

APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Osama Quotah, Chair

Shannon Loew, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Megan Groth

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

May 1, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 5:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Fire Station 32 – West Seattle Junction

Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Chair

Shannon Loew, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Megan Groth

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman

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May 1, 2014	Project:	Fire Station 32 – West Seattle Junction
3:00 – 5:00 pm	Phase:	90% design
	Previous reviews:	8/1/13 60% design approved
	Presenters:	Mark Adams Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Alison Maitland Scheetz Swift Company
	Attendees:	Charles Cordova SFD Michael Fernandes FAS Marcia Iwasaki Arts & Cultural Affairs David Kunselman FAS Sandra Mallory OSE Cameron Marshall Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Robert Miller Bohlin Cywinski Jackson Mark Nakagawara FAS Emma Nowinski Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the 90% design of Fire Station 32 in the West Seattle Junction. On August 1, 2013, the Design Commission approved the 60% design and before that reviewed the 30% design in subcommittee.

Summary of Proposal

This project involves the replacement of the existing Fire Station 32, built in 1966, at 3715 SW Alaska Street in West Seattle with a new facility on the same site, funded through the Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy Program. The new 20,000 SF fire station will house an Engine company (E32), Ladder company (L11), Medic unit (M32) and Battalion Chief (B7).

The project is sited on a tight urban lot in the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village and bounded by SW Alaska Street to the north, 38th Avenue SW to the west, and alleys to the east and south. Zoned NC3P-40, the site is adjacent to a single-family zone to the south and neighborhood commercial zones to the north, east, and west with height limits of 40, 65, and 85 feet, respectively. Throughout the neighborhood, mixed-use developments have replaced older, smaller buildings in recent years. New development not only brings more people to the surrounding neighborhood but is likely to obscure some of the views towards downtown that the existing fire station has. The fire station is situated between a taller commercial zone and the single-family area uphill to the south.

Similar to the current station, the proposed design accommodates apparatus bays for the ladder, engine, medic, and battalion chief on the north part of the site exiting onto 38th Ave SW. The site slopes upwards towards the southeast allowing two levels of tandem parking spaces stacked on top of each

other in the SE corner. Lower parking is accessed from the east alley and upper parking from the south alley.

The proposed building houses operations spaces on the first floor and basement, administrative functions on a second floor mezzanine level, and crew bunk rooms and social spaces on the third floor.

Summary of Presentation

Mark Adams introduced the project, described the physical context for the site, and reviewed previous feedback from the Commission. His presentation is available on the [Design Commission website](#).

Alison Maitland Scheetz referred to the Urban Design Framework and Streetscape Concept Plans contained in the West Seattle Triangle Plan. She stated that these plans have influenced the proposed landscaping around the site. The UDF specifies street trees as an important element for Alaska and identifies 38th Ave SW as a Neighborhood Green Street, though Ms. Scheetz stated that they cannot plant trees due to utility concerns. On SW Alaska St, three street trees and a thick band of mostly evergreen planting would delineate the apron space from the sidewalk. Access to the practice hydrant and the required turning radius for vehicles entering the apparatus bay are some of the constraints on landscaping along SW Alaska St.

Mr. Adams then described the program for the new Fire Station 32, one of the larger stations in the Fire Levy and the only new battalion station. In the proposed design, the hose tower is intended to be a neighborhood marker. The long transparent façade on SW Alaska St allows passersby to observe activity inside the station, and the station entrance, pushed further south than in the existing building, is framed by the proposed public art and site walls.

Mr. Adams reviewed how the 90% design responds to each of the seven recommendations the Commission previously made. He noted that, while Commissioners had encouraged providing daylight for the physical training area, other concerns (specifically noise transmission disturbing firefighters during the day and when asleep upstairs) essentially require that this space be located in the basement. Also in response to Commission feedback, the upper portion of the building is now treated as a single, more unified volume, and site wall elements are employed throughout the station to define pedestrian spaces.

Mr. Adams reviewed the floor plans for the building, highlighting how visitors can see the bunker gear storage and the location of fire poles and stairs from the lobby. The quieter functions, such as firefighter sleeping quarters, are located at the south end of the building towards the residential neighborhood; the beanery opens to an outside terrace at the north side. The proposed green roof at the terrace level would have a tray system with sedums and areas of taller grasses at the terrace, while the upper roof would have a tray system with sedum. The south side of the roof is reserved for PV, which is not currently in the budget.

The presentation explored the sustainability program in more detail. The team has used an energy model to evaluate both sustaining and regenerative elements of building design, expects an energy use intensity (EUI) of 20-30, and is targeting LEED Platinum. The project team is using data-driven analysis to determine the optimum level of insulation and glazing given the associated costs and benefits of each option. In response to Commission concern around shading of a future PV array, Mr. Adams stated that

the team proposes a microinverter system that has been successful elsewhere in the city allows the array to continue to function even if partially shaded.

