

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

OF

QUEEN ANNE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

January 2, 2007

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3005841

Address: 3841 34th Ave. W.

Applicant: Jensen/Fey Architects for Mark Modawell, Dina Corp.

Board members present

Patrick Doherty, Chair
Matt Roewe
Andrew Hastings
J. Christopher Kirk
Maria Barrientos
Bill Vandeventer

Land Use Planner present:

Scott Kemp

Site and Vicinity

The proposal site is in an NC3 – 60' zoned parcel 256 feet long along Roy St. and 120 feet deep along both 3rd Ave. N. and Nob Hill Ave. N. Directly south, across Roy St. is a tree level parking garage for Seattle Center. To the north, contiguous with the subject site, in an area of L-3 zoning are several low scale multi-family buildings and some surface parking areas.

Topography rises approximately eight feet along Roy St. from east to west and an additional approximately eight feet from south to north. The site is currently used as a surface parking lot.

Roy St. is a one way, street commercial in character with uses including restaurants, offices and some retail businesses. Auto traffic on the street is high as it functions as the west bound complement to the one way, east bound Mercer St. In addition to the close by Seattle Center with its many attractions, the headquarters of the Gates Foundation is soon to be built nearby. Uses to the north, away from the commercial Roy St, are multi-family; established over the past 100 years at a moderately high density.

Proposal Description

The applicants propose a five level hotel and apartment building with street level uses to include two restaurant spaces and a hotel lobby. The hotel would have 120-140 rooms. A one way in driveway is proposed from Roy St. with a two way driveway onto Nob Hill Ave. N.

The hotel lobby would be at sidewalk grade near mid-block along the proposal site. Further west, at a floor level about four feet below sidewalk level, a restaurant in a tall, two story space, would be located at the corner. An entry at the corner would access a landing and stairs down to the main floor level. A secondary path into the restaurant would be along a level path from the hotel lobby. At the eastern end of the Roy St. frontage would be another restaurant space on a floor plate below the main one so that it too is at sidewalk grade. Incorporated into the building massing at this eastern, Roy St. corner is a setback to provide area for sidewalk seating.

Parking would be provided at two levels, one below grade and one at grade, partially within the structure and partially exposed in the northern areas of the site with no structure above.

Public Comments

Public comment was received. Commentors pointed out that zoning and uses change mid-block, immediately north of the subject site to lowrise multifamily and that building massing and site design should reflect the future development likely to happen on adjacent properties. The introduction of hotel and restaurant uses along this element of Roy St. frontage was applauded as consistent with neighborhood planning efforts. A restaurant a few feet below sidewalk grade could hinder the connection to the sidewalk and street realm. The proposed two story expression of the restaurant space and an entry with landing could each help to make it more vital. Expressive corners should be considered. The proposed angled “bend” of part of the upper building could be more acute and less subtle. The required upper level setback from the overhead utility lines along the street were observed to create a strong horizontality of the building which should be countered with vertical architectural elements.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED:

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. The guidance and recommendations made were agreed to by all of the Board members present, unless otherwise noted. While the notes below indicate the area the Board found most important, all of the Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings apply.

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

The pedestrian environment should dictate the streetscape. Currently there are a number of uses in the area, restaurants, shops, offices which have entrances directly off the sidewalk and add to the general level of pedestrian activity. This project should be designed with uses well connected to the sidewalk realm.

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-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.

Two prominent corners along Roy St. should be expressed.

Entrances to the hotel and the other non-residential uses should be well expressed on the exterior of the building. The planned restaurant at the western most end of the building, expected to be below sidewalk grade at the corner needs to be carefully designed. The proposed two-story glass wall of this space will help to enliven and announce the space. A corner entry would also go far to insure the restaurant space is successfully connected to the sidewalk and street realm.

Human activity on the street frontage and sidewalks is an important feature to be accomplished in this urban location. Retail, restaurant and hotel lobby uses should all be closely connected to the sidewalk realm and should treat that area as an integral element of the uses on site.

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.

The in only driveway from Roy St. should be kept at a minimum width in order to interrupt as little of the sidewalk area as possible. The driveway location should also be coordinated with the location of any bus stops along the site so as to avoid safety conflicts. The two way driveway on Nob Hill Ave. N. should be located as far north as possible to separate vehicle entry and exiting from the intersection with Roy St. as much as possible and to maximize space for non-residential uses at the corner.

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 project, which proposes to make full use of the NC3-40' height envelope with five different levels, should have a massing with varied and generous set backs from the L-3 zoned areas to the north and should also provide good building forms along the front and side facades.

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 facade walls.

The Board thinks the third massing option, the applicant preferred option, works well. However, the second story set back to provide additional separation from existing power lines creates a horizontal line across two of the façades which should be addressed as part of the architecture either to de-emphasize it or to utilize it as part of a building expression. Most likely, there should be areas of vertical expression to de-emphasize this horizontality.

The building should have a good deal of unification in its expression. There can be repetition with variation, but, care should be taken not to lose the unified expression of the building. The functional expression of the uses within should also be maintained.

The building should not read as a “single family home grown up.” Instead it should add to the urban context of the area. Notable elements of that context include the Fisher Pavilion, the theatre district with its neon and fun night life, the Willows and the Eye Doctor buildings near by and the soon to be constructed Gates Foundation Headquarters. This should not be a suburban expression with stucco and vinyl.

Signage should be incorporated into the overall building architecture in a considered and appropriate manner.

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.

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 proposal presents ample opportunity to and should provide areas which enhance the pedestrian realm, including entries and outdoor eating areas. Overhead weather protection should be incorporated.

Rising topography along the two side streets create areas where there are no internal uses to connect well to the sidewalk. Blank walls in these areas and elsewhere are to be avoided wherever possible and to be treated with architectural measures, landscaping, etc. where unavoidable.

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 can not 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.

Departure Requests

None requested.