



**INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
CAPITOL/FIRST HILL/CENTRAL AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3005925

Address: 2203 East Union Street

Applicant: Jay Janette, Mithun Architects for JC Mueller

Meeting Date: March 5, 2008
Report Date: March 24, 2008

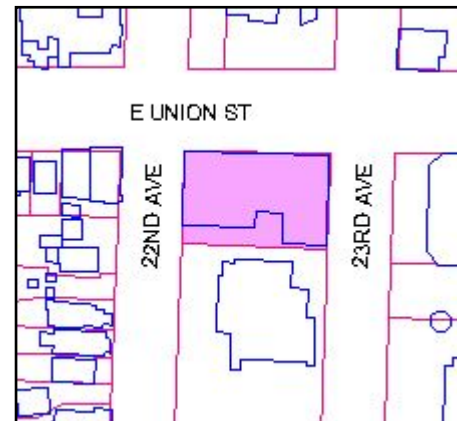
Board members present: Rumi Takahashi
James Walker, Chair

Board members absent: Jason Morrow
Sharon Sutton

DPD staff present: Lisa Rutzick, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

The subject site, zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 40-foot height limit (NC2P-40'), is located between 22nd Avenue and 23rd Avenue at East Union Street. The project site, where the Colman Building once stood, is 1-1/2 lots with no existing structure. There is no alley access to the site. The NC2P-40 zone continues to the north, east and south of the subject site. The zone across the street to the west of the site changes to NC2P-30, with SF 5000 to its south. The site is well served by public transit.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes the construction of a six story mixed use building with approximately 5,000 square feet of ground level commercial retail uses, below grade parking for approximately 89 vehicles, and five levels of residential use with approximately 92 units above the base. Access to the site would be from 23rd Avenue (seeking departure for garage access off 23rd Avenue).

The applicant is pursuing a Contract Rezone for the site to Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 65-foot height limit (NC2P-65'). The applicant is also considering requesting a reduction to the required parking per SMC 23.34.004.B.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: JUNE 27, 2007

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three schemes were presented. All of the options include below grade parking with approximately 85 stalls. The preferred option shows parking access from 23rd Avenue. The other two schemes show access from 22nd Avenue.

The first and preferred scheme (Design Scheme 1) proposed a six story mixed use building with retail along East Union Street and 23rd Avenue, and a residential amenity space at the corner of 22nd Avenue and East Union Street. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22nd Avenue and a south garden terrace as a response to the single-family residences along 22nd Avenue. Parking access is from 23rd Avenue. This scheme incorporates setbacks from the south and west property lines to create a more sensitive scale and allow for open space with a garden terrace. There is a centralized entry to the building that allows natural light into common spaces.

The second alternative (Design Scheme 2) proposed a six story mixed use building with retail along East Union Street and the northeast corner of 23rd Avenue. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22nd Avenue and the south garden terrace. Parking access is from 22nd Avenue, which is not preferred due to pedestrian activity along the street. The south face of the building is set back from the property line (with exception to the garage entry with residential units above) to allow for the garden terrace. In this scheme, the garden terrace is exposed to 23rd Avenue.

The third alternative (Design Scheme 3) proposed a 4 story mixed use building (current code compliant) with retail along East Union Street and the northeast corner of 23rd Avenue. Residential townhouses were proposed along 22nd Avenue and the south garden terrace. The south face of the building is set back from the property line (with exception to the garage entry with residential units above) to allow for the garden terrace. Parking access is from 22nd Avenue, leaving the garden terrace exposed to 23rd Avenue.

