City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
of
AREA 7, THE CAPITOL HILL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Meeting Date: December 5, 2007
Report Date: December 10, 2007

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Number:	3001776
Address:	2701 Eastlake Avenue East
Applicant:	Mark Brennan, Callison Architects, for Hughes Northwest, owner and developer
Board Members Present:	James Walker, Chair Jason Morrow Sharon Sutton
Board Members Absent:	Philip Beck Rumi Takahashi
DPD Project Planner:	Art Pederson

PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The project proposes a three to five story office and retail / commercial structure with two levels of parking (Approximately 45,300 sq. ft of office, 6,800 sq. ft. retail, and 86 parking spaces). Because of the grade change between Eastlake Avenue East and the named alley (Yale Terrace East), the Eastlake Avenue frontage will have three levels: a retail / commercial level with office space behind and two stories of office above. The alley frontage will have 5 levels. Access to the lowest parking level is proposed from the alley. Access to the 2nd level parking is proposed from

East Edgar Street (requires a *Design Departure* from the Code requirements).
The site slopes downward approximately 12 feet between Eastlake Avenue and Yale Terrace. North to south along the alley the site dips in its center approximately 8-feet. The southern portion of the site is currently vacant while the northern half contains an existing restaurant and former automotive repair building.

Abutting the site to the north is a 4-story mixed use building at the corner of East Hamlin Street and between Yale Terrace and Eastlake Avenue. Across Yale Terrace to the east are a variety of sizes and ages of residential structures, some used for office use.

The project site and parcels along the west side of Eastlake Avenue to the north and south are zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40 foot height limit (NC2-40). Directly across Eastlake Avenue from the project site the zoning is Lowrise 2-Residential Commercial (L-2 RC) but transitions to NC2-30 to the north. Across Yale Terrace the zoning is Lowrise 3-Residential Commercial (L-3 RC). The site and surrounding area are within the Eastlake Residential Urban Village.

ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION

Mark Brennan, project architect, presented the development proposal, site, surrounding context (as described above) and presented three development alternatives. All design alternatives propose the same number of levels and approximately the same building square footage. LEED certification will be pursued for the project.

Alternatives "A" and "B" proposed a three level structure as seen from Eastlake Avenue and Edgar Street and that steps down to two levels along Edgar Street by Yale Terrace. Two lower levels of parking are visible from Yale Terrace but below the Eastlake Avenue grade. From the west, both alternatives have the third office level set-back from the western façade resulting in a smaller third level. These alternatives differ in their overall expression and amount of modulation. Alternative "A" was described as a "conservative gesture" because of its concrete frame system with infill windows. This alternative would be built to the north property line and would not have windows there. Alternative "B" proposed a glass and metal grid over a differentiated concrete plinth and was described as having a "suburban gesture". Along the north property boundary the second and third levels would be set back 5-feet + from the property boundary to allow north facing windows. This would also create a better transition to the neighboring property.

Alternative "C", the applicant's preferred option, essentially proposes the same building form as Alternative "B", but proposes a larger scale façade framework of metal for the street facing facades. Glazing (both vision and spandrel glass) will be the material between the frames. The intent of this difference is to create a strong contemporary expression in response to the surrounding buildings and more clearly differentiate the retail base from the office use above. The preliminary design drawings presented showed a greater level of façade articulation on the west and north building faces than Alternatives A and B. The alley façade would be pre-cast panels with a corrugated window strips.

A landscape plan was presented showing an extensively landscaped planting strip along Edgar Street. A terrace area is proposed at the street intersection beginning at grade and extending along approximately one-quarter of the Edgar Street frontage. Beyond the terrace a landscaped planting strip will extend the length of this façade between the proposed building and the sidewalk. A thickly planted landscape strip is proposed in front of the alley façade for screening of the blank garage walls.

Alternative "C" proposes to have the upper level parking access from Edgar Street and adjacent to the alley and to forgo the inclusion of an interior loading berth. These two elements require *Design Departures* from the Land Use Code requirement for alley vehicle access only when a lot faces an improved alley and the provision of an on-site loading berth when office space of the anticipated size is proposed. The rationale for the requested departures is in the *Design Departure* Table below.

