



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 43/21

### MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, March 9, 2021

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Remote Meeting

#### **Board Members Present**

Matt Chan  
Matt Fujimoto  
Sergio Legon-Talamoni, Chair  
Tanya Woo

#### **Staff**

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

#### **Absent**

Faye Hong  
Russ Williams  
Andy Yip

Chair Sergio Legon-Talamoni called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm.

**In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation is limited to access by the WebEx meeting link or the telephone call-in line provided on agenda.**

#### **030921.1 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Derek Lum expressed concern that KODA is using the pandemic as an excuse to go back on their word to have the corner retail open to the community. He said retail would open the corner to the community and demonstrate a willingness to welcome. He said it is a false comparison to compare empty store to populated amenity space. He urged the board to allow use as amenity space for residents as a short-term use and to find a culturally appropriate tenant for that space when the pandemic ends.

#### **030921.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

##### **030921.21 450 S. Main St. - KODA**

*Applicant:* Lesley Bain, Framework and artists Gerard Tsutakawa and Erin Shigaki

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed installation of artworks by Gerard Tsutakawa and Erin Shigaki, respectively, to be located at street level near the south residential entrance and incorporated into the façade near the southeast corner of the building on S. Main St. Exhibits included plans, renderings, specifications and cut sheets. She said the ISRD Board received a briefing on the proposed artwork on December 8, 2020. A Certificate of Approval for Final Design of the building was issued in January 2019.

Lesley Bain, Framework, presented the application for art at KODA (full presentation materials in DON file). She explained that art locations were specified in Certificate of Approval for the building. The locations for art were agreed on as the building entry and the shadow boxes below the retail at 5th Avenue S and S Main St.

She said the makeup of the Artist Selection Panel was extremely important. They looked for a variety of voices rooted in the neighborhood and its history, with a strong connection to Japanese American culture and knowledge of public art. They asked for recommendations for candidates from the Wing Luke Museum, InterIm and SCIDPDA.

The panel consisted of:

- Blake Nakatsu, Exhibit Developer and YouthCAN Program Manager, Wing Luke Museum
- S Surface, King Street Station Program Lead, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
- Ken Matsudaira, Curator, M. Rosetta Hunter Art Gallery, Seattle Central College
- Tom Kleifgen, Co-owner, Momo, in Nihonmachi
- Christina Nguyen, Nihonmachi /Japantown & Chinatown- International District Community Resident

Ms. Bain said the selection panel agreed on a set of criteria to view the work and score the artists. She summarized the criteria considered. The Selection Panel felt that all of the responding artists had merit in terms of artistic quality, and the decision was difficult because of the high caliber of artist. The panel agreed to hire two artists, one for the entry piece and another for the shadowboxes. The connection to the neighborhood was highly ranked. The panel selected Gerard Tsutakawa as the artist for the sculpture at the entry and Erin Shigaki for the artwork in the shadow boxes.

Ms. Bain said both artists have exceptionally strong roots to the neighborhood. As a teenager, Mr. Tsutakawa swept the floor and stocked the shelves at the Uwajimaya store that once stood on the site. Ms. Shigaki spent much of her childhood in Nihonmachi with her grandparents and has focused her art on bringing the stories of Seattle's Japanese community to the public.

Ms. Bain went on to say that artists are expert storytellers in different ways. Tsutakawa creates iconic sculptural expressions that connect with people, exemplified by the dragon in the Donny Chin International Children's Park. Shigaki's work has included both abstractions and photographic images that have engaged communities in both the history of place and the issues of our time. The Selection Panel was pleased with the idea of pairing of a seasoned iconic sculptor with a younger artist that is similarly rooted in the neighborhood from the next generation and having two strong complimentary artistic voices represented.

Artist statements in DON file.

Mr. Tsutakawa said he has been an artist 'for a while' and has created many public art pieces, mostly in bronze. He said his first piece of public art is the Dragon in Donnie Chin Park International Children's Park. He said art should not be separated from the community; it should be part of the community and it should be touched. He said he grew up in the community, his family dined here, and he worked at Uwajimaya in the 1950s.

Ms. Bain spoke on behalf of Erin Shigaki who was unable to attend meeting. She said Shigaki is a younger artist who remembers coming to the CID with her grandmother.

Mr. Tsutakawa said the entry sculpture 'XO' or kisses and hugs is a universal language. He said the design is rooted in his Japanese and northwest heritage and will greet visitors to the neighborhood.