The open spaces for all three schemes would be at grade in the areas between building masses and at the garden terrace, as well as on a roof deck.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 31 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Clarify the proposed construction type. [Either wood frame over concrete for options 1 and 2 or all concrete for option 3]
- Question where is the closest 65-foot tall structure. [23rd and Madison]
- Excited to see development on this site.
- Regarding the contract re-zone, further exploration of the community benefit is critical. Important to carefully explore what will be offered in exchange for the extra height involved with the re-zone. Examples of this exchange might include guarantees of the type of commercial tenants, affordable units, etc.
- Commends the design team's work; however, feels that the proposed design is more in keeping with streets such as Broadway and Madison than this neighborhood. The proposed design doesn't adequately address the single family neighborhood. This intersection is more of a neighborhood commercial center, not an urban center as described.
- Unclear what the community benefit is for losing its collective air rights.
- The design context of the site is single family homes – this context has been ignored by the proposed design. While an attractive design has been presented, it is out of place with the neighborhood and needs to be challenged.
- The explanation that Option 3 does not work financially should be challenged because this proposal is going too far.
- Concerned with the vehicular access from 23rd creating a large gaping opening and leaving a tall wall on 22nd.
- Prefer garage entry on 23rd.
- A six story building on this site is disproportionate to the neighborhood, especially the single family development. Even a 40 foot tall building would be the tallest building around.
- Condos would be preferred to apartments. Like the ground level townhouse concept. Support ground floor retail uses.
- Strongly support preservation of street trees.
- Very supportive of overhead weather protection.
- Concerned with six foot tall fencing at the property line. This fencing should be carefully designed.
- Keeping the bus stop between the proposed driveway and the driveway to the south on 23rd is preferred.
- Would like to see special paving treatment along the sidewalks.
- If the garage is off of 23rd, left-hand turns should be prohibited.
- Hopes that the renovation of this corner will be the first of many other future redevelopments. The architecture should establish a strong design precedent that is sensitive to single family homes and is well-integrated into the neighborhood.
- The building should also be designed to be viewed from the south.
- A more reasonable design should propose that the building be stepped back so that the portion of the structure along 22nd Avenue is no higher than 40-feet in height.
- Concerned with traffic circulation through the neighborhood if access is located on 23rd Avenue.
- Need some traffic calming devices along 22nd Avenue – perhaps this would be a helpful and reasonable exchange for the increased building height.

- Like design concept, but concerned with affordability of units and would like to see some affordable housing units in the neighborhood.
- Not concerned with extra height.
- Wants to see durable and well-maintained materials used on the building exterior.
- Prefer 23rd Avenue for garage access.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION: MARCH 5, 2008
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DESIGN PRESENTATION

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, a more fully developed design was presented to the Board. The design sought to include an urban expression along 23rd and amore residential expression along 22nd Avenue. The south façade enjoys solar exposure and ground level entry units have been included off this side of the site. The landscape design includes a variety of vegetation that is layered with a mixture of heights, scale, texture and quality. The ground level units on 22nd are challenged with having a sense of entry that is separate from the public sidewalk.

The proposed design is also seeking an administrative waiver from the parking standards per SMC 23.54.015.D to reduce the commercial parking from the three required stalls to zero.

Because the Board did not have a quorum present at this meeting, the project team will return to the Board for a Final Recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 25 members of the public attended the Initial Recommendation meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Clarification of the proposed sidewalk widths. [ROW widths are 22nd Ave: 22'-6", E Union: 13'- 0 1/2" and 23rd Ave: 16'-1 1/2"].
- Concerned that the proposed materials are cold and too industrial appearing; would prefer a warmer, stone like texture.
- Clarify the proposed building heights. Would like to see the building height along 22nd remain at 40' to avoid greater shadow impacts on the residential uses to the west.
- The nearby restaurant Kurrent is a similar size and shape as the retail space proposed at the northwest corner and it works successfully.
- Commend the introduction of refreshing palette and design into the neighborhood
- The Union façade has three entrances and the 22nd Avenue has four entrances, while the 23rd Avenue façade is treated more as the service side without pedestrian entry points. The 23rd Avenue side should be given greater consideration and seek to encourage positive pedestrian activity with points of entry that encourage interaction between the public and private realms.
- Important to have secured parking for residents and bicycles. Would like tenants to be people who work in the neighborhood. Supports the transparency of the building and eyes on the street. Pleased with proposed green roof and curb bulbs. Encouraged the building's accent colors to be responsive to the neighborhoods history.
- Excited by the proposed design, but remains uncertain about the additional height requested. Clarify that parking is for residents only.

- Appreciates the “pop out” windows of the architecture, but finds the design to be too boxy and lacking modulation to afford relief from the monolithic massing. Suggest slight curve shape to soften the design.
- Confirm that the existing bus stop to remain. Reiterate that 23rd Avenue not activated enough by the proposed street level design.
- Actual height of the structure reaches 80’ to the top of the elevator penthouse – opposed to the requested height increase. The site is in an urban neighborhood that is predominantly single family houses and the proposal to go to a higher height is incongruous and jarring to the existing context.
- Concerned with proposed narrower driveway onto 23rd because turning movements onto the arterial can be challenging; therefore, the driveway should be at least the required dimension.
- This is a thoughtful design contribution to the urban village.
- The retail entry should be shifted to the corner of 23rd to help carry the pedestrian activity around to 23rd. The street level landscaping should be hardy and irrigated to ensure survival.
- Support the building step back on 22nd.
- This project will set a positive precedent for the neighborhood.
- Also concerned with driveway width reduction, in conjunction with the proposed sight triangle elimination and proximity to the bus stop all seem like a dangerous confluence of pedestrians and cars.
- Want to see details of proposed fiber cement panels.
- Clarification of proposed street lighting. [2 poles and exterior sconces].

