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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

July 2, 2009

Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 4:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Seward Park Play Area
Universal Design and Public Open Space
Fire Station 6 – Central District
Burien Interim Art Space
Streetcar Network
DPR Planning and Development Division Update

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Julie Parrett
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Excused Commissioners

Nathan Polanski

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Jeff Arango

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



July 2, 2009

Project:**Fire Station 6 – Central District****Phase:**

Concept Design

Last Reviewed: N/A**Presenters:**

David Jackson, Fleets and Facilities Department
 Ed Weinstein, Weinstein AU
 John Mikhels, Weinstein AU

Attendees:

Susan Rosenthal, Fire Department
 Kirsten Wild, Weinstein AU
 Chief Molly Douce, Fire Department
 David Kunselman, Fleets and Facilities
 Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
 Lindsay King, DPD

Time: 1 hour

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ACTION

The Design Commission thanks the City staff and Weinstein AU designers for their presentation and approves the concept design as presented with a vote of eight to one. The no vote was based on the concern that a civic atmosphere was not being created with the design. The Commission has the following recommendations:

- Provide more attention to the design of the north part of the building. There is potential at this location to create a civic presence that interfaces more dynamically with the community.
- Engage the artist and landscape architect in addressing the interface of the site with the public. The site is difficult, so collaboration will be necessary, and the artist should be allowed into the design process as much as possible.
- Consider that not just the wall along the north property line along S. Jackson St. is blank, but that the fence and gate are an extension of this impenetrable wall.
- Consider that the location of the solid waste receptacles just behind the north wall along S. Jackson St. further contributes to the less attractive nature of this frontage for pedestrians.
- Allowing views into the apparatus bay would afford the north façade more permeation.
- Take a cue from the Capital Hill Library that provides a rhythm of landscaping and views into the building to enliven the façade.
- Consider curb bulbs along S. Jackson St. to expand area for landscaping, art and/or a small plaza.
- Commissioners applaud the location of the more quiet functions in the south part of the building.
- Please bring a model of the project, preferably with context area, to the next review.

Presentation

The existing fire station lies at 101 23rd Ave. South and serves the Central District. It was built in 1931 and is too small to serve existing needs. The new fire station's address is 2615 S. Jackson Street and it will include a new 11,000 square foot station. The station will be built in 2012.

Approximately 4,500 square feet of the station will be used for vehicles and equipment and use, a smaller portion for administration and space for exercise, sleeping and food preparation. The program is operationally driven.

An analysis of adaptively reusing the existing facility was done, but ultimately resulted in a decision to cite a new facility.

A drive-through apparatus bay is incorporated into the design of the building as part of the program requirement. There is a big demand for ground level space resulting in a two-story solution for the fire station. Maintaining a 55' setback from the front property line to the apparatus bay is also part of the program. Staff parking will enter from MLK Boulevard.

The second concept alternative has a more desirable drive-through apparatus bay. The alternative does not achieve the 12 parking spaces for staff.

The third concept alternative incorporates the uses that are most suitable to responding to the public realm near the public right-of-way. All the support space will be located along the south end of the building. The apparatus bay will be a drive-through and have a rear entrance. The public entrance will be located to the south of the site and not on the street corner. One of the challenges is determining the pedestrian nature along the S. Jackson St. Everything is driven by the required access to the apparatus bay. The functional imperatives really drive most of the first floor design. The quiet space for sleeping and eating is located along the south side of the property. However, there are some real concerns about the street frontage because of the blank walls created by the side of the apparatus bay. Lighting will be used on the S. Jackson frontage to enliven the streetscape and create an iconic presence. Two stairs with direct access to the apparatus bay without intermediate landings will be part of the design. Departures from the transparency requirements and the floor to height requirements (from 12' to 10.5') on the second floor will be requested. Consideration for removing the parking along S. Jackson to create open space is part of the design process. Meeting the green factor on the site will be a challenge, but a green roof is being considered.



Project Area

The public entrance will be located to the south of the site and not on the street corner. One of the challenges is determining the pedestrian nature along the S. Jackson St. Everything is driven by the required access to the apparatus bay. The functional imperatives really drive most of the first floor design. The quiet space for sleeping and eating is located along the south side of the property. However, there are some real concerns about the street frontage because of the blank walls created by the side of the apparatus bay. Lighting will be used on the S. Jackson frontage to enliven the streetscape and create an iconic presence. Two stairs with direct access to the apparatus bay without intermediate landings will be part of the design. Departures from the transparency requirements and the floor to height requirements (from 12' to 10.5') on the second floor will be requested. Consideration for removing the parking along S. Jackson to create open space is part of the design process. Meeting the green factor on the site will be a challenge, but a green roof is being considered.

Public Comments

Lindsay King, DPD

The height departure and the green factor are the two major issues.

Commissioners' Questions and Comments

You talked about the alley initially, but never went back to it.

We considered underground parking with access from the alley. However, the secondary uses became less flexible and it substantially increased the cost. A variance is required to build to the south property line. The program can be met with the 3' setback. The turning radius appear to work and it meets our programmatic needs, we've also been involved in the process throughout.

Why is the drive through required when fire stations have operated with drive in apparatus bays for many years?

Backing out requires our people to stop traffic and it puts them in a dangerous situation as people don't always stop.

The key concern is the S. Jackson streetscape. Have you considered putting the apparatus bay in the middle and pushing the office and support functions to the side?

Yes, it could be done, but it's challenging. It's not as effective. However, under any alternative there is still going to be a significant blank wall along S. Jackson.

Programmatic relationships and needs make a lot of sense in your proposal. It seems the north edge is the major point of discussion and in order to mitigate the blank wall it seems more space is needed. Have you considered creating more space and utilizing some of the parking proposed on the east side?

The perfect situation for us would be to widen the sidewalk along S. Jackson to create the space.

My first reaction to the blank wall is you killed the blank wall, but where would they go across the street? So, the retaining wall has stopped on the next block over. Therefore, the onus is to create the best place you can. A landscape architect needs to consider this along with an artist.

I'm looking at the sidewalk on the north side of the site and the sidewalk. It seems people are using the parking as a de facto right turn lane.

Correct, but during peak hours circulation through here is already difficult. We haven't seen a restricted parking area near the intersection.

I think we are misconceiving ourselves if we think it's just a blank wall because there is a large gate along the north side as well. There is also a public safety issue here and to get the officers out towards the street.

Our concept is to have transparency on the south side of the bay to allow some visual access to the street.

Couldn't the support space for the trucks be moved to the south side to give transparency to the north wall?

Yes, we could make it work although it wouldn't be quite as efficient. Another option is to create breaks in the north wall to allow for penetration.

I'm concerned about the art being used as a band-aid for the blank wall and I'm not sure it's a great location for art because it has trees and isn't very visible from afar. There might be other possibilities to use the roof or corners to lift the art up higher and give it more stature. Also, if light is going to be part of the design, (what is great about the old station is the use of light and neon art) perhaps light could be incorporated into the design and the artwork in a very dynamic and fundamental way..

We agree with you and our attitude is to move to a concept that has more transparency and to leverage some of our architecture budget for the artwork. Philosophically we are inclined to integrate the art better.

I would urge the team in the next stage of design to use a three dimensional model. The three dimensional design is going to address a lot of these issues.

Is there a potential for solar panels?

We will look at that.

I would want to reiterate the comment about the pulling back from the S. Jackson to create more space for enhancing the pedestrian environment.

The programmatic requirements make that difficult in meeting the square footage requirements.