



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

**Department of Planning and Development**

D.M. Sugimura, Director

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**2<sup>ND</sup> EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE  
OF THE  
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**Meeting Date: March 4, 2009**

**Report Date: March 12, 2009**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Project Number: 3005778

Address: 100 Republican Street

Applicant: Brian Runberg, Architect for Burkheimer Family LLC

Board members present: Matt Roewe (Chair)  
John Rose, Jr  
Bill Vandeventer  
David Nemens  
Mark Garrell  
Kristen Clem

Board members absent: None

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

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**BACKGROUND**

The first Early Design Guidance Meeting was held on June 6, 2006, and was based on a proposal that included two parcels on either side of a platted alley totaling approximately 49,200 sq. ft. The proposal also included a subterranean vacation of the alley and contract rezone from NC3-40 to NC3-65 (east parcel along Warren Avenue N) and NC3P-40 to NC3P-65 (west parcel along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N). Subsequent to the EDG meeting, the owner acquired an additional parcel of land to the north of the west parcel bringing the total development site to 68,640 sq. ft.

**SITE AND VICINITY**

The site is located in Queen Anne's Uptown neighborhood, on Republican Street between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Warren Avenue North. The site consists of three parcels separated by an alley that runs north-south from Republican to Mercer Street. The alley is unimproved for the north 1/3. The three parcels together comprise approximately 2/3 of the block bounded by Mercer Street and Republican

Street on the north and south and Warren Avenue North and 1st Avenue North on the east and west. The site slopes up slightly to the northwest with a change in grade of approximately eight feet.

The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 40-foot base height limit (NC3-40). Properties along Republican Street and to the north are also zoned NC3-40. Properties along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North are NC3P-40 (Pedestrian designated zone). The site is bounded on the east and south by Seattle Center which is zoned NC3 with an 85 foot height limit. Zoning changes to NC3 with a 65 foot height limit to the southwest.

No portion of the site is designated as an Environmentally Critical Area on City maps. The site is currently occupied by a paved surface parking lot and a commercial building on the west portion of the site and the vacated QFC grocery on the east parcel. There are existing mature street trees along all three frontages. There are existing curbs and sidewalk, and sufficient width to accommodate full sidewalk improvements.

Development in the vicinity reflects its zoning, though most does not approach full zoning potential, suggesting that the area could experience substantial future redevelopment. Mercer Street defines Seattle Center's northern edge and the district's performing arts venues, including Seattle Repertory Theater, Intiman Theater, Pacific Northwest Ballet, McCaw Hall, the Mercer Arts Arena. Immediately to the north of the west parcel on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North is a small two-story commercial building with parking located off the alley to the rear of the building. On the northwest corner of the subject block at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Mercer Street is a four-story, 41-unit brick apartment building built in 1929 and recently renovated. Adjacent to the apartment building to the east is a surface pay parking lot. On the northeast corner at Mercer Street and Warren Avenue North is a two-story retail/office building.

The site is located directly across Republican from Seattle Center's Northwest Rooms. In August 2008, the Seattle City Council adopted the Seattle Center Century 21 Master Plan. The Plan proposes that the blank outer wall of the current Northwest meeting rooms is replaced with a five-story, glassy, open building on the corner of 1st Avenue N. and Republican Street. A lower level meeting room faces a new campus plaza with the ground floor above developed as retail space compatible with the Uptown Urban Center.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes a six-story mixed use building with 17,994 sq. ft. of commercial space at ground level fronting on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Republican and 276 residential units both at ground level on Warren Avenue North and on upper levels. Parking for 302 vehicles will be provided on one level below grade, one level at grade and another level above that. The proposal includes a request for a contract rezone to increase the height limit from the 40-foot limit to 65 feet. There is also a proposal to vacate approximately 3,840 sq ft of the platted alley (about ½ the length of the alley) and rededicate 2, 880 sq. ft. in another location.

