



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

LPB 41/23

MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

City Hall

Hybrid Meeting

Wednesday, February 1, 2023 - 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Dean Barnes

Roi Chang

Matt Inpanbutr

Kristen Johnson

Ian Macleod

Lawrence Norman

Marc Schmitt

Padraic Slattery

Harriet Wasserman

Staff

Sarah Sodt

Erin Doherty

Melinda Bloom

Absent

Taber Caton

Lora-Ellen McKinney

Acting Chair Roi Chang called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

020123.1

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment. Due to technical difficulties with the website, Ms. Doherty asked individuals to email her if wanting to make public comment and said she would monitor it. If contacted, she would let the Board know.

020123.2 MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2022

MM/SC/IM/HW 7:0:1 Minutes approved. Mr. Inpanbutr abstained.

020123.3 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

020123.31 Beacon Hill Garden / Turner-Koepf House
2336 15th Avenue S

Eugenia Woo, Historic Seattle said they are thrilled to be at this point. She noted there are three lots with the house sitting on the middle one. She said Historic Seattle received a grant from King County Conservation with requirement that open space remains undeveloped. She said Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPAR) has an easement on the property and there will be no new development.

Mr. Barnes joined at 3:45pm.

Ms. Doherty provided the history of designation of the property and went over details of the signed agreement. She said the site is a large property and noted historic pear tree orchard at the south end of the property. She said much of the agreement uses typical language. Controlled areas include the site, the exterior of the house (excluding the 2006 addition on the north side), and includes the main interior stair from first floor to second floor.

Ms. Chang asked about parking area and how it might be impacted by proposed bike route.

Ms. Doherty said there is a small, paved area behind the building. Administrative approval is allowed for restriping or putting in bollards, but board approval would be required for anything more.

Mr. Macleod asked if the sundial is mentioned.

Ms. Doherty said it is not historic.

Action: I move to approve Controls and Incentives for the Beacon Hill Garden / Turner-Koepf House, 2336 15th Avenue S.

MM/SC/MI/IM 9:0:0 Motion carried.

020123.4 NOMINATION

020123.41 Continental Hotel
315 Seneca Street

Curran Hagstrom said he is one of three owners and explained they invest in classic 1920's multi-family properties. He said they are attracted to the period charm and the opportunity to restore a beautiful property. He said they want the building designated.

Susan Boyle, BOLA, prepared and presented the nomination report (full report in DON file). She provided context of the building downtown and said that a building on a steep street is interesting; she noted the stepping development, regrades. The building was built in the downtown financial core to serve businesspeople. She said the siting afforded views of water and mountains.

Ms. Boyle noted the history of lodging from crude worker shared spaces, boarding houses to the emergence of luxury hotels. She said Seattle's first hotel building was the Sackler House which was at Front and Jackson streets in Pioneer Square. She said it was a small-framed building / boarding house that was built in 1853 and demolished in 1889. She said the subject building served another class – businessmen who travelled. She said most of the hotels of this time were sited on large parcels with primary entries on level streets while this one was sited on steep streets. She said it is unusual and noted that we don't see these buildings on steep streets.

She said the building is on a 60' x 60' block and is 11-stories tall. She said it is hard to see because of its specific location. She said Seattle's pre-eminent hotel, The Olympic is located a block away. She said it is a luxury five-star hotel. She noted the classical styling with the base middle and cap.

She said Stephen Berg built, owned and operated the hotel. He was born in Norway in and migrated to the United States at the age of 26 and became naturalized in 1909. He established himself as a builder and began to purchase property. By the early 1920s his business reportedly had revenues of over one million dollars. He built the Biltmore and the annex building to provide retail space to help serve the dwellers within the Biltmore. He managed the building and served his tenants and hotel guests personally. She told a story of Berg having caught fish from his yacht that was served in the hotel dining rooms. She said by the 1920s Berg had moved on to develop and own hotels in downtown Seattle including the Claremont, Bergonian/Mayflower. Berg was a contractor, developer and then financier. She said that because of the depression and probably over capitalization he lost everything and ended his life in a humble way in Auburn.

Ms. Boyle said the hotel was advertised as catering to those who appreciate the best at a moderate price. She said the hotel was artistically ornamented and magnificently furnished to become a popular and distinctive lounging and meeting place for its guests. She said the lobby is modest and originally there were no large meeting rooms, but it had a radio station. She said the first commercial radio station opened in Philadelphia in the 1920s and soon after department stores had radio stations so they could advertise. She said Berg got a radio station that opened in the hotel in 1926 which was one of five in the city that had over 100 kilowatts and one of the smallest it didn't last very long. She said it shows Berg's interest in providing special services and promoting his hotels.

She said the building was designed by Dudley Stuart of Stuart and Wheatley. He worked a lot with Berg and designed apartment and commercial buildings and noted the simple, modern but classical proportions with Gothic reference at top. She noted the emergence of Modernism and a new eclectic style with stepped massing to assure sunlight and air at the ground level. She said stepping emphasized the height and the verticals in a different way. She noted use of stepped massing at The Roosevelt, Harborview Hospital and Medical Center, and the Northern Life Building. She said the buildings were decorated with terracotta at the base where the pedestrian would see it and then at the top where the sky profile is so important.

