

Historic Stakeholders Meeting # 3- Structures of Merit (SOMs)
Notes from July 22, 2009

Red indicates a question
Green indicates an answer

High vs. Low:

- Fiesta Lanes v. Delmas Market
- Historic Reports can be put together quickly- can be superficial
- Some subjectivity in scoring
 - However, extremely helpful
- Low-scoring structures can be important
 - Tommie Smith House
- Has to be a cutoff point for CEQA purposes
- Q.: What is process to Structures of Merit?
 - A: Not a CEQA resource
- Quality of DPRs > 15 years old
 - Q: Process for re-evaluating buildings?
 - A: Yes, re-evaluations happen
- Greater flexibility for different levels of Structures of Merit – different permitting possibilities
- Q.: Not happening not though, correct?
 - A.: No
- Applying historic guidelines to Structures of Merit is not appropriate
- Would help staff to treat buildings correctly
- City doesn't apply Secretary's standards to Structures of Merit at this point
- Breaking up Structures of Merit into strata creates additional complexity
- Difficulty is in design process
- Q.: Should we care if Fiesta Lanes was turned into a retail center?
- DeYoung: It's either above the line or below the line, Clear gradations. Clear process.
 - What's important can be contextual
 - Adaptive re-use? Can be a negative when there are empty buildings waiting for re-uses

- Human element can be a problem:
 - Clear line instead of subjectivity
 - Live, warm buildings are the objective
- If the line wiggles, creates more difficulty
- People sometimes don't have the patience to see the value of historic buildings
- Structures of Merit could be too much of a moving target
 - Not a clear process for Structures of Merit
 - What do Structures of Merit deserve in terms of respect?
- No nexus under CEQA to preserve Structures of Merit
- W/ regard to Structures of Merit, we haven't been clear about our goals are
 - Is context important?
- Should narrow down process to a dozen criteria
 - Make it great, no matter what
- Architectural Significance vs. Historical Significance
- A community rallying around a building is OK
- PF Chang's was a bad example
- Point structure- consultants check and re-check buildings on the cusp
 - Borderline structures call for scrutiny
 - Higher Structures of Merit should mean more discretionary power
- Make sure Tally Sheet is upgraded and thorough. Spend extra time and money to get really good information
- Interiors can't be controlled by Planning
- Things have to be reviewed no matter what the age of the DPR. Even a few years old should be reviewed for accuracy
- Surveys might not have the level of detail, but when a demolition is proposed a full historic report should be done
- Level of analysis should be shown
 - Shown on P10 field on the DPR form
- Analysis can be of value to the community
- Context statement important
 - Want to represent types, events, and people in addition to architecture
- Implications of Structures of Merit are unclear, should be made clear
- Tally helps staff figure out why a structure is important

- Positive that high-scoring Structures of Merit get more scrutiny
- Q.: What does it mean to treat differently?
 - A.: More strict in terms of alterations and changes
- Q.: Is 5 years reasonable for a stale DPR?
- A.: A 5 year threshold is a good idea
- Technical Reports have a shelf life
- Subcommittee to revamp points system? (future meeting topic)
- Staff training for staff w/ consultants?
- Never going to be black and white issue
- There will always be facts and findings
- Modifications are dependent on why a building is significant
- Important to be careful and not lose what we've got left
- What is the guiding principle? Do we require additional documentation for something that conforms to your old house?
- Don't want to add bureaucracy?
- How to consider context?
- Is this the only concentration in the city?
- Need clarification especially around intensification areas
- All of the Meridian buildings need to be evaluated; context needs to be looked at
- Tally sheet tells the story
- Context argument can be manipulated (piecemealing demolition)
- Sometimes context fluctuates,
sometimes fabric is important
sometimes last one is important
- Ironic that corporate architecture is discouraged
- Always going to be discussion, analysis, weighing things
- Doesn't matter if its gray, just as long as it's not a pain
- Goal is an inter-subjective agreement?
- How does context play into the discussion?
 - 14 points
- How does context get applied?
- Bottom line number is important

- Also description
- Analysis needs to be basis of recommendation, not tally #
- Context weighs very heavily
- New bowling alleys are being built
 - This use is continuing in a changing format
- Want to be careful about extending that argument
- Use of architecture? Reason for preserving a building is important
- Have to be forward thinking, and future thinking about preservation
- **Rubric for Structures of Merit?**
- Staff needs to maintain credibility!
- Sometimes there isn't a community to support preservation (IBM 025)
- Importance of GP agreeing w/ preservation issues
 - Neighbors wanted GP to aid preservation (Washington)
- Could this group engage the GP taskforce?
- GP likely to have much more specific policy direction
- Get GP taskforce to understand value of preservation