## **SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE FROM 6/6/2006 EDG MEETING**

1. Chamfered corners at major intersections are not preferred; true "proud" corners are preferable.
2. The building should step down to meet the 40-foot zone to the north.
3. Contract rezones imply some restriction on "maxing-out" the upzone to 65 feet.
4. Better articulation and differentiation of grade-level uses is needed along Warren Avenue North from the remainder of the site.

5. Street walls are preferred along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Warren Avenue North; open space is appropriate for Republican.

Because the current proposal is for a significantly larger site, involves a full alley vacation (as opposed to subterranean), and is for a single building instead of two buildings, the following design guidance will focus solely on the analysis and concept proposal and options presented at the EDG meeting of March 4, 2009.

## **DESIGN PRESENTATION**

Three alternative design schemes were presented. Common to all options are retail uses the full length of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N and Republican; residential units accessed from street level on Warren Avenue N; large courtyard/open space on Republican Street; stepping down to the 40-foot level on the north, and; strong corners at the intersections.

Concept 1 features a large plaza located roughly at the center of Republican Street with a portion of the upper massing set back to enhance the openness of the plaza. Ground to roof modulation along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North breaks the vertical massing to reflect surrounding development. Vehicle access to parking is via the proposed new alley on Warren Avenue N and from a curb cut on Republican through the plaza. Two residential entries are proposed: one on Warren Avenue N and one on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N.

Concept 2 is similar to Concept 1 but more of pronounced “H” shape. The Republican plaza is located closer to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and also has two residential entries as in Concept 1. This concept features a separate private deck facing north.

Concept 3 (the preferred scheme) locates the public plaza almost to Warren Avenue N to relate directly to the northwest entry to Seattle Center. Residential vehicle access is from the proposed new alley at the north property on Warren Avenue N; access to parking for the commercial uses is from a curb cut approximately 30 feet south of the alley entry. All residential entry is from two lobbies on either side of the plaza on Republican. The east lobby does have an exit onto Warren Avenue N.

Two departures are requested: One to allow two curb cuts from Warren Avenue N and one to allow a reduction in the residential setback on Warren Avenue N.

## **Board clarifying questions**

- How much area (in sq. ft.) is gained by upzoning from the 40-foot height to the 65-foot height? *Total possible at 40-foot height is 230,000 sq. ft. Total possible at 65-foot height is 365,000 sq. ft. Current proposal is 312,000 sq. ft.-53,000 less than maximum potential build-out at 65 feet.*
- Has the design team investigated accessing all garage entries from the alley? *It is very difficult to access three parking levels (two at and above grade) given the short distance of the alley.*
- Have there been any shading/shadowing studies for the plaza area? *Initial sun studies are being developed for the preferred scheme.*
- Will the courtyard at the podium level be for private use? *It will be for private but will be visually open to the public.*
- How deep is the upper story setback (at 40 feet height) at the north property line? *On the east, building is separated from the neighbor by the alley plus the upper two floors are setback approximately 12 feet. On the west the setback at 40 feet is approximately 20 feet deep.*

- Will the townhouse-style units on Warren Avenue N be differentiated (in style) from the rest of the building? *Yes, they will most likely be three stories of brick.*
- What protection will be provided for pedestrian traffic at the two driveways along Warren Avenue N. *The new building will be more visually open due to a voluntary 8 feet of additional setback. A change in paving pattern is also considered.*
- Why is a residential entry not provided on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N? *To provide a continuous retail frontage and to entries to be located on one central place (at the the plaza).*
- What are the dimensions of the proposed open spaces? *The plaza area is approximately 30' X 60'. The podium level courtyard is approximately 72' X 110'*

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ten members of the public attended this Early Design Guidance meeting and following comments were noted:

- Extra curb cut on Warren Avenue N is unnecessary when there is access at the alley 20 feet away.
- Warren Avenue N is usually quiet except for rush hour when it is busy and traffic is fast.
- Prefers chamfered corners on the buildings especially at ground level.
- Wanted to know if the commercial parking would be available for Seattle Center events. (No).
- Concern about safety and security on Warren Avenue N after dark.
- Concern that the alley area is secluded with low visibility and could harbor illicit activities.
- Does not support alley vacation as it would compromise parking and commercial deliveries to the building just north of the site on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. Suggested improvement of the alley through to Mercer Street.
- (Received by email after the EDG meeting) concern about congestion and maneuvering ability of large trucks and Fire Dept. apparatus in proposed new alley; lack of safety and security in alley; general parking concerns; concern about height, bulk and scale of building Warren Avenue N; likes the “older” architectural styles and finishes; suggest an additional residential entry on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N.