DEPARTURES FROM CODE STANDARDS
ADD ONE FOR STREET LEVEL USES

A request was made for two *Design Departures* from Code requirements as outlined below. A third *Design Departure* may be necessary as described below and under *D-5*.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTURE REQUEST

Land Use Code Standard	**Proposed Amount of Departure**	**Rationale for Request**	**Board Recommendation**
Parking Location and Access. Vehicle access must be from an abutting alley. (SMC 23.47A.032).	The project proposes vehicle access from the alley and East Edgar Street.	The grade of the alley and the predominately residential uses across it to the west are not compatible with full alley access. Access to one level of parking from Edgar Street will keep evening hour commercial parking out of the alley and facilitate customer use of the parking garage instead of the limited on-street parking.	The Board was generally supportive of this request provided it demonstrates a response to the Design Guidance given below.
Loading Berths. Required based on size of proposed uses. One loading berth expected for proposed office use. (10'wide, 14' high, 35' long / 25'long with exception.) No berth required for expected retail or restaurant use, unless restaurant use > 10,000 square feet. (SMC 23.47A.030 & 23.54.035).	No loading berth on site. Provide service entrance off alley.	Applicant experience with this size of project and mix of uses is the berth requirement is excessive. Additionally, with difficult alley grade trucks will naturally make the minimal deliveries expected with this project on Eastlake Avenue.	The Board would give further consideration to this request based on information provided to DPD and SDOT, if it validates the lack of need for a berth and no disruption to pedestrian and vehicular circulation will occur.

Street Level Uses. Street-level parking must be separated from the street-level street-facing façade by another permitted use. (SMC 23.47A.005)	No intervening use between the upper level parking proposed to be accessed from Edgar Street and the street.	Not requested at EDG but implied through the proposed design.	Board was not aware of this requirement and did not give specific guidance regarding this aspect of the presented proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Fifteen members of the community attended the Early Design Guidance meeting and offered the following comments:

- Many of the newer commercial buildings along Eastlake Avenue don't present an invitation for interaction between the public and the interior uses. The project's proposed modern design should not continue this.
- Extensive building modulation and "greenery" should be included along the street façade for a human scale.
- The managing partner of the Remy Apartments to the north offered to work with the project proponents to make their mutual property boundary attractive and inviting.
- More building façade modulation should be added to the Eastlake Avenue East frontage.
- The proposed rooftop mechanical structure should be oriented east to west, not the view-blocking north to south proposed.
- What is the "trade-off" that the community will receive for the project receiving Design Departures giving the applicant cost savings and an increase in square footage?
- The proposed retail / commercial space at the corner of Edgar Street and Eastlake Avenue should be two-stories to be more open and inviting.
- Retail / commercial space should extend along the length of Edgar Street.
- Any proposed restaurant space should extend the east to west depth of the site to take advantage of westward views and an opportunity to use a rear terrace that is possible from building stepping along the alley.
- The proposed roof is large and will be visible from the east and uphill. A substantial area of green roof should be used to beautify this and lessen storm water run-off.
- Any alley vehicle access should be designed to be compatible with the alley's extensive use for walking and designation as a City bike route.
- A storefront should be included along Edgar Street.
- The project should not rely on using Eastlake Avenue for truck loading and unloading.
- The alley is too steep for truck access to an alley loading dock.
- The loading dock should be in the building's northeast corner and accessed from Eastlake Avenue.

PRIORITIES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the siting

and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *"Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings"* of highest priority to this project.

A. <u>Site Planning</u>

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. *The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.*

- The Eastlake façade should include modulation and / or variety of materials to visually reduce the length of the building.
- The site's boundaries on three rights of way and location on a west facing slope should be taken advantage of to provide extensive interior day-lighting.
- The proposed north to south oriented mechanical penthouse is at odds with the westerly views to the lake and mountains from the general area uphill to the east. Alternatives showing this structure broken into smaller increments or re-oriented to not create a visual wall should be included with the MUP proposal.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. *The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

- The design of the Eastlake and Edgar façades should acknowledge and respond to any positive datum and rhythm along these respective streets.

