

Members

Mark McIntire, *Chair*
Ross Buffington, *Vice Chair*
Phillip Hill
Ken House
Imad Al Janabi, PhD.
Fred King
Megan Luce
Ha Pham
Pamela Sundell
Caroline T. Swope, PhD.

Kathryn Longwell, North Slope Ex-Officio

Staff

Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer



MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Commission Community and Economic Development Department

Date: May 27, 2009

LPC 86/09

Location: 728 St. Helens, Tacoma Municipal Bldg North, Room 16

Commission Members in Attendance:

Ross Buffington
Ken House (late arrival)
Imad Al Janabi, PhD.
Megan Luce
Mark McIntire
Ha Pham
Pamela Sundell

Staff Present:

Reuben McKnight
Tonie Cook

Others Present:

NA

Commission Members Excused:

Phillip Hill, Fred King

Commission Members Absent:

Kathryn Longwell

Chair McIntire called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Excusal of Absences

Commissioners Hill and King were excused.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 13, 2009 were approved.

2. DESIGN REVIEW

A. 405 6th Avenue

It was noted that the applicant was not in attendance.

Mr. McKnight presented the Staff Report.

The Walker Apartments building was built in 1927 and listed on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places in 1992; extensive rehabilitation was completed in September 2008 meeting the requirements of the Special Tax Valuation program. This is a retroactive proposal to install four exterior light fixtures using approximately 6 feet of conduit piping per light fixture. Four screws were used to attach each conduit line. The proposal includes the installation of a corner 16 inch by 16 inch metal sign attached to the building with four screws and a bracket as shown in the application materials.

The property is protected by a covenant between the owner and the City related to historical property tax abatement (Special Tax Valuation).

Secretary of the Interior's Standards were offered for consideration.

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

Staff provided the following analysis:

1. The Walker Apartments building is historically significant. Constructed in 1927, the building at 405 6th Avenue was built by Robert Walker who was thought to be "one of the leading stone men in the country." According to the nomination form, he leased the Wilkeson quarry, in which the sandstone was recognized by the United States government as the only sandstone that would not absorb water. Wilkeson quarry sandstone was used to face the Walker Apartments.

The nomination form states, "*The Walker Apartments is an important architectural structure in the city and the Northwest. It was considered to be the first apartment building on the coast to be faced with stone and was built with reinforced concrete...Borhek (the architect) paid much attention to the detail throughout the structure. Upon completion, he received an award for the architecture by the State's committee...news articles over the years featured The Walker Apartments, lauding its construction and beauty...*"

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

3. The installation of four light fixtures using 4 conduits and screws on the primary elevation of the building does not meet Secretary of Interior's Standards number 9, specifically, for, "*New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property...*" because the new fixtures were installed with screws, piercing the historic exterior sandstone material on one of the primary elevations of the building.

4. It is not known whether the piercings are watertight, and whether water incursion resulting from the installation will be an issue. It is possible that leaving the installations in place will not cause further damage beyond that which has occurred already.

5. The light fixtures are new features in a contemporary style that differ significantly from the historic light fixture (i.e. globe style), also on the same elevation near the garage opening. In addition, the galvanized conduits and joints are exposed. It is therefore possible that Secretary of Interior's Standard number 9, "*The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment*" is not met by this installation.

6. The corner sign and bracket are new additions to the prominent corner of the building's exterior. The enclosed historic photos (from the nomination file) shows a rooftop sign and another sign with the building's name above the entrance door. The new bracket and sign was installed for the purpose of identifying the street level tenant's business and appears to match the logo of the business which is also on the windows.

7. A staff photo of the building that encompasses the entire façade (with the new features) was presented to the Commission at the meeting.

8. Staff reported that there had been no remediation recommended for the installation holes on the sandstone if the new fixtures were removed in the future.

Mr. McKnight recommended deferral of the application until the applicant can be present at a future meeting.

Commissioners asked staff to provide to the applicant the following questions in preparation of the next meeting: 1) Explain the addition of the light fixtures and sign; and 2) What is recommended to remediate the drilled holes into the façade.

There was discussion on the special tax valuation program and rescinding the benefit to property owners.

There was a motion:

"I move that we, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, defer consideration of the application; request staff to contact the applicant providing Commissioner's questions in advance so the applicant is prepared to answer the questions, and that attendance is mandatory at the next meeting in order to avoid action taken on the special tax valuation".

MOTION: Buffington

SECOND: Al Janabi

MOTION: Carried

3. CHAIR COMMENTS

There were no Chair comments.

4. STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. McKnight reported that the Wedge mailing notice and survey went out as scheduled.

Commissioner Buffington thanked Reuben McKnight for his attendance at the previous evening's Wedge neighborhood meeting.

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The meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Submitted as True and Correct:

Reuben McKnight
Historic Preservation Officer