## **BOARD DELIBERATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and reviewing their original priority guidelines, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below. The Board 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.

### **“Hot-Button” Issues:**

- Vehicle access – two curb cuts on Warren Avenue N (A-8)
- Massing – preferred concept ? (A-1)
- Departure for townhouse unit setback (A-3; A-6)
- Upper level setback along north property line – is 20 foot depth enough? (A-5; B-1)
- Massing and shading around the plaza/courtyard (B-1; A-5)

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **A Site Planning**

#### **A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics**

*The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities.*

#### **A-2 Streetscape Compatibility**

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

#### **A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street**

*Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.*

#### **A-4 Human Activity**

*New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.*

#### **A-5 Respect for Adjacent sites**

*Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their site to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.*

#### **A-6 Transition between Residence and Street**

*For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for the residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.*

#### **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.*

#### **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 Board generally agreed that preferred Concept 3 was preferable to the others as it respects the sites to the north by stepping down and the large plaza relates well to Seattle Center.
- The Board appreciated the focus on the provision of continuous retail on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North around to Republican providing a clear organization of the program. A retail entrance at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N and Republican would provide a visual anchor to that corner.
- The Board expressed concern about the relatively narrow opening at the proposed plaza design and some questioned locating all residential entries here. The applicant was asked to provide sun/shadowing studies for the plaza and courtyard areas for the next meeting.
- Most Board members agreed with the approach of a plaza being the focal point of activity. Though most agreed that the proposed entry locations on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N compromised the continuous retail design, the applicant was asked to consider another residential entry point.
- The applicant was directed to provide sections drawings in two or three areas showing the relationship of the building to adjacent properties to determine the impact of the increased

height on neighboring sites. The Board declined to set a prescriptive setback (e.g., 25 feet) preferring to see section studies with various setbacks.

- The Board expressed general discomfort with the location of the second curb cut (in addition to the alley access) on Warren Avenue N citing potential excessive disruption of pedestrian traffic, isolation of three proposed townhouse units between two curb cuts and lack of distance between the vehicle access points. The design should be refined to either combine the access points on Warren Avenue N or consolidate the access from the alley.
- The Board also expressed concern that alley access, loading dock and turnaround space may be somewhat limited and asked to have maneuvering diagrams submitted to demonstrate the adequacy of the area to serve both the project and the neighbors needs.
- The Board felt that the proposed eight foot setback for the ground-level residential entries on Warren Avenue N is inadequate to provide security and privacy for the residents. The Board generally agreed that they preferred entries above grade to provide greater privacy. The Board is disinclined at this time to grant this departure request (4-2).

## **B**        *Height, Bulk and Scale*

### **B-1**    **Height, Bulk and Scale**

*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.*

- The Board agreed that since this is a contract rezone, the design of the structure should not maximize the massing. The Board appreciated the proposed stepping down of the building massing on the north and looks forward to seeing section drawings to help depict the impact of the mass in relation to the neighbors. In a presentation of sample perspective drawings the Board preferred detailing that echoed the 40-foot height limit to the north. They especially liked the three dimensional massing model that illustrated the buildings forms at each height and how it informs the eventual refined design.

## **C**        *Architectural Elements and Materials*

### **C-1**    **Architectural Context**

*New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.*

### **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.*

### **C-3**    **Human Scale**

*The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.*

**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.*

**C-5 Structured Parking Entrances**

*The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.*

- The board agreed that the design should relate to nearby buildings but not be too nostalgic. They also cautioned against designing excessively busy elevations. They referred back to the desirable image presented in simple massing model and it’s relative building elements.
- See discussion above regarding residential and commercial vehicle access.

