



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION
OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Meeting Date: July 15, 2009

Report Date: July 22, 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3005778

Address: 100 Republican Street

Applicant: Brian Runberg, Architect for Burkheimer Family LLC

Board members present: John Rose, Jr (Chair)
David Delfs
Lipika Mekrji

Board members absent: David Nemens
Mark Garrell
Kristen Clem

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

BACKGROUND

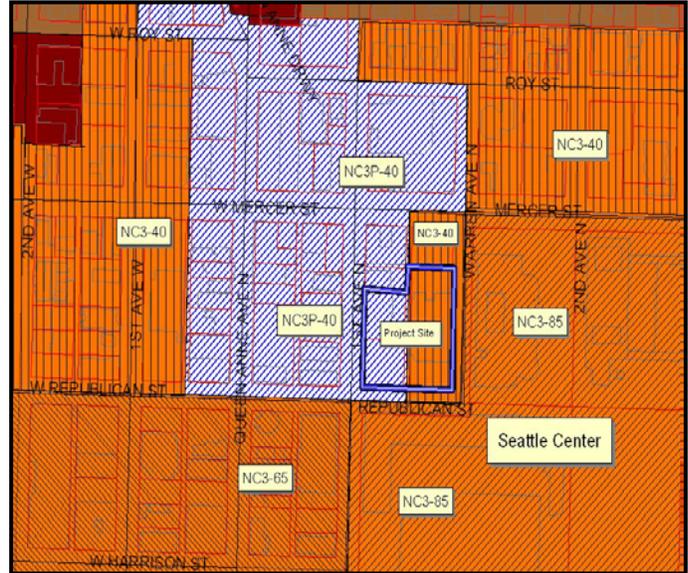
The first Early Design Guidance Meeting was held on June 6, 2006, and was based on a proposal that included two parcels on either side of a platted alley totaling approximately 49,200 sq. ft. The proposal also included a subterranean vacation of the alley and contract rezone from NC3-40 to NC3-65 (east parcel along Warren Avenue N) and NC3P-40 to NC3P-65 (west parcel along 1st 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 1st 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 1st 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.

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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 1st 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 1st 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 1st 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 1/2 the length of the alley) and rededicate 2, 880 sq. ft. in another location.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. Common to all options are retail uses the full length of 1st 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 1st 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 1st Avenue N.

Concept 2 is similar to Concept 1 but more of pronounced “H” shape. The Republican plaza is located closer to 1st 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.

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 1st 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 1st Avenue N.

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit on April 28, 2009. Notice of Application was published on May 14, 2009. Notice was again published on May 21, 2009 because of a mapping error with the comment period ending June 3, 2009. No comments were received by DPD during this period.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: DATE: JULY 15, 2009

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The architect presented a refined design with facades that vary in design approach on each of the three street frontages. The 1st Ave N façade reflects that traditional brick buildings familiar in the Uptown neighborhood; the Republican façade takes its cue from the close proximity to Seattle Center and its major entrance at August Wilson Way; the Warren Ave façade is quieter with extensive landscaping and residential entries to townhouse like units at grade. Retail uses are located along 1st Ave N and wrap around to Republican. Retail storefronts will be varied in design, fenestration and color. A large plaza and new curb bulb are located at the southeast corner and are part of the public benefits package offered for the proposed alley vacation. The building is stepped down on portions of the north façade to respect adjacent properties still zoned at a 40' height limit.

On May 21, 2009, the Seattle Design Commission approved the proposed design of the public benefits including the large public plaza and curb bulb as part of the alley vacation. The applicants proposed to vacate 3,840 square feet of the north-south alley and rededicate an equal amount at the north edge of the site in an east-west configuration.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Four members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting and two people commented as follows:

- Concern about shadowing effect on buildings to the north (shadow studies provided by applicant showed minimal effect on adjacent buildings); concern about future redevelopment of adjacent building to the north on 1st Ave N and constrained access from rededicated alley
- Liked overall massing and how building relates to Seattle Center; suggested opening courtyard more to allow views from inside upper level private courtyard; suggested a better “knitting” together of materials.