Ms. Bain said the sculpture is 7' tall. She said it you can see through it and it meets CPTED principles, referring to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. She noted on elevation of entry where the sculpture will sit along the slope of the hill. She noted the siting of the shadow boxes and indicated grade change on drawing. She said the concept for the shadowboxes is to create a set of circular stone mon (family crests) representing the resiliency of Seattle's Japanese American community which was once located in the heart of the Chinatown-International District, where KODA is located. Three mon will be made from Columbia River basalt. Each will be on 20" diameter, 2" deep circular stone pieces hand-cut and polished by a sub-contracted vendor. The 2" depth will allow the stones to be attached from behind in the 4" deep shadow boxes with the appearance of floating.

Meaning of the Mon:

Mizuhiki: A traditional knot made of twisted rice paper usually gracing gifts and homes on special occasions. The knot is symbolic of the Japanese American community's strength and fortitude. May this mizuhiki impart this same strength and endurance on the current inhabitants of the Chinatown-International District.

Tanzaku and Kiku: Wish flag and chrysanthemum. Tanzaku contain handwritten wishes of gratitude and for a good future. They are traditionally hung from trees and sacred spaces during festivals. Kiku symbolize longevity, rejuvenation, and royalty. May this pairing evoke a wish for healing and dignity in this neighborhood.

Matsu: Pine. Matsu are symbolic of longevity, virtue, and youth. Japanese immigrants found Pacific Northwest evergreens were similar to the ones they left behind. In Japan, matsu are also used to mark the boundaries of the sacred ground of temples and shrines. May these pines bless this land in remembrance.

Ms. Bain said the original intent of community outreach was to have in-person meetings with presentations and input. COVID-19 restrictions have meant following a different approach. She said both digital and paper media in English and Chinese were created to try to reach as many people as possible. Input is possible via phone, email and the website. Flyers were distributed around the neighborhood with information on the art concepts. They were left with businesses, including smaller shops and restaurants and larger businesses with bulletin boards such as Uwajimaya and Kinokuniya. They were left, with permission, where newspapers and literature were on display in cafes and tea shops

including Oasis Tea Zone and the Panama Hotel. Flyers were also left with apartment building managers who would take them for posting, including at Hirabayashi Place, Icon Apartments, and Imperial House.

Mr. Tsutakawa said he designed his piece with consideration of positioning and scale at the site. He said that placement is important. The sculpture will be placed 24” away from post to create traffic around it. He said he wanted it to be a scale that would have a presence and could be used as a pathfinder. He went over installation details and said anchor bolts will be attached into slab. He said a single light, slightly off center will illuminate the art. He said lighting will have a warmer tone to bring out multi-hued patina.

Ms. Bain said a plaque will be placed on the downhill side of the shadowboxes so it will be easier to read. She said inset boxes will be finished with clear glazing; LED strip will provide up-lighting and will make the mom glow and look like it is floating. The electrical connections will not be visible. She went over plaque details and said it will be integrated into artwork with the sculpture plaque on the column and the shadow box plaque to side.

Ms. Woo asked what the plaque material will be.

Ms. Bain said it will be brass, affixed from behind.

Mr. Chan asked about installation of LED strip.

Ms. Bain said it will be installed at top half and light will bounce around in recessed well. The mons will be behind glass so they will be protected. She said the light will go around 360°.

There was discussion about the placement of the artwork and its proximity to the sidewalk.

Mr. Tsutakawa said it will be fairly close the edge and you could touch the sculpture as you step down.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciated the warmer tone of lighting selected and the quality of surface. He said it is a wonderful outcome and quality and the messaging is positive.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni shared Mr. Fujimoto’s sentiments. He said he is familiar with the work of both artists and it goes without saying both works are a welcome addition to this project. He said the art adds placemaking aspects to the corner.

