



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: October 10, 2007
Report Date: October 19, 2007**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Number: 3005392
Address: 100 23rd Avenue South
Applicant: Roderick Butler, Chaos Architecture, for Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCSWW), Developer

Board Members Present: James Walker, Chair
Philip Beck
Sharon Sutton

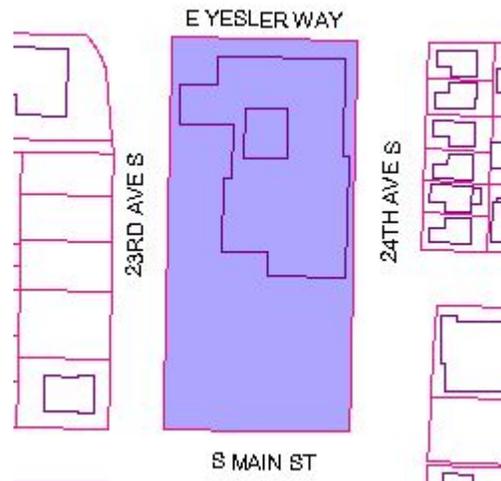
Board Members Absent: Jason Morrow
Rumi Takahashi

DPD Project Planner: Art Pederson

PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The project proposes a four story mixed-use structure with 51 affordable residential units, 2,400 square feet of retail space, 2,000 square feet of administrative office space, 31 parking spaces for the residents and administrative office use, and 41 replacement parking spaces for the existing Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCSWW) building.

The development will replace the existing parking lot on the south end of the CCSWW and be bordered by 23rd Avenue South (23rd Avenue) to the west, South Main Street to the south, and 24th Avenue South (24th Avenue)



to the east. The existing CCSWW building will remain.

The site is mostly level, but with a 2 foot to 3 foot grade change along the 23rd Avenue frontage. The project site and CCSWW northern portion are zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40 foot height limit (NC2-40). The CCSWW building is a one to two story office building. To the south across South Main Street and extending to the east and west of 23rd Avenue and south beyond South Jackson Street the zoning is NC 3 with a 65-foot height limit (NC3 –65) and contain predominately retail commercial uses centered on the intersection of 23rd Avenue and South Jackson Street. On the north end of this commercial area and to the southeast of the project site is the P.H. Masonic Temple. To the east of the site the zoning is Lowrise 2 (L2) and contains predominately residential structures but also the Bethel Christian Church. To the west across 23rd Avenue the zoning is Lowrise 4 (L4) and contains a variety of ages of multi-family development, a retirement and assisted living facility directly across 23rd Avenue, and the Historic Landmark Fire Station No. 6 to the north at the corner of East Yesler Way and 23rd Avenue. To the north of the CCSWW building is the Historic Landmark Douglas Truth Branch of the Seattle Public Library, in an L3 zone.

ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION

Roderick Butler, project architect, described the CCSWW goal of developing 51 affordable housing units in a mixed use building. Twenty six units would be for tenants with incomes at 30 percent of Adjusted Median Income (AMI) and 25 units would be for tenants with incomes between 30 and 50 percent of AMI. Retail spaces would front 23rd Avenue. Interior at-grade parking would be provided to replace the existing and required parking for the CCSWW building. Project resident parking would be below grade. Vehicle access would be from a proposed driveway between the proposed new and existing buildings and be connected to both 23rd and 24th Avenues (Planner's Note: When a lot fronts 2 or more streets, parking access must be from the street with the fewest lineal feet of commercially zoned frontage [SMC 23.47A.032.A1.c]. For this site that street is 24th Avenue South.). CCSWW is also working with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to convert the approximately 20 foot wide planting strip along the west side 24th Avenue to diagonal parking. This will not be a replacement for current CCSWW or future required project parking, but as a way to address a shortage of neighborhood parking and the lack of parking on 23rd Avenue.

CCSWW and the architect intend to design a building that will not be an isolated residence for the tenants, but actively engage the street and the significant asset of the 23rd and Jackson commercial district beginning directly across South Main Street to the south.

The building would be built to City of Seattle "Sea-Green" and State of Washington "Evergreen" standards for assuring acceptable environmental quality for tenants, but will not be submitted for LEED certification. A very high quality of materials and construction will be used, not only for initial marketability, but for long term durability. Because of the smaller cash flow from renting to tenants earning between 30 to 50 percent of AMI, this type of project must invest in quality materials and construction up front to avoid costly maintenance during life-time operation.

Three development concepts were presented. All concepts propose commercial spaces in varying amounts, the residential lobby along 23rd Avenue, the office and “multi-use” room along South Main Street, the CCSWW parking at grade within the building and behind the street level uses, and residential units on floors 2 through 4. All concepts would require a *Design Departure* from the Code requirement that any structured street level parking be separated from a street level street facing façade by a permitted use (see Departure Matrix below).

