



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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LPB 306/25

MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

Hybrid Meeting via Webex Webinar or Room L2-80 Boards & Commissions

Seattle City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Floor L2

Wednesday, October 1, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Roi Chang Vice-Chair (RC)

Taber Caton (TC)

VJ Kopacki (VK)

Ian Macleod, Chair (IM)

Lara Ellen McKinney (LEM)

Lawrence Norman (LN)

Becca Pheasant-Reis (BP)

Cameron Wong (CW)

Erica Thomas (ET)

Harriet Wasserman (HW)

Board Members Absent

Katie Randall (KR)

Staff Present

Sarah Sodt (SD)

Erin Doherty (ED)

Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Key

BM Board Member

AP Applicant

SM Staff Member

Executive Session began at 3:30 p.m. Chair Ian Macleod called the public meeting to order at 4:11 p.m.

100125.1 EXECUTIVE SESSION

100125.2 ROLL CALL

100125.3 PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Swift expressed opposition to the Seattle Parks Gas Works proposal, citing a lack of clear documentation, methodology, and involvement from the Landmarks oversight group regarding the preservation of Gas Works Park's historical elements. Barbara also requested more information on how public safety would be integrated into the current proposal.

Patricia Fels, a conservation architect, author of Gas Works Park landmark nomination, and a longtime advocate for the park, spoke in opposition to the proposal. Patricia urged the Board to return the proposal for revision, citing insufficient information on how historic attachments would be removed and how the towers would be protected. Patricia encouraged the Board to reconsider how the towers, along with safety and security measures, could be reintegrated into a long-term plan before making a final decision.

100125.4 CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

100125.41 The Showbox

1426 1st Avenue

Request for extension

Jack McCullough provided an update on the current work at the Showbox and is requesting an extension to be considered at the February 18, 2026, meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Board.

MM/SC/HW/BPR

9:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

100125.42 White Garage

1915 3rd Avenue

Request for extension

Jack McCullough provided an update on the White Garage and noted that they are in the final stages of completing the process with SDCI and is requesting an extension to be considered at the February 18, 2026, meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Board

MM/SC/RC/VK

9:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

100125.43 Donahoe Building

1901-1911 3rd Avenue

Request for extension

SM Sarah Sodt informed the Board that the applicant is requesting an extension and to be considered at the February 18, 2026, meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Board.

MM/SC/BPR/HW

9:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

100125.44 Bullitt House

1125 Harvard Avenue E

Request for extension

David Graves of Seattle Parks and Recreation informed the Board that they are currently preparing a request for letters of interest to take over the stewardship and maintenance of the building and are requesting a six-month extension to complete this process.

MM/SC/RC/TC

9:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

100125.5 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

100125.51 Gas Works Park

1901-2101 N Northlake Way

Proposed selective removal of elements of old gas plant equipment

Vice-Chair Chang recused.

David Graves stated that the project team reviewed the Board's comments and feedback from the last meeting and explored options for preserving some of the taller sections of the tower. David noted that the current focus of the proposal is addressing unsafe "pedestrian" structures such as ladders and walkways/platforms while leaving the pipes and towers unchanged (except on the west side). Full presentation included in the file.

BM Norman joined at 5:20 p.m.

BM Pheasant-Reis asked if the original design intent was to allow deterioration or maintain a specific aesthetic. AP Graves said there is no conservation plan for the equipment. He said the structures are 70-90 years old and steel deteriorates.

BM Caton asked to clarify if over the past 50 years there has been no maintenance on “pedestrian elements” aside from occasional painting and the intent has been to allow natural degradation. AP Graves confirmed.

BM Kopacki asked if in the past when making selective removals documentation was done. AP Graves said that recent removals are easier to track due to Board-submitted plans, but there is no historical documentation for work at towers.

SM Doherty noted as a reminder, that the Landmarks Ordinance has no minimum maintenance requirements. BM Pheasant-Reis asked if experienced climbers have looked at the equipment to offer input. AP Graves said yes, that is how they started with the previously approved project to selectively remove elements and add deterrents.

BM Pheasant-Reis asked if the graffiti has ever been mapped to see what areas are most accessed. AP Graves said they do not document it, but one can tell by where they paint over it. A lot happens near the tops of the towers where there are catwalks, also at the ground level.

BM Caton said people can still climb towers outside the fence, so that would always be a possibility. AP Graves said they need to take away places people can stand and the elements that they use to get there.

Chair Macleod asked about potential incidents with equipment outside the fence. AP Graves said he was not’ aware of any reports, aside from addressing graffiti down low.

BM Pheasant-Reis talked about the letter that outlines what could be saved versus removed for safety. AP Graves said they are proposing to remove all elements shown in red and will try preserve elements higher up on the towers if they can determine they are structurally intact, and potentially part of the west pipe.