Ms. Frestedt suggested conditioning the motion with submittal of updated plan of lighting and attachment of plaque, since those elements are still being refined.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni concurred that the sculpture lighting sheet should be updated as a condition of approval.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for Exterior Alterations at 450 S. Main St. condition on submission of updated lighting layout for sculpture and attachment details for plaque.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the March 9, 2021 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 23.66.302 – International Special Review District goals and objectives**

The International District is the urban focal point for the Asian American community. The International Special Review District is established to promote, preserve and perpetuate the cultural, economic, historical, and otherwise beneficial qualities of the area, particularly the features derived from its Asian heritage, by:

- A. Reestablishing the District as a stable residential neighborhood with a mixture of housing types;
- B. Encouraging the use of street-level spaces for pedestrian-oriented retail specialty shops with colorful and interesting displays;
- C. Protecting the area and its periphery from the proliferation of parking lots and other automobile-oriented uses;
- D. Encouraging the rehabilitation of existing structures;
- E. Improving the visual and urban design relationships between existing and future buildings, parking garages, open spaces and public improvements within the International District;
- F. Exercising a reasonable degree of control over site development and the location of off-street parking and other automobile-oriented uses; and
- G. Discouraging traffic and parking resulting from athletic stadium events and commuters working outside the District.

**SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes**

- A. **General Requirements.** To retain and enhance the visual order of the District, which is created by existing older buildings that provide unique character and form through their subtle detailing and quarter-block and half-block coverage, new development, including exterior remodeling, should respect the architectural and structural integrity of the building in which the work is undertaken, through sympathetic use of colors, material and style. Exterior building facades shall be of a scale compatible with surrounding structures. Window proportions, floor height, cornice line, street elevations and other elements of the building facades shall relate to the scale of the existing buildings in the immediate area.
- C. **Exterior Building Design Outside the Asian Design Character District.** Outside the Asian Design Character District, earthen colors and masonry construction with nonmetallic surfaces are preferred. Concrete construction will also be permitted if treated in a manner or incorporated into a design that provides visual interest and avoids large unbroken surface areas.

**Secretary of the Interior’s Standards**

#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property.

#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

MM/SC/MC/MF            4:0:0    Motion carried.

**030921.3 PROJECT BRIEFING**

**030921.31 450 S. Main St. - KODA**

*Presenters:* Yang Lee, Da-Li International

Briefing on proposed change of use for the corner level commercial space from retail to amenity space for the building.

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed change in use of corner retail space and noted significant discussion had taken place throughout the design review process on how the corner was to be used and open to the community. She said that Mr. Lee has requested to brief the Board to request feedback on the change of use.

Yang Lee said they understood the importance of street activation and requested feedback from the board on use of the space as amenity space for the residents of the building. He said the square footage is approximately 760 square feet.

Gary Lin, Da-Li International, said the COVID climate has presented a challenge in their search for open concept retail tenants. He said using the space as amenity space for the building residents would activate the area that would otherwise be empty. He said the space could be used as a resident touch-down spot when waiting for a ride. He said he would prefer to activate the space rather than let it sit empty.

There was discussion about code requirements for ground floor uses.

Ms. Frestedt said public comment was received and forwarded to the board.

Mr. Lee provided a rendering comparing the corner retail space occupied and unoccupied. He said when unoccupied, it is a dark corner at night.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni thanked the presenters and explained to board that as this was a briefing, no action would be taken, the presenters request feedback and recommendations.

Ms. Chan said he was not on the board when the application was approved and asked what was promised to the community.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said that initially a hybrid retail / lobby used was discussed at several board meetings. The board said the space should be reserved for whatever retail activity was proposed.

Ms. Frestedt said there was lots of discussion about the orientation of the corner and if there could be an entrance there. She said the grade is a challenge. She said they discussed ways to help bring community into the building with retail hybrid and retail at the corner.

Mr. Lee said they proposed retail being open retail hours and closed after.

Mr. Chan asked if any of the three retail spaces on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been leased.

Mr. Lin said none. He said they have been talking to one restaurant that could occupy two spaces.

Mr. Chan said the goal is to activate the area for residential use in neighborhood and retail goes a long way. He said the artist rendering show amenity space activity when the use would likely be sparse. He asked if there are other amenity spaces in the building.

Mr. Lin identified other amenity spaces including roof top area, level 7 area, dog run on ground level. He said what they are proposing would be an extension of the lobby. He said there will be times there will be no one there but they hope it would be used. He said potential buyers see it as a good waiting place for pickups, deliveries. He said activation is important. He said they want a solution that will activate the area as it is more attractive to buyers. He said hopefully the challenge of finding retail will be short-term.

Mr. Fujimoto asked what open concept experience was considered.

Mr. Lin said a coffee kiosk, soft seating, small retail, quick eats, but that they have not found any interested vendors.

Mr. Fujimoto asked how that space would look as an extension of residential use.