Concept “A” proposes a full site ground level with floors 2 through 4 in an unequal “U” shape with a smaller footprint that opens towards 24th Avenue. Except for the residential lobby, the 23rd Avenue frontage at grade would contain commercial spaces that wrap around to South Main Street. The remainder of South Main Street would contain the administrative office and multi-use room. The residential amenity area (the amenity area replaces the formerly required open space) would be on the second level in the recess of the “U” and then extend north along 24th Avenue between the short leg of the “U” and the street. The applicant asserts that because of the requirements for the apartment level building footprint, providing the required amount of amenity area would not be possible, hence a *Design Departure* to require only 4 percent, not the required 5 percent of gross residential floor area would be requested. A *Design Departure* to allow at-grade and street facing parking along 24th Avenue without an intervening allowed use would also be required.

Concept “B” proposes a “U” shaped ground level with the recess of the “U” facing the CCSWW building to the north. The upper three levels would extend from the three street facades and be the same footprint of the ground level except it would not extend above the 23rd Avenue leg and some of the area south of the recess. The residential lobby would be located on the north end of the 23rd Avenue façade with commercial space along the remainder and wrapping around to the Main Street façade. Similar to Concept “A”, the administrative office and multi-use room would extend along the entire Main Street frontage. The amenity area would be in the recess of the “U” at ground level. Because of area constraints from the building footprint, a *Design Departure* to require only three and one-half to four percent, not the required 5 percent of gross residential floor area would be requested. A *Design Departure* to allow at-grade and street facing parking along 24th Avenue without an intervening allowed use would also be required.

Concept “C” proposes a full site ground level similar to Concept “A” but with two separate residential structures above. A west to east oriented upper level structure along the north side of the site would house three levels of apartments. It would have a short leg extending further south along the 23rd Avenue frontage for the elevator tower. The second upper level section would extend between 23rd and 24th Avenues along South Main Street and contain two levels of “townhouse” style units (these would not be townhouses per City Land Use Code definition, but apartments with two internally connected levels). The administrative office and multi-use room area spaces would extend along approximately three-fourths of South Main Street from the 23rd Avenue frontage. The residential lobby on 23rd Avenue would be north of this with the remainder of the façade containing commercial space. The remaining one-fourth of the South Main Street façade would contain two ground level apartments at the southeast corner. The full amount of residential amenity area would be located on the second level and between the north and south structures. A *Design Departure* to allow at-grade and street facing parking along 24th Avenue without an intervening allowed use would also be required.

Concept “C” is the applicant’s preferred option for their program and the site for the following reasons: the separate east to west oriented upper levels creates strong street walls on the site perimeters and at the same time breaks the building mass into two smaller sections; the resultant east to west oriented amenity area will receive morning and afternoon sun and create a pleasant and visible (to tenants and the street) outdoor recreation / amenity area; the separate structures allow for a differentiation of the separate unit types; and, the inclusion of ground level apartments at the southeast corner create a transition to the L2 zoned area to the east.

The projects development consultant added that they want to break ground in April 2009 with project completion in June 2010.

DEPARTURE FROM CODE STANDARDS

A request was made for one possible *Design Departure* from Code requirements as outlined below. A second *Design Departure* (recognized after the EDG meeting) is required under all development options.

SUMMARY OF DEPARTURE REQUESTS

Land Use Code Standard	Proposed Amount of Departure	Rationale for Request	Board Recommendation
<p>Required Street Level Uses. Parking may not abut a street level street facing façade in a structure that contains more than one residential dwelling unit, i.e. a permitted use must separate any parking from a street level street facing façade (SMC 23.47A.005.B).</p>	<p>The at-grade and possibly below grade parking is proposed to abut the structure’s east wall with no intervening use along approximately three-quarters of its 24th Avenue facade.</p>	<p>Provision of a required street level use would restrict the internal area for parking.</p>	<p>The Board was not generally supportive of this request. It would consider the request if the applicant can demonstrate how the proposed layout is essential to the functioning of a floor plan <u>and</u> is replaced with a strong response to the Code and Design Guideline requirements for treatments of blank walls.</p>

Land Use Code Standard	Proposed Amount of Departure	Rationale for Request	Board Recommendation
<p>Vehicle Access. A lot without alley access and abutting two or more streets must have access from the street with the fewest lineal feet of commercially zoned frontage, or 24th Avenue South. (SMC 23.47A.032)</p>	<p>Retain and use the southern of the two existing 23rd Ave South access curb-cuts in addition to retaining and using the existing access curb-cut on 24th Avenue South.</p>	<p>The retention of the 23rd Avenue curb-cut provides efficient vehicle access for the applicant’s preferred development option.</p>	<p>The need for a <i>Design Departure</i> was not recognized at the time of EDG and was not considered by the Board. The Director generally does not support the request as full vehicle access from 24th Avenue is possible and the second existing curb-cut on 23rd will remain and provide access to the CCSWW buildings.</p>

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- To maximize visual connections between the courtyard and surrounding units, these units should have balconies and large windows.
- The building design and materials should be visually interesting and have the appearance of market rate housing, not low-income housing.
- “Sustainable” building principles should be used in design and construction.
- The design should fit with the three historic buildings in the area (Seattle Public Library Douglas Truth Branch, Yesler “Victorian” houses, and Seattle Fire Department Station #6).
- Support for the development of parking in the large planting strip along 24th Avenue.
- The divided massing and building set-back from the street is good; do not crowd the street like the Welch Plaza building crowds 23rd Avenue.
- Opposition to replacing the wide planting strip on 24th Avenue with parking; this is a pleasant public “open space”.