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 at the EDG Meeting March 4, 2009. 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. The Board’s comments and recommendation at the Recommendation Meeting on July 15, 2009, follow the guidance in ***bold italicized text***.

“Hot Button Issues” are items initially discussed by the Board and include items of top importance for the design. For this project at EDG, the Board determined the hot button issues were:

- 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)

The Board was satisfied that the direction given with respect to the above issues was met. More detailed discussion follows.

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 1st Avenue North around to Republican providing a clear organization of the program. A retail entrance at the corner of 1st Avenue N and Republican would provide and 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 1st 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).

The Board was pleased with refined design that addressed most of the Board's design guidance. While the residential entries are not changed, there is an exit on 1st Ave N. Vehicle access for the retail uses has been relocated closer to the corner of Warren Ave and Republican allowing for a continuous row of residential entries on Warren. These entries have been setback an additional two feet for more privacy. Residential vehicle access is now entirely from the alley. The rear of the building has been redesigned to provide more area for delivery truck and trash pickup maneuvering. Maneuvering diagrams were provided that demonstrated the adequacy of the space.

The Board is still uncomfortable with the at-grade townhouse entrances commenting that they still lack privacy and security. The previously requested departure for setback was withdrawn but even at the required 10 foot setback the Board still preferred entries above grade. The Board directed the applicant to work with the Department to refine the design of the landscaping and the proposed low walls to make the entries more defensible.

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.

As proposed, there will be a 22 foot step back of the upper two floors on the north side of the building echoing the 40 foot height limit to the north. Additionally the brick façade ends at 40 feet with the upper two floors slightly recessed until there is a break in the façade and then the brick extends up another floor. Together it gives the appearance of two separate but related buildings.

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.

The Board was pleased with how the design relates to the many existing brick buildings in the neighborhood but in a contemporary way. The Republican façade acknowledges Seattle Center and the new Century 21 Master Plan for the center with more contemporary materials and design. The overall effect is of three different buildings as each façade changes (but are related) as one turns each corner.

The Board recommended approval of the semi-transparent metal mesh garage door proposed for the commercial entrance, commenting that it is important to retain visibility and lighting even when the garage is closed after hours.

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.

Additional trash collections areas have been added. Adequacy of trash and recycling areas will be addressed at building permit stage.

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.

The proposed landscape design includes extensive street level plantings including a bioswale on Warren Ave N, green walls and new street trees. Required Green Factor has been met.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Departure Summary Table

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
Access to parking (SMC23.47A.032A1a) 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. A-1	Access to commercial parking was relocated to closer to Republican and all residential vehicle access is proposed from the alley. The Board unanimously approved the new design and agreed to grant this departure.
Driveway width (SMC23.54.030F2) Minimum width for driveway serving residential parking is 22’ for 2-way traffic.	Request 18’ driveway width to access mezzanine level parking	In response to Board’s direction to locate all access at the alley. Building frontage is limited along alley. A-3	The Board unanimously approved this departure.

Street Level Standards (SMC 23.47A.008) Minimum floor to floor height for non-residential uses is 13'	Request reduction in floor to floor height from 13' to 11' 10" in commercial units at the NW corner of the site.	Site grade changes approximately 8' north to south. The lower height would not be noticeable in the small scale of the commercial units at this location. A-1	The Board unanimously approved this departure.
Parking Space Standards (SMC 23.54.030B) Commercial parking must consist of 35% small stalls and 35% large stalls	Request to waive mix requirements for small and large vehicles.	The proposed stall size mix proposes fewer small stalls to enhance ease of maneuvering. Providing required mix would result in reducing retail space. A-8	The Board agreed that as parking is not required in the Uptown Urban Center the parking mix requirement could be waived. The Board unanimously approved this departure.

The three Board member in attendance unanimously recommended approval of the project and the four requested departures with the following condition:

Condition #1: . The Board directed the applicant to work with the Department to refine the design of the landscaping and the proposed low walls to make the residential entries on Warren Ave N more defensible.