



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB 291/25

ARC/Staff Report

Board meeting January 7, 2026

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

120726.21 600 Alaskan

Applicant: Ron Wright, architect

Proposed: Placement of waste dumpsters and construction of screening

Staff report: This application was remanded by the Hearing Examiner back to the Board for consideration of an amended site plan and consider approval conditions.

In September of 2025, the City Council approved code changes to SMC 23.54.040 that allows for separate places for waste storage and waste staging for pick up and that only the staging must be within 50 feet of the curb. This code seems to give the applicant the ability to store their dumpsters at one end of the parcel and then move them to the other end of the parcel for staging for pick up. While there are only six dumpsters and two carts currently located on the site, the applicant resubmitted a different site plan that shows ten dumpsters. It is staff's understanding that there is a minimum requirement but not a maximum limit for the number of dumpsters.

SMC 23.54.040.E.5 was also amended to say: "The solid waste storage space shall not be used for purposes other than solid waste storage and access to or movement of solid waste containers." This seems to limit the Board's ability to require a reduction of the size of the screened area as the Hearing Examiner had suggested prior to the code change.

Therefore, it appears that the Board's review and recommendation will be limited to the *design* of the screen (e.g., material and colors).

Project background:

2023 Staff reported the installation of dumpster on a vacant parcel for a notice of violation.

After the Notice of Violation was issued by Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), the property owner asked for violation to be reconsidered. SDCI determined that because the parcels were all owned by the same property owner, that the garbage was an accessory use to the Western and Polson Buildings adjacent to the parcel rather than a primary use and that together the parcels were a lot. They determined that locating the garbage on the parcel was not a violation but not screening the garbage dumpsters was a violation. Following up with the SDCI they said that the dumpster could also be placed in a different location that was mutually acceptable to the applicant and the Board. The Office of the Waterfront also sent an email to SDCI to correct that they did not designate the parcel as the location of the dumpster as stated.

March 2024

The applicant submitted an application for a screened dumpster area on the corner parcel that was screened on two sides and left open on the third side.

Because the site is on the corner of Yesler and Alaskan Way, across from the entry and exit for the Seattle Ferry and along the new waterfront promenade, the Board considered this a prominent location. The Board requested that the applicant consider less obtrusive alternatives, but no locations were acceptable to the applicant. They also determined that the proposed location would need to be screened from all sides in order for the dumpster to not be visible. The applicant provided a plan for screening all sides in future reviews.

During the May 8, 2024 meeting, The Office of the Waterfront gave testimony that they did not dictate where the garbage would be stored but they provided an access ramp to accommodate garbage pick based on where the garbage was previously stored next to the Western Building loading dock as shown on a site plan provided by the Office of the Waterfront.

The Board had asked the applicant to rearrange the 6 dumpsters so that they complied with the code that required that they be within 50 feet of the pick up location and to reduce the size of the screening accordingly. The applicant refused and asked the Board to make a decision that day so the Board denied the application Aug 13 , 2024 because it did not comply with provisions of the code.

The applicant appealed the Denial to the Hearing Examiner, who issued a decision on December 19, 2024. The Hearing Examiner granted the appeal in part and denied the appeal in part. The applicant provided a new site plan after the Board had made a decision. The Hearing Examiner found that “the new site plan showed receptacle placement in a manner that appears to follow the 50-foot rule but with fencing at least one-third larger and possibly taller than necessary to screen the facility, potentially making it more obtrusive and in conflict with neighboring businesses, which raises code conflict concerns.” She noted that the prior code required “that the refuse storage area be used only for ‘solid waste and recyclable materials storage and access.’” The Hearing Examiner said: “The decision should

be remanded to allow the Board to re-open the hearing and allow L&B to submit a revised site plan. The Board would then have an opportunity to consider the new materials and determine whether approval conditions are needed to address code requirements, consistent with District purposes.”

Following the Hearing Examiner’s decision, the applicant requested that SDCI provide an interpretation of SMC 23.54.040 regarding the “50 foot Rule”.

While the interpretation was being considered, the Council approved code changes to SMC 23.54.040. The entire Ordinance 127285 is attached.

Dec 4, 2025 the applicant submitted a different site plan showing ten dumpsters

Dec 11, 2025 Staff issued a correction notice asking for clarification of the changes to the site plan and for a copy of the SDCI interpretation which the applicant had requested.

Draft Motions:

Motion to Approve: I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval placement of waste dumpsters and screening of the dumpster on four (4) sides using screening design that was used along the waterfront outside the Pioneer Square Preservation District, including a planting area on the south end of the parcel. All per the applicant’s submittal. The area of the dumpsters, inside the screening and out, must be maintained free of litter and spills and free of odor and pests, and the area may not be used for storage of anything other than the solid waste storage. Any graffiti on the screening must be removed promptly. If the solid waste dumpsters are no longer stored in this location, the screening must be removed as nothing but solid waste can be stored in this area. The planting area is to be maintained free of weeds and maintained with living plants.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the January 7, 2026 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.54.040 (as amended by Ordinance 127285 attached) Solid waste storage, access, and collection

E. The location of all solid waste storage spaces shall meet the following requirements:

4. The solid waste storage space shall be located to minimize noise and odor impacts on building occupants and beyond the lot lines of the lot; and

((E.)) 5. The solid waste storage space shall not be used for purposes other than solid waste ((and recyclable materials)) storage and access to or movement of solid waste containers

((F)) G. Access to solid waste containers for solid waste service providers and solid waste collection vehicles ((to the storage space from the collection location)) shall meet the following requirements

1. For ((containers)) dumpsters 2 cubic yards or smaller:

a. ((Containers)) Dumpsters to be manually ((pulled)) transported for collection by a solid waste service provider, shall be ((placed)) staged no more than 50 feet from ((a curb cut or)) the solid waste collection location((?)), in a manner that provides access to each container for service;

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION
In addition to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance and Rules, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the complete series of Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs developed by the National Park Service shall serve as guidelines for proposed exterior alterations and treatments, rehabilitation projects, and new construction. (7/99)

New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District. (7/99)
Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

The following architectural elements are typical throughout the District and will be used by the Board in the evaluation of requests for design approval:

A. Site. The property line is the line of the building mass. Street facades are uniformly located at the front property lines, thus there is a strong street edge definition. Building cornices, bay windows and ornament project beyond the main wall surface of some facades.

B. Design. Building design is generally typified by horizontal divisions which create distinctive base and cap levels. Facades may also be divided vertically by pilasters or wide piers which form repetitive window bays. Street facades are also distinguished by heavy terminal cornices and parapets, ornamental storefronts and entrance bays and repetitive window sizes and placement.

C. Building materials. The most common facing materials are brick masonry and cut or rusticated sandstone, with limited use of terra cotta and tile. Wooden window sash, ornamental sheet metal, carved stone and wooden or cast iron storefronts are also typically used throughout the District. Synthetic stucco siding materials are generally not permitted. (7/99)

D. Color. Building facades are primarily composed of varied tones of red brick masonry or gray sandstone. Unfinished brick, stone, or concrete masonry unit surfaces may not be painted. Painted color is typically applied to wooden window sash, sheet metal ornament and wooden or cast iron storefronts. Paint colors shall be appropriate to ensure compatibility within the District. (7/99)

Issued: December 30, 2025
Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator