

Capitol Hill height for sale: Developer of 95 Slide building buying right to build higher

Posted on [Tuesday, July 12, 2016 - 7:03 am](#) by [Mariah Joyce](#)



Capitol Hill developers do not have to preserve the neighborhood's oldest buildings to reap the construction benefits that come with that preservation — they can buy those perks, too, as **Johnson Carr** plans to do for its planned seven-story development at the corner of Pike and Harvard. Someday, you might call it the **95 Slide**

building. Kids will look at you like you're old and crazy. That's the **Pike Flats** building, old timer. The preservation perks without preservation plan will be on the table Wednesday night as the **East Design Review Board** takes what will likely be its final look at the project.

John Feit, chair of the **Pike/Pine Urban Neighborhood Council**, said transferring development rights is analogous to moving apples around from basket to basket. "**Melrose Market** paid for the ability to create an extra floor, they just didn't," said Feit. Instead, the developers of the Capitol Hill retail project are selling that right to Johnson Carr.

Though a city planner says a "transfer of development rights" is a common occurrence in parts of Seattle, it will be the first time it has happened on Capitol Hill. Developer Johnson Carr plans to entirely demolish the pre-1940 building at 722 E Pike that currently houses sports bar **95 Slide** to build a seven-story, 75-foot structure in its place. The site is only zoned for a

65-foot structure and typically a developer would have to preserve the existing building in order to gain the extra 10 feet under the **Pike/Pine Conservation District** incentive program, but instead Johnson Carr plans to purchase that ability from the developers of Melrose Market, who gained — but didn't use — the right to build higher by preserving the auto-row era character structure.



— Here's what it would look like if they were forced to preserve 95 Slide

Oops! That embed can't be found.

It looks like nothing was found at this location. Maybe try visiting **CHS Capitol Hill Seattle** directly?

CHS Capitol Hill Seattle

The practice of transferring development rights is common in parts of Seattle, says city planner **Dennis Meier**. The requirements change from neighborhood to neighborhood – downtown, an area that has taken extensive advantage of the program, developers are able to sell unused development rights if their structure falls under the heading of affordable housing, open space, or landmark development. In Capitol Hill, development rights [can be transferred from one site to another in the Pike/Pine district](#) if the sending site — the one selling the rights – is a pre-1940, auto row era character structure.

At the July 13 Design Review Board Meeting, Johnson Carr will finalize its request for a departure to allow them to use the acquired Melrose Market's development rights to build a taller structure at 722 E Pike without preserving the existing structure, said developer **Kelten Johnson**. The board indicated initial support for the plan during its first review last August, and most seem to agree that even though the sports bar-hosting building Johnson Carr plans to demolish technically qualifies as a character structure, there is no reason to preserve it.

“The building that is on that site is not at all significant,” said Feit. “No one likes that building. No one's going to bitch if it gets torn down.” Meier agreed, saying that while the 722 E Pike building was “technically considered a character structure, it was in bad condition,” and thus the board determined that the requirement to preserve character structures could be waived.

Feit said that in addition to there being no reason to preserve the current structure, it is typically cheaper for a developer to purchase the rights to build a larger structure from another site that did not use them, rather than go through the expensive hassle of preserving a character structure.

The plan to “create a timeless contribution to the built environment through design, craft, and sensibility to the surrounding context” from architects **Skidmore Janette** will create a 90-unit apartment building with no parking on one of the last undeveloped corners in the heart of Pike/Pine.

Meier said that transferring development rights on Capitol Hill is uncommon partly because some developers hold on to the rights themselves in case they want to develop the site to its full potential in the future, and partly because while many sites qualify as sending sites, not many sites qualify to receive the rights.

“There aren’t a lot of sites that would qualify as receiving sites because you would need a site that didn’t have a character structure on it,” said Meier. Unlike the structure at 722 E Pike, most developers are now required to preserve the character structures on their sites.

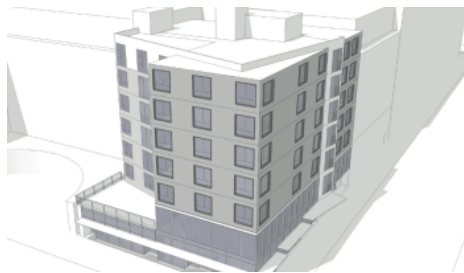
Though Meier said the Pike/Pine preservation incentive transfer program was widely supported by the community due to interest in preserving character structures, he worries that the surplus of sending sites will drive down the value of the development rights. Johnson declined to disclose how much his company planned to pay for the Melrose Market development rights.



SHARE THIS:

Tweet

Share 0



[What the Broadway 'post office' building will look like -- Plus, first look at plans for 95 Slide development](#)

Monday, August 24, 2015 - 9:13 am
In "News, etc."



[CHS Year in Review 2013 | Capitol Hill development and the quest for affordability](#)

Wednesday, December 18, 2013 - 7:00 am
In "News, etc."



[Why aren't developers incentivized to save entire Pike/Pine buildings?](#)

Tuesday, June 10, 2014 - 6:00 am
In "News, etc."

This entry was posted in [News, etc.](#) and tagged [design review](#), [development](#), [e pike](#), [pike/pine](#), [preservation](#) by [Mariah Joyce](#). Bookmark the [permalink \[https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2016/07/capitol-hill-height-for-sale-developer-of-95-slide-building-buying-right-to-build-higher/\]](https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2016/07/capitol-hill-height-for-sale-developer-of-95-slide-building-buying-right-to-build-higher/) .