**D Pedestrian Environment**

**D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

*Provide convenient, attractive and protected pedestrian entries.*

**D-8 Treatment of alleys**

*The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrians’ street front.*

- The Board expressed concern that the proposed location of the trash and recycling receptacles at the rear of the building is adequate to serve all the retail and residential uses and include loading facilities.

**E Landscaping**

**E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or site**

*Landscaping, including living plants, special pavement, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.*

- The Board is looking forward to a detailed landscape design that incorporates the Green Factor into the design.

**DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**Departure Summary Table**

<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>REQUEST</b>	<b>APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION</b>	<b>BOARD RECOMMENDATION</b>
<b>Access to parking (SMC23.47A.032A1a)</b> Access to parking must be from the alley when the site abuts a platted alley improved to SDOT standards.	Request access to at-grade retail parking from second curb cut on Warren Avenue N	Accessing all parking from alley will require additional square footage for maneuvering reducing the amount of retail space.	The Board is not inclined to grant this departure at this time and would like the applicant to explore access options that is less disruptive to pedestrian circulation. The Board believes that all access could be designed to work from the

<b>Front setback (SMC23.47A.008D2)</b> Residential uses at grade level must be 4' above the sidewalk or setback 10' from the property line.	Request 8' for residential entries along Warren Avenue N.. A reduction of 2'.	Setback plus extensive landscaping provide adequate privacy for street level units.	proposed alley. The Board was not inclined to grant this departure and directed that applicant to explore a raised stoop design option..
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**NEXT STEPS**

Using the design guidance above the architect should develop the next iteration of the design response. The following items summarize what should be included in the submittal materials for MUP application and recommendation meeting. See guidance above for applicable details.

- 4 sets of MUP plans, 5 copies of the filled out (and signed) SEPA checklist, owner authorization form, financial responsibility form, site plan (8.5”-11”) for SEPA large sign (see Director’s Rule 29-2006).
- Provide a written response to the Design Review guidelines and guidance above at MUP submittal (see attachment B of CAM 238). Please send the planner the electronic version of the narrative design response via email.
- Provide full color shadowed elevations in the MUP plans (N-S-E-W) with material callouts. Please also provide axonometric views from the Southwest and Southeast. Please label these Sheets “DR”.
- Provide a large scale full color landscape plan in the MUP plans with plant material lists. Provide detail drawings of unique features (arbors, trellises, green walls, artwork, fountains, etc.) as appropriate. Please label “DR”.
- Provide sections of the site and proposed structures, with more detailed sections showing the east and west façades in context with adjacent development.
- Please provide shadow studies demonstrating the impact of the proposed massing on the proposed plaza and interior courtyard. The study should demonstrate shadows at 9am, 12pm, 3pm, and 6pm on:
  - December 21<sup>st</sup> (6pm analysis not required; 9am, 12pm, and 3pm analyses required)
  - March 21<sup>st</sup>/September 21<sup>st</sup>
  - June 21st
- **Please call the Planner (Marti Stave 206 684-0239) when you have made your MUP intake appointment.**

For Recommendation Meeting:

- Please provide all of the studies required for the MUP application (sections, shadowing, details, etc.)
- Provide larger scale site plan at the recommendation meeting.

- Provide the topographic survey in the recommendation packet.
- Provide detailed large scale street level vignettes for the street level along all three rights-of-way to illustrate the streetscape experience.
- Provide a full color rendering of the project looking northwest from southeast perspective.
- Provide a full color and materials board with tangible examples at the recommendation meeting. Also, provide some pictures of the material applications in built projects.
- A conceptual plan for lighting design and signage plan should be presented at the next meeting.
- **Provide a .pdf file of the Recommendation packet per instruction in CAM 238 for uploading to the Design Review website at least 7 days prior to meeting.**

Stavem/DOCS/Design Review/3005778 Republican/3005778EDG-2.doc