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, at the EDG meeting on 6/27/07 the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance 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 Board’s response follows in bold text.

A. Site Planning

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

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 agreed that the design and building program should encourage pedestrian activity. The commercial spaces should utilize transparent windows and overhead weather protection and other details that encourage pedestrian traffic to, from and around the site. The Board discussed several pedestrian features that would significantly improve the sidewalk environment and help them agree that the project is significantly better as a whole: overhead canopies, operable storefront windows, transparent fencing in front of the 22nd Avenue townhouse units, retail spaces that coordinate with ground level amenity room, a crosswalk across East Union Street at the intersection of 22nd Avenue, curb bulbs, specialty paving, artwork, public seating, bike racks and a well-designed and integrated planting strip and tree wells.

The Board also agreed that the town home units along the ground level of the west side of the building should endeavor to be quieter responding to the single family development across 22nd Avenue, while the east and north sides of the building should strive for active commercial use and activity. The two building corners located at the intersections should reinforce the transition of ground level uses. The Board liked the projecting window bays shown at the 23rd Avenue intersection.

The Board looks forward to reviewing a high-quality well programmed and well landscaped ground level open space design. The Board recommended that the design include elements that emphasize the quality and experience of the open spaces. These elements should include operable windows, well programmed, well-landscaped spaces and a well-designed hard-scape along the right-of-way.

At the Recommendation meeting, the Board did not discuss the pedestrian amenity features described above.

The Board agreed that the ground level units along 22nd Avenue were more residential in character. The Board indicated support for the wider sidewalk depth on 22nd, as well as the variety of dense planting proposed on all of the abutting right-of-way, both against the building and in the planting strip.

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 nearby, 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 on the adjacent zones.

The Board supported a design that maximizes the potential development allowed by the existing underlying zone. All Board members agreed that the bulk of the building as viewed from 22nd Avenue should read predominantly as a four story building, rather than

a six story structure. However, the Board was split between the appropriateness of the proposed rezone to allow 25 additional feet to the building height. Two Board members felt that the proposed setbacks at the upper levels adequately addressed the issue of compatibility between the proposed building and the single family zone and development to the west; the other two Board members were not convinced that the proposed setback (of 12 feet from the west property line above the fourth level) would provide significant enough relief from the perceived building mass to those neighbors to the west.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the design showed a setback at the fourth floor that wraps from the west and south facades. The setback of the upper two levels measures 13' from the property line. The ground level residential units on 22nd Avenue are set back from the property line by three feet and have been designed to respond to the single family context across the street.

The Board indicated support for the erosion of the massing in conjunction with the preservation of the large street trees which provide significant buffer to the height, bulk and scale of the proposed building.

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.**

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 Option 1 is preferred in terms of the retail configuration and found the location of ground level townhouse type units along 22nd Avenue to well considered and located to respond to the residential zone across the street.

The Board looks forward to seeing a cohesive architectural design with details that are thoughtfully considered to help enliven the pedestrian environment and unique location of this building at these two corners. The Board felt comfortable with the architectural concept and language proposed for the building. The Board discussed that the activity of this intersection is more likely to be neighborhood commercial focal point and this building should strive to respond to the strong residential character of the community, but also provide opportunity to commercial uses that will be unique to and serve this community.

The Board looks forward to reviewing a more details material and color palette that is reflective of and responsive to the surrounding architectural aesthetic. The Board also noted that the design of this building should create a strong precedent to which future development will respond. The Board mentioned concern with the proposed painted (colored) concrete. All materials should be highly durable and age well.

The Board strongly agreed that the vehicular access, regardless of which street it is from, should be visually minimized and cause as little disruption to pedestrian circulation around the site as possible. The Board expressed a tentative preference for the 23rd Avenue garage entry over the 22nd Avenue entry given the proximity to the residential zone on the 22nd Avenue side. However, the Board voiced concern that having an entrance off of 23rd may create undesirable circulation issues whereby vehicles, unable to take a left onto 23rd Avenue, would take several right turns from the site and end up traveling down 22nd Avenue to reach East Union Street. Such a scenario needs to be examined by the traffic consultant to help inform the most appropriate access location. Efforts to prevent traffic movement down 22nd Avenue are encouraged. The Board also wants to know whether the METRO bus stop can be relocated as proposed.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the proposed material palette includes a fiber-cement system painted a brown color over a concrete base, galvanized metal railings, white vinyl windows and large storefront retail windows at the ground floor. The overhead canopies are a steel frame with a translucent canvas covering.