Lastly, the presentation showed the proposed materials for the station and the proposed public art piece by Sean Orlando. The piece, “Engine 32.5,” is inspired by wooden toys carved by a former West Seattle resident that are on display in the station. The artist’s work uses iconic objects that appeal to children’s sense of play and adult’s nostalgia for a previous era. The piece has been reviewed by the PAAC and is conceived as hung on the wall above the entrance like a helmet, axe, or other piece of firefighting equipment. Low pedestrian-level illumination along the west façade of the station directs visitors to the entrance way.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission was pleased to see significant progress in the design since the last review, particularly in response to their feedback and recommendations. For example, where there had previously been concern about large sections of undifferentiated paving around the station entrance, the Commission appreciated much clearer identification and delineation of the pedestrian way through concrete scoring, site walls, and planting. The Commission was encouraged by the team’s pursuit of LEED Platinum through a comprehensive approach to the sustainability and felt strongly that these components of the project be maintained as it moves to construction. This was also the first time the Commissioners saw the proposed artwork by Sean Orlando, “Engine 32.5.” The physical design of the piece, its integration into the building design and operations, and particularly its connection to the history of the community all received praise.

Given the stage of the project and its progression since 60% design, much of the discussion focused on refining and simplifying some of the details of the design. The Commissioners considered some of the functional aspects of the project, such as how the canopy above the north terrace could provide weather protection without overly shading the space so staff can access sunlight year round, as well as aesthetic elements like the coloration of the black hose tower. This feature in particular generated several comments. While there were various opinions on the precise shade it could be, the Commissioners agreed that the tower should both remain within the color palette for the station but also, as a neighborhood landmark, contrast with the rest of the building. Above all, it should enhance but not overpower the red stripe.

The Commission also discussed—and encouraged—other details that could let the geometry of the forms to be more clearly expressed. For example, while the strong mullion system along SW Alaska St and the hose tower emphasize stacking volume, the thin canopy above the beanery, the ribbon window adjacent to it, and the east-facing recessed window suggest slipping planes. One Commissioner suggested that, while the overall massing strategy felt strong, refining and simplifying these exterior elements into a common language would allow greater emphasis where it’s desired, perhaps the north façade, entry sequence, and hose tower.

Finally, given the Streetscape Concept Plan completed in November 2011 as part of the Urban Design Framework in the West Triangle Plan, the Commissioners asked how the proposed landscaping on 38th Ave SW—a designated Neighborhood Green Street—could support the elements of the Plan.

Unfortunately, many of the suggested streetscape improvements are not feasible with the project. Traffic calming, for example, is incompatible with the station’s vehicle requirements, and the grade of 38th Ave SW precludes rainwater catchment. That said, the team intends to provide as much buffering

and planting as possible along 38th Ave SW in order to create a pleasant pedestrian experience despite the large fire apron outside the apparatus bay.

Agency Comments

none

Public Comments

none

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team for the presentation of the 90% design of Fire Station 32 in the West Seattle Junction. The Commission particularly appreciated the significant progress in design from 60% to 90% and the team's responsiveness to previous Commission feedback. The project's approach to sustainability was well described, and the presentation provided a good display of materials and color palette. The Commission is encouraged by the mix of green roofs, future solar PV, and solar hot water and encourages FAS to maintain these features in the project design.

With a **vote of 9-0**, the Design Commission approved the 90% design of Fire Station 32 with the following recommendations:

1. In the design of the canopy that extends from the beanery on the third floor over the north terrace, balance both the need for weather protection and opportunities for sun and light in order to create an outdoor space that building occupants feel invited to use year round.
2. Consider how the density of planting at the entrance can continue to achieve the goal of marking the entry while ensuring that public realm are clearly delineated and well understood.
3. Consider a lighter color for the tower. The tower plays a significant role as a neighborhood landmark and should continue to contrast with the building, but the transparency of the tower and its integration with the palette for the rest of the station is equally important.
4. Continue the progression of simplification shown from 60% to 90% design, which has allowed the forms and massing to express the fundamental concepts of the project.
5. Push the details. Adhere to a strong hierarchy among the building forms; refine and simplify the various competing languages at play, particularly in the view from the southeast corner; and, above all, ensure a clear resolution to the dialogue between geometry and material.
6. Hold firm to the aesthetic integrity of the design until the very end of the project.

This is the last time the Design Commission anticipates reviewing the Fire Station. However, if there are any significant changes to the design, the project shall return to the Commission for further consideration.