Mr. Lin said they could light it better and put seating there. It wouldn't be as activated as retail but would look better than empty shell space.

Mr. Fujimoto commented on this being a very special corner. He said he admired that the ownership came forth with open concept retail.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if the proposed amenity use is the desired outcome or if it would be temporary with a return to retail.

Mr. Lin said they would love that to happen but can't say it will. He said once the Homeowners' Association (HOA) takes control they will not be involved.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked what measures they had explored in locating a tenant.

Mr. Lin said he reached out to retail brokers and independent contacts to gauge interest and there hasn't been any. He said he welcomes input if anyone know an interested local retailer.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said the board won't mandate it but SCIDPDA and Interim might be able to assist connecting proposed tenants to the property owner. He said the board has recommended this to others.

Mr. Lin said he did meet with SCIDPDA but could try again.

Ms. Woo said Shanti Breznau is the business development person. She said Ms. Breznau was helpful to her when finding tenants for the Louisa. She said the corner spot was the last spot to fill. She said it is difficult to do a full lease before a building is built. She said it took months to a year and she said she suspects the once the occupancy rate is up, it will go.

Ms. Frestedt clarified that this area is outside of the retail core and is not subject to street level use requirements. She said the overall goals and objectives are a desire and preference given to improving visual and design relations are encouraged; they are preferred, not required.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said the board originally expressed gratitude and was on board with proposed retail because this is so prominent in a highly contentious development. He said he thought retail would remain. He expressed concern about what happens when the space is turned over to the HOA and asked if all options are off the table. He said there is a strong desire way back in design phase and the developer made a commitment to make this a retail space. He said he was concerned about the potential change in use.

Mr. Fujimoto reiterated KODA is not in the retail core and there is no requirement for retail there. He said the proposal has three retail suites to contribute to the color and vibrancy of the streetscape. He said to recognize the power and generosity of those edges and the push back when shared with the community.

Ms. Frestedt said she received and approved administratively a request by DaLi to use one of the retail spaces as office for DaLi International with the understanding that corner space would be retail.

Mr. Lin said the process is indicative of the market we are in. He said there is lack of activity in all three locations. He said while there has been a request to use one retail space for office, they would switch right back to retail once they have a tenant. He said that is their hope. He said the restaurant that has expressed interested is one ownership group that is interested in two of the retail spaces.

Ms. Frestedt asked if DaLi would still have office in the building.

Mr. Lin said DaLi office would likely move to the live-work space at the southwest corner.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said the economic landscape is difficult and any activation is better than none.

Mr. Chan said that given the contentiousness of the project he suggested making another run at involving the community to occupy the space even as hybrid community space. He said there needs to be some olive branch shown. He said the appearance is this is an economic decision and the community in this area is expecting activation and access to the building via retail. He said otherwise it will seem like a fortress. He said they should make every effort to meet with the community.

Mr. Fujimoto said it is a residential building. He said from an urban design perspective the corner is permitted to be flexible as resident amenity and retail functionality.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said there is precedent in the district for innovative use of space and he suggested contacting Hello Em, in Little Saigon, which shares space with Friends of Little Saigon office and hosts a café. He said there is precedent for partnership and dynamic, open-ended retail. He suggested more exploration to find a partner or tenant connecting economics, community and residents. He said to make every effort to make it happen.

Mr. Lin said they take input to heart that the community wants a presence in the neighborhood and building. He said he will take all feedback.



**030921.4 BOARD BUSINESS**

Ms. Frestedt said the election of Chair and Vice Chair will be postponed because three members are absent today and it wouldn't be appropriate to do so without them.

She reported the deadline for applying for the vacant board position is March 22, 2021; she noted three applications have been received with two of them being architects.

Ms. Frestedt said she is working on switching ISRD Board meetings from WebEx to Zoom to be more accessible and familiar for non-English speakers. She said Zoom will allow for simultaneous translation. She said that City Council uses Zoom. She said once meetings are switched to Zoom the board will reconvene new construction project briefings in a virtual setting. She said greater outreach with community will be done to raise awareness and raise awareness of how community can stay engaged and provide comment.

Guidelines review is still in process.

She said Mr. Legon-Talamoni's last meeting will be today, if there is no meeting on March 23. She thanked him for his service and on-going dedication to the community. She appreciated that he continued to serve after his term ended.

**Adjourn** 6:15 pm

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