A-4 Human Activity. *New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.*

- Both street level façades should include multiple visible entrances to the different uses inside and transparency to create a connection between the street and interior uses.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. *Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.*

- The proposed landscape screening along the alley and terraced set-back of an upper office level should be continued as a method to create a transition between this use and zone and the Lowrise zone to the west. An additional terraced set-back between the first and second office levels should also be explored (see *B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale* below).
- The amount of glazing proposed for the west façade should be carefully considered for minimizing glare impacts on properties to the west, both immediately and across the lake, and from the lake itself. Results of this exploration should be presented with the MUP submittal (for SEPA) and for presentation at the Recommendation meeting (e.g. what is the anticipated level of glare in comparison to other high glare producing facades in this area? etc).

- See A-1 above regarding minimizing the loss of westerly views from all affected areas to the east.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. *Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.*

Because of its proposed proximity to the alley, the proposed Edgar Street driveway and garage entrance could be reduced below the Code required width to a size that will minimize the disruption of the pedestrian environment, but still allow safe vehicle travel. A *Design Departure* for this would be considered by the Board.

A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts. *Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.*

The proposed *Design Departure* from providing a loading berth could result in a loss of on-street parking (for an additional or expanded on-street loading zone), conflict with the current peak-hour no parking lane that would be used for loading, and negatively affect the desired synergy between the street-level commercial spaces and the pedestrian environment.

- To pursue this departure request the applicant shall provide data with the MUP application on the loading berth needs of similar sized buildings with a similar tenant mix and the operational profile of on-street loading (entrance needs, traffic conflicts, etc).

A-10 Corner Lots. *Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.*

The character of the Edgar Street and Eastlake corner does not require building orientation to the corner. However, the design should continue and maximize the proposed extension of the street level commercial space along Edgar Street along with the proposed outside terrace.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility. *Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less-intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.*

The site is uphill from the adjacent and downhill Lowrise zone.

- To create a sensitive transition to this less-intensive zone, the design should continue the proposed stepping of the building's alley façade and add this between the office first and second levels, or other design technique to achieve this goal. The proposed alley façade landscaping should be pursued, but because it serve to screen more than reduce the height, bulk, and scale, can not be fully relied upon to address this guidance.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. *Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall*

architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls.

C-3 Human Scale. *The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, element and details to achieve a good human scale.*

The Board noted that the selection of proposed materials has the potential to create a unified form and design expression but:

- The proposed Eastlake façade design should include more modulation for a reduction in perceived building length.
- The proposed upper level frame expression now appears to tower-over and minimize the visibility of the street level commercial frontage; this should not occur.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. *Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open space should be considered.*

A priority for the commercial frontage along Eastlake Avenue and Edgar Street.

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. *The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.*

All presented design alternatives showed a portion of the Edgar Street façade adjacent to the alley without an allowed use between the parking and the street level street facing façade as required by Code (SMC 23.47A.005.C). The inclusion of a vehicle entrance (by requested *Design Departure*) will address most of this area. The street grade across a substantial portion of this façade will make most, but not all, of this requirement moot. If the remaining portion of the façade above grade is proposed without a required intervening use a *Design Departure* must be requested and the street level landscape design and wall treatment should be attractive and supportive of the pedestrian environment.

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas. *Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.*

- Proposed alley facing garbage and recycling areas should be screened from view.

Staff Comments

After integrating the above guidance into the project design, the applicant should proceed to submit an application for the full Master Use Permit.

- Include colored and shadowed elevation drawings and site/landscaping plans in the MUP submittal plans.
- Include material and color samples for planner review.
- Contact the City arborist (Bill Ames at SDOT) to confirm the choice of Hungarian Oak along Eastlake Avenue and Triumph Elm along Edgar Street trees proposed for the ROW.
- Inform the planner when the applicant has secured a MUP intake appointment.

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