The Board was very concerned with the proposed material palette and the long term durability and maintenance of the proposed hardi-panel. Furthermore, the Board was concerned with joinery of the proposed materials, how the corners will be treated, as well as the projecting bays. The Board noted that a more durable material, such as wood, metal or masonry should be proposed. The Board would also like to see the details of how the proposed materials will wrap the corners and building projections. The soffit material of these projections should also be shown. The Board noted support for a reduced parking count if the quality of materials was improved.

The Board was pleased with the proposed building composition that includes projecting window box forms that are unevenly spaced giving a playful quality to the building pattern.

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.

D-2 Blank Walls. Building 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.

- 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 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.
- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.
- D-9 Commercial Signage.** Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.
- D-10 Commercial Lighting.** Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.
- D-11 Commercial Transparency.** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

The Board wants to see an exterior lighting plan and fixtures included that highlights building features and illuminates the sidewalk environment.

The Board would like to better understand the sequence of the ground level unit entryways, between the sidewalk, property line, exterior wall and front door entry. The Board encouraged the ground level entries to be higher than the six inches proposed in order to create more of a privacy buffer and transitional space between the public and private realm. Likewise, the Board wants to review a more detailed design of the residential entrance off of East Union Street, as well as those ground level units facing the south property line.

The Board was interested in the amenity room shown on the corner of the ground floor and will be interested to see how it interacts with the retail uses. The Board likes the tall 17' ceilings proposed for this space and the design should continue to include the tall height at this corner.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board agreed that additional permeability is needed on 23rd Avenue and at least one point of pedestrian access should be provided.

The Board was supportive of the proposed gate design that would be installed at the secured entry off of 22nd Avenue to access the south-facing ground level units.

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.

The Board strongly and unanimously agreed that the mature street trees on 22nd Avenue should be preserved, as they provide a significant buffer between the zones, both in terms of softening the proposed building, but also to reduce the sense of height, bulk and scale. The trees along 22nd Avenue are of particular importance.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board appreciated the well-considered landscape plan that includes six Trident Maples on Union Street, Multi-stem Vine Maples in the planters against the building along 22nd Avenue and the preservation of the three existing Red Oaks in 22nd Avenue planting strip and the two existing Maples on 23rd. The unusually wide planting strip is densely planted with ground cover and ornamental grasses, while leaving space between the planting strip and the curb. The rooftop is a variety of pavers and a green roof system with contrasting colors and textures.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Seven departures from the Code were requested at this time.

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	BOARD GUIDANCE
RESIDENTIAL STREET LEVEL REQ SMC 23.47A.008.D	The residential entry shall be either 4' above sidewalk or set back 10' from the sidewalk.	On 22 nd Avenue, the ground level residential facades are 6'-9.5" from the sidewalk and the bay projections are 2'-9.5" from the sidewalk.	The Board was supportive of the departure request given the unusually wide right-of-way on 22 nd and the proposed landscape design for the planting strip and the planters between the sidewalk and the building.
PARKING LOCATION & ACCESS SMC 23.47A.032	Access to parking shall be from a street that is not a designated Pedestrian street	Take access to parking from 23 rd Avenue, a designated pedestrian street.	The Board agreed that the 23 rd entrance prevents intrusion to the residential neighbors; however, they want to see this evidenced by transportation professional. Want mirrors at the driveway
STRUCTURAL BUILDING OVERHANG SMC 23.54.035	Width of bay window over property line allowed to project up to 9' with 45-degree angles.	Increase bay window projections to 13' with 90-degree angles.	The Board prefers the design of the bay projections proposed by the applicant rather than those allowed by Code.
PARKING SPACE	60% of stalls must	51.5% medium	The Board is supportive of proposed

SIZE SMC 23.54.030	be medium sized.	sized stalls	departure.
DRIVEWAY WIDTH SMC 23.54.030	22'	20'	The Board is supportive of proposed departure provided that mirrors and other devices are included to ensure pedestrian visibility to drivers accessing the garage.
SIGHT TRIANGLE SMC 23.54.030	10'	0'	The Board is supportive of proposed departure provided that mirrors and other devices are included to ensure pedestrian visibility to drivers accessing the garage.
RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AREA SMC 23.47A.008	3,489 SF	3,012 SF	The Board agreed that the proposed green roof system is an amenity that is appreciated by both tenants and the broader community. As such, the proposed departure is supported.