Ms. Boyle said the floors are organized with a double loaded corridor, five rooms on the front end and four in the back. She indicated projecting landings and exterior stair on west elevation. She said the building was originally light in color, prominent entry in the middle with horizontal marquee. She said there were retail spaces at ground level. She said the rooms were small but each had its own bathroom which was a step up for hotels of this period in contrast to those from earlier periods. She said the hotel had excellent views of downtown, Mt. Rainier, the Olympics, Elliot Bay and Seattle's port.

Ms. Boyle said the hotel business transitioned in the 1930s. She said the hotel was rebranded Hotel Earl when taken over by another operator. She noted signage changes related to another operator taking over. She said all operators have been local, the hotel has never been part of a chain or national operation. She said in the 1960s dark colored marblecrete was added to front base of the building, new light fixtures were installed in lobby, and a three-part precast concrete marquee was put over the marblecrete. She said the brickwork was painted over at this point. She said the recycled door came from another hotel to bring people into the basement level restaurant cocktail lounge. She said the lobby was partitioned for retail space, the mezzanine double height spaces were reduced, and an exit door was added to the south. The high ceiling, windows and coffering remain.

She noted the decorative terracotta around the windows is visible on three sides. She said Seneca is a narrow corridor and although the building is next to a historic bank building, there are new larger buildings around. She said the exterior brick was painted and is now peeling. The terracotta work has been maintained at upper levels as well as underneath the applied marblecrete. She said the building has a primary façade and others are secondary although the decorative terracotta around the window openings and the top are visible on three sides.

Ms. Boyle said she agreed with the Staff Report and the building meets the criteria noted.

Mr. Barnes asked if the interior has been renovated.

Ms. Boyle said that the original partitions and bathrooms and hallways are where they were but the rooms have been freshened with new finishes.

Mr. Barnes asked if lobby doors and upper windows were original.

Ms. Boyle said the lobby interior has been renovated. She said the windows have been replaced with aluminum anodized, double hung so they follow the same pattern as the original windows. She said that due to changes on the interior the Staff Report recommends including just the exterior.

Mr. Macleod asked when the marblecrete was installed.

Ms. Boyle said 1962 and indicated the extent of marblecrete installation. The original cladding is intact beneath the marblecrete.

Mr. Norman asked the age of the basement bar.

Ms. Boyle said it is from the 1970s.

Mr. Slattery asked the plans for the 1960s awning.

Ms. Boyle said the ownership will bring future design to board; they plan to restore the building to accommodate a new hotel. The existing awning is incongruent with 1920s building design.

Ms. Chang asked about the building's seismic status.

Mr. Hagstrom said they would look into it but noted the building has great bones with significant historic character. He said the building needs renovation.

Ms. Boyles said in her review process she saw nothing indicating structural review. She said there are no cracks in the concrete staircase and it looks sturdy.

Ms. Chang said the brick or terracotta would show cracks. She expressed interest in learning the condition of terracotta when marblecrete removed.

Mr. Macleod appreciated the ownership's would care for the building and said it is a significant property in its location. He said while he appreciated marblecrete the application here was so out of place and he looks forward to seeing the building restored. He said the building has stood the test of time and would continue that legacy. He appreciated the presentation.

Ms. Johnson supported nomination and said she enjoyed the presentation and nomination report. She said this building is unique in size and while it is not high luxury, but each room had its own bathroom. She said in combination with other historic buildings nearby this is a lovely place in the city. She was glad the building will continue as a hotel and that the owners are sensitive to its character.

Ms. Wasserman supported nomination and said she agreed with the Staff Report. She said it is a lovely building and has a wonderful presence. She was glad the owners want to care for and improve it.

Mr. Barnes supported nomination and said criteria C and D are appropriate. He said there are not too many hotels like this left. He thanked the owners for self-nominating.

Mr. Norman supported nomination and said it is a unique building full of nostalgia. He said the location on a slope is interesting.

Mr. Inpanbutr left the meeting at 4:30 pm.

Mr. Schmitt supported nomination and noted the significant integrity and that it has always been a hotel. He appreciated the presentation.

Ms. Chang noted the unique site on a steep slope. She noted the size and scale of the building in comparison to what is around it. She said the building type is interesting, it isn't an SRO nor is it a luxury hotel. She appreciated the presentation and said she was glad the history of local ownership continues.

Action: I move that the Board approve the nomination of the Continental Hotel at 315 Seneca Street for consideration as a Seattle Landmark; noting the legal description in the Nomination Form; that the features and characteristics proposed for preservation include: the exterior of the building; that the public meeting for Board consideration of designation be scheduled for March 15, 2023; that this action conforms to the known comprehensive and development plans of the City of Seattle.

MM/SC/IM/DB 8:0:0 Motion carried.

020123.5 BOARD BUSINESS