Chair Macleod asked about the information provided in public comment about discussions with Rich Haag about addressing issues. AP Graves said he recalls that they briefed the Board first, then discussed the plan with Haag, then developed a more complete plan in a Certificate of Approval application that the Landmarks Board approved. The work was completed after the covid pandemic.

BM Norman said being able to visualize the removal of red-marked materials helps, and he supports removing all walking and climbing elements that are deemed unsafe.

BM Pheasant-Reis struggled with the proposed removal of all red-marked areas, with just the hope that some of it gets retained. She would rather clearly see what needs to be removed for safety and what elements they will work to save.

BM Wassermann needs more information before committing to a drastic remedy, and not ready to support full removal of items shown without clear identification of what can be preserved. Acknowledged the safety concerns.

BM Kopacki wants clarity on how removals will be documented if approved and said the historic elements should be adequately recorded so materials can be recreated if needed, or to create interpretive materials. Noted it is a large quantity of historic material proposed for removal.

BM McKinney agrees that there is a fine line when potentially removing too much of what makes a place historic, even when it is for safety reasons. Suggests creative engagement strategies, stabilization methods, and graffiti mitigation.

BM Caton commented that decisions should consider long-term vision, evolving park use, and improved safety and not rushed action. Thinks the Board needs more information about the physical condition of the elements proposed for removal.

Chair Macleod does not think they have enough information to understand how urgent the need for removal is from a structural perspective. Requested a report with concrete steps and analysis of what can be saved structurally. Also questioned the logic of removing upper elements while maintaining the lower ones like pipes and turbines.

BM Thomas understands the safety needs but is concerned about taking away so many elements at one time. Thanked Parks for the work that they do there.

BM Wong agreed with colleagues that the proposed scope seems drastic.

BM Norman is open to a more radical change if they could also remove the fence. Thinks activating space may be a better approach to making it safer.

Several board members acknowledged and appreciated the quality of illustration done so far, noting that the 3D model is a valuable resource for identifying the park's structures.

The majority of the board members support having a plan and exploring alternative options and recommend revisiting the proposal with modifications.

Chair Macleod asked about case studies of what may have been done at other similar properties, citing an example in Alabama.

BM McKinney left the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

SM Doherty expressed appreciation for the Board's feedback. In response to a Board member comment about a range of alternatives, SM Doherty noted that alternatives have been explored and some implemented. Seattle Parks has in the past made concerted efforts to remove pieces and add deterrents to reduce climbability, informed by a person with climbing expertise. SM Doherty said that Parks has also improved the perimeter fence. Noted that one alternative Parks has not proposed is removal of all of the equipment which would have a major impact and undertaking. The Board wanted to think about this proposal in terms of scale of the entire park and all of its features. Cited the staff report which speaks to scale and references the original nomination/designation. Reminded the Board of the code language about reasonableness of a proposal.

AP Graves said that Andy Sheffer from Parks said he and Rich Haag were together on the site in the past, and Andy understood Rich's vision was to allow the structures to safely disintegrate. Andy Sheffer, Deputy Superintendent of Capital Development Branch of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Noted that the project's intent is to remove pedestrian elements such as ladders and catwalks, originally designed for human use but no longer structurally sound. Andy explained that removing these circulation features will hopefully improve safety. Making the elements structurally sound would be prohibitively expensive but they have to make them safe. The goal is to restrict circulation and support patron safety.

BM Norman said he trusts Parks' judgment and is in favor of the proposal.

BM Pheasant-Reis said it is helpful to know that the intent was for the equipment to deteriorate. She wishes that it was documented, but hearing it changes her thoughts about the proposal. Agrees that selective removal makes sense as pieces deteriorate.

BM Kopacki said hearing that also changes their perspective, similar to BM Pheasant-Reis.

BM Caton would like to see the explanation of Haag's intent included in the application and understand the long-term plan for the park.

BMs Thomas and Pheasant-Reis reiterated Caton's comment.

BM Wong said their perspective is unchanged.

Chair Macleod asked David Graves if Parks was willing to table the application in lieu of having the application fail to be approved.

Andy Sheffer said that Parks needs to act expeditiously and is willing to come back with information to be responsive to the Board. Sheffer noted he was a student of Rich Haag's and walked the site with him and knows it well. He would rather not have to take down these appurtenances, but said it is necessary.

Chair Macleod noted that there were not enough votes to approve the Certificate of Approval as presented and recommended that Seattle Parks return to the next meeting to address and respond to the Board's concerns.

Andy Sheffer confirmed that Parks is willing to table the application and would want to return to the Board at their October 15, 2025 meeting.

Action: I move the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board table the consideration of the Seattle Parks proposal until October 15, 2026, Landmarks Preservation Board meeting.

MM/SC/HW/TC

8:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

100125.6 BOARD BUSINESS

There was no board business.

Meeting adjourned at 6:19 pm