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. Site Planning

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.*

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 parking access driveway extending from 23rd to 24th Avenues will be traversed by CCSWW employees using the new parking. It will also be visible from the CCSWW building and the residents of the proposed structure. Consequently the driveway area and north side ground level of the proposed building should:

- Not have a utility / service character, but acknowledge its visibility from the CCSWW site and the both avenues when approaching from the north.
- Be designed to be foster interaction between the two buildings and sites.

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

There are a number of developments along 23rd Avenue to the south and west of the project site that have begun to create a “street wall” definition for this avenue.

- The design should continue this by placing the structure in a traditional urban relationship close to the sidewalk.

Development on this site will require a 3 foot dedication of land along 23rd Avenue for right of way (ROW) widening. The minimum sidewalk width required will be 6 feet. To build upon these required street improvements:

- The proposed retail uses along 23rd Avenue should be close to the street for interaction and engagement with the street. But they should also be set-back enough to create a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment next to the street, which has high traffic volumes and speeds and no on street parking as a buffer. Recessed entry areas are a possible approach.
- If administrative office use is necessary at the southwest corner, it should be designed to support activity on the street.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. *Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.*

Residential, office, retail, and semi-public spaces (multi-purpose room) should have entries visible to the public and users and be differentiated from each other.

A-7 Residential Open Space. **Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

The widest width of the amenity area is approximately 30 feet. This may be too narrow to achieve the above objectives. The width of the space on the 23rd Avenue façade is likely one-third to one-half of this and will occlude a substantial amount of needed afternoon sun light.

- The design should assure adequate width of the amenity level to create functional and inviting user areas. The MUP submittal should include solar studies of sunlight penetration during the four seasons (spring and autumn equinox, summer and winter solstice). A detailed “site” plan of the area configuration should also be included.
- The proposed roof top residential amenity area (open space) between the two upper level structures should have a strong connection to the interior of the building and be easily accessible to users. It should be an active space.
- Suggestions on creating this connection are multiple entries for the northern apartment building (mid-way on the long wall and at the structure end(s)), orientation of living rooms and kitchens/dining rooms toward the amenity area, among others.

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.*

Although off site, the project proposal to replace a large planting strip along 24th Avenue with diagonal parking (approximately 21 spaces) would have a negative affect on the pedestrian environment. Planting areas provide opportunity for landscaping, street trees, wider sidewalks, and “spill-over” activity space for pedestrians. Diagonal parking schemes can place automobiles in close proximity to pedestrians and remove space for these others elements. The Board does not support this proposal. The project proponents may present other schemes that separate parking from pedestrians and maintain landscaping.

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 building design should continue its orientation to both avenue corners with South Main Street. Active uses should be fronting both sides of each corner, appropriate to their location on the quieter character of 24th Avenue or the more active 23rd Avenue.

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-4 Exterior Finish Materials. **Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

Priorities for this highly visible site that is located at the in the southern end of the 23rd & Union – Jackson Residential Urban Village.

- Strong and durable materials, such as brick or masonry, should be used at the building base, particularly along the tough environment of 23rd Avenue.

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 recessed residential entry along 23rd Avenue is proposed, where high traffic volumes and speeds require an ample entry area. However, this should be designed for visibility to the interior for resident safety.

D-2 Blank Walls. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

The rear (north) wall at ground level should not be blank or considered a "rear" wall. This façade will be visible from 23rd and 24th Avenues as well as the remaining CCSWW building and site to the north, particularly where the CCSWW building is substantially stepped-back from its 23rd Avenue property line.

If a *Design Departure* from the requirement for an intervening use between the interior parking and the 24th Avenue street level façade is pursued the applicant must demonstrate how the overall design would meet this and other guidelines.

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.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security. *Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.*

The design proposes two entries with security gates for the parking garage. The proposed landscaping in front of the north façade where it is visible from 23rd Avenue is likely to create a security / visibility problem. These openings and the surrounding building base and any landscaping should respond to this guidance.

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.*

Dumpster and recycling areas should be screened from street view; the parking garage is the likely location. Utility meters should be within the garage areas if possible, or substantially

screened if outside.

- Location of these utilities should be determined before MUP submittal for discussion at the *Recommendation* meeting.

E. Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. *Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.*

See D-5 above.

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. Finally, please inform the assigned planner when the applicant has secured a MUP intake appointment.