inches (1'6") in a sign band. If the Board considers the location on the north façade as similar to a sign band they could consider if the sign should comply with the 12 inch maximum in the guidelines now or 18 inches in the draft guidelines.

The Board will need to articulate the reason for any exceptions, including how the context of this site is different than other locations. to avoid challenges to our otherwise consistent application of the guidelines.

Code Citations:

SMC

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

A. Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.160 Signs

B. To ensure that flags, banners and signs are of a scale, color, shape and type compatible with the Pioneer Square Preservation District objectives stated in Section 23.66.100 and with the character of the District and the buildings in the District, to reduce driver distraction and visual blight, to ensure that the messages of signs are not lost through undue proliferation, and to enhance views and sight lines into and down streets, the overall design of a sign, flag, or banner, including size, shape, typeface, texture, method of attachment, color, graphics and lighting, and the number and location of signs, flags, and banners, shall be reviewed by the Board and are regulated as set out in this Section 23.66.160. Building owners are encouraged to develop an overall signage plan for their buildings.

C. In determining the appropriateness of signs, including flags and banners used as signs as defined in Section 23.84A.036, the Preservation Board shall consider the following:

1. Signs Attached or Applied to Structures.

a. The relationship of the shape of the proposed sign to the architecture of the building and with the shape of other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;

- b. The relationship of the texture of the proposed sign to the building for which it is proposed, and with other approved signs located on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
 - c. The possibility of physical damage to the structure and the degree to which the method of attachment would conceal or disfigure desirable architectural features or details of the structure (the method of attachment shall be approved by the Director);
 - d. The relationship of the proposed colors and graphics with the colors of the building and with other approved signs on the building or in proximity to the proposed sign;
 - e. The relationship of the proposed sign with existing lights and lighting standards, and with the architectural and design motifs of the building;
 - f. Whether the proposed sign lighting will detract from the character of the building; and
 - g. The compatibility of the colors and graphics of the proposed sign with the character of the District.
- 4. When determining the appropriate size of a sign the Board and the Director of Neighborhoods shall also consider the function of the sign and the character and scale of buildings in the immediate vicinity, the character and scale of the building for which the sign is proposed, the proposed location of the sign on the building's exterior, and the total number and size of signs proposed or existing on the building.
 - 6. Projecting signs and neon signs may be recommended only if the Preservation Board determines that all other criteria for permitted signs have been met and that historic precedent, locational or visibility concerns of the business for which the signing is proposed warrant such signing.

RULES FOR THE PIONEER SQUARE PRESERVATION DISTRICT

XX. RULES FOR TRANSPARENCY, SIGNS, AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

The Pioneer Square Preservation Ordinance reflects a policy to focus on structures, individually and collectively, so that they can be seen and appreciated. Sign proliferation or inconsistent paint colors, for example, are incompatible with this focus, and are expressly to be avoided. (8/93)

B. General Signage Regulations

All signs on or hanging from buildings, in windows, or applied to windows, are subject to review and approval by the Pioneer Square Preservation Board. (8/93) Locations for signs shall be in accordance with all other regulations for signage. (12/94)

The intent of sign regulations is to ensure that signs relate physically and visually to their location; that signs not hide, damage or obscure the architectural elements of the building; that signs be oriented toward and promote a pedestrian environment; and that the products or services offered be the focus, rather than signs. (8/93)

C. Specific Signage Regulations

1. Letter Size. Letter size in windows, awnings and hanging signs shall be consistent with the scale of the architectural elements of the building (as per SMC 23.66.160), but shall not exceed a maximum height of 10 inches unless an exception has been approved as set forth in this paragraph. Exceptions to the 10-inch height limitation will be considered for individual letters in the business name (subject to a limit of no more than three letters) only if both of the following conditions are satisfied: a) the exception is sought as part of a reduced overall sign package or plan for the business; and b) the size of the letters for which an exception is requested is consistent with the scale and character of the building, the frontage of the business, the transparency requirements of the regulations, and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160. An overall sign package or plan will be considered reduced for purposes of the exception if it calls for approval of signage that is substantially less than what would otherwise be allowable under the regulations. (12/94)
2. Sign bands. A sign band is an area located on some buildings in the zone above storefront windows and below second floor windows designed to display signage. (7/99) Letter size in sign bands shall be permitted to a maximum of 12 inches. Letters shall be painted or applied, and shall not be neon. (12/94)
3. Projecting Elements (e.g. blade signs, banners, flags and awnings). There shall be a limit of one projecting element, e.g. a blade sign, banner, or awning per address. If a business chooses awnings for its projecting element, it may not also have a blade sign, flag, or banner, and no additional signage may be hung below awnings. (6/03) Exceptions may be made for businesses on corners, in which case one projecting element per facade may be permitted. (12/94)
4. Blade signs (signs hanging perpendicular to the building). Blade signs shall be installed below the intermediate cornice or second floor of the building, and in such a manner that they do not hide, damage, or obscure the architectural elements of the building. Typically, non-illuminated blade signs will be limited to eight (8) square feet. (12/94)

Blade signs incorporating neon of any kind shall not be permitted unless all of the following conditions are met: a) the neon blade sign is sought as part of a reduced overall sign package or plan for the business; b) neon blade signs shall be limited to six (6) square feet in dimension with letters not to exceed eight (8) inches in height; c) the sign meets the requirements of Neon Signs - Paragraph 3 for the number and type of colors of neon; d) the sign meets the requirements of Signs - Paragraph 5 (above) for installation of a blade sign; e) electrical connection from exterior walls to the blade sign shall be made using rigid, paintable electrical tubing painted to match the building facade and all bends shall closely follow the support structure; f) all signage supports shall be fastened to the exterior wall by the use of metal anchors at existing grout joints only; and g) the sign taken as a whole is consistent with the scale and character of the building, the transparency requirements of the regulations, and all other conditions under SMC 23.66.160. An overall sign package or plan will be considered reduced for purposes of the exception. if it calls for approval of signage that is substantially less than what would otherwise be allowable under regulations. (5/96)
7. Internally Lit Signs. Internally lit or backlit signs are prohibited. (8/93)

D. NEON SIGNS

1. The number of neon signs shall be limited to one for each 10 linear feet of business frontage for the first forty feet of business, and one for each additional 15 feet of frontage for businesses over forty feet. For a business that has transom windows beginning at ten (10) feet above the sidewalk, one additional neon sign to be located within the transom windows would be permitted for every 30 feet of frontage. Signs need not be spaced one per ten feet, but may be clustered, provided the maximum number of approved signs is not exceeded and the grouping does not obscure visibility into the business. Permitted neon signs may be located in transom windows, according to the guidelines contained in this section. (12/94)
2. When a business is on a corner and has a minimum of 10 linear feet of glazing on the secondary facade, additional neon signs are permitted for the secondary facade as on the basis stated in Paragraph 1 for the primary facade. (12/94)
3. No more than three colors, including neon tubes and any backing materials, shall be used on any neon sign. Transparent backing materials are preferred. Neon colors shall be subdued. (8/93, 7/03)
4. Neon is permitted only as signage and shall not be used as decorative trim. (8/93)

Secretary of Interior's Standards

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

Issued: February 28, 2024

Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator