



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D.M. Sugimura, Director

***EARLY DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES
OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 4 SOUTHEAST***

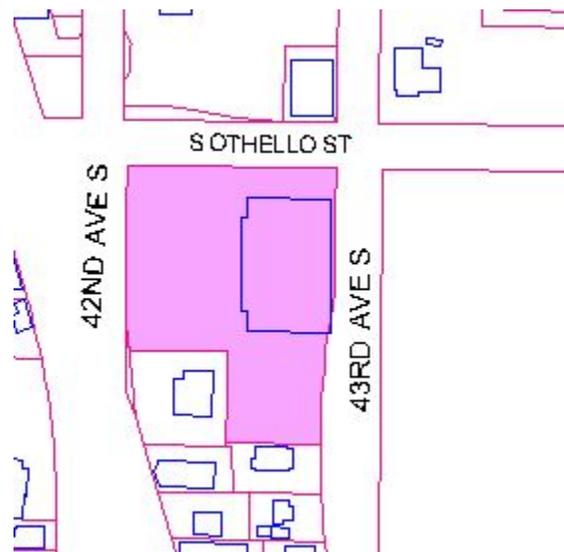
Project Number: 3006405
Address: 7300 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South
Applicant: Michael Hlastala, Othello Partners
Brad Hinthorne, Ruffcorn Mott Hinthorne Stine
Meeting Date: September 11, 2007
Report Date: October 4, 2007
Board Members Present: Steve Sindiong, Chair
Robert A. Mohn
Michele Wang
John Woodworth
Board Members Absent: Ann Beeman
Staff Members Present: Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Site Description

The development site occupies a total land area of approximately 81,041 square feet, in the Rainier Valley area of south Seattle. The site zoned Neighborhood Commercial Three Pedestrian zone with a height limit of 65 feet (NC3P-65) that occupies the north half of an irregular shaped block, with street frontage on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South to the west, South Othello Street to the north, and 43rd Avenue South to the east. The subject site is also located within the MLK at Holly Street Residential Urban Village, Othello Neighborhood Design Guideline area, Othello Station Overlay District, and the South Seattle Reinvestment Area. Additionally, the site is not located in a designated Environmentally Critical Area (ECA).

The site is developed with one building, surrounded by a hard surface parking lot, loading areas, and



perimeter landscaping. The site slopes modestly upward from west to the southeast, approximately 8 feet over a distance of 275 feet, with a level area near the mid-half of the site. The streets abutting the subject site are fully developed rights-of-way with asphalt roadway; curbs, sidewalks and gutters. South Othello Street is an arterial with heavy traffic volumes.

Area Development

The area is defined by Sound Transit's project to install light rail line within the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South right-of-way. Along the MLK corridor construction activity is robust and impacts the neighborhood significantly. Within one block west, a light rail station is currently under construction. Further to the west, Holly Park Phase III has helped to transform the area and stimulate economic growth. On either side of MLK, commercial development dominates the area with a mix of retail, restaurant, offices, institutional uses to name a few. To the north across Othello the applicant has proposed to development the site with a similarly scaled building. The two reviews will run concurrently. Zoning in the area includes Multifamily and Single family zones outside the commercially zoned corridor along MLK. To the east across 43rd Avenue an expansive Single family 5,000 (SF 5000) zone is defined by spacious open spaces and moderate sized homes. Othello Playfield, a Seattle City Park is located across 43rd Avenue. Multifamily Lowrise Two (L-2) zone, abuts the southern portion of the development site, supports a varied assortment of residential units including apartments single family uses.

ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION

Mike Hlastala, of Othello Partners, opened the presentation with an overview of his company's commitment to the neighborhood, including program goals, community assessment and their connection to the neighborhood. Othello Partners is a private company co-owned by Mike Hlastala and Steve Rauf. Brad Hinthorne, Project Architect, followed the opening statements with the primary design presentation. Mr. Hinthorne provided a historic and site context analysis that featured a photo essay of the immediate area. During his presentation, Mr. Hinthorne emphasized the contextual relationship of the development site to the north identified as Othello North and the subject site of this proposal, Othello South. Additionally, he stressed the importance of in-fill projects taking cues from adjacent structures, open spaces, and street systems in the immediate area. The area is in transition architecturally and the architectural character of the proposed building will draw upon its unique corner block location, topographic site conditions, and influences from surrounding to create a reinvigorated street presence. The design will take cues from Sound Transit light rail station and right-of-way improvements. The design objectives include: design a thoughtful pedestrian oriented development; maximize solar access; create an architectural image that would be a positive addition to the neighborhood.

All three design schemes presented featured one structure, with a single story commercial base below five levels of residential use. Massing studies are oriented to take advantage of external influences, i.e., solar exposure, street patterns, etc. The structure is envisioned to extend six stories above street grade, with residential open space set above the concrete base. Under all schemes a parking will be located within the structure at and above grade, accessed off 43rd Avenue South. No design departures have been identified or requested by the design team at this time.

After providing the context which informed the three conceptual design schemes Mr. Hinthorne compared three schemes, noting the advantages and disadvantages of each scheme. Design Alternative “3” depicted two upper level building masses which stepped the east wing from the Othello street frontage to soften the transition from the SF 5000 zone to commercial zone. The upper level massing would be oriented along the north and south axis, with open space at the south end to maximize natural light penetration. The building’s mass will be loaded at the corner of South Othello and MLK (west wing), and east adjacent to 43rd Avenue (east wing). As depicted in all schemes, access to parking will be in two locations adjacent to 43rd Avenue South. The design scheme establishes a strong corner presence at MLK and Othello within a commercial corridor which is anticipated to be flush with activity adjacent to a light rail station. Some disadvantages identified by the design team are the lack of graceful scale along the east frontage, due in part to large setbacks. The overall design does not adequately respond the unique character of the Othello alignment.

Design Alternative “2” features a disjointed “U”-shaped building that nearly maximizes the building’s upper level mass along all street frontages. The north half of the east facade steps back significantly from the public park located across the street to provide an opportunity for a terrace level courtyard with connection to the park. Additionally, the residential open space with southern exposure would increase under this scheme in the south half of the development site. Under this scheme as well as in the other schemes, retail space would be maximized at street level. Disadvantages identified were similar to the ones cited in Alternative “3.”

The “Preferred” Alternative (“1”) introduces an upper level more gracious in its relationship to adjacent uses and zone transitions. The northeast corner will be chamfered in acknowledgement to the lower density zone to the east and Othello North site. The upper level will be divided into two sections that will hold the street edges. Along the 43rd Avenue frontage, the upper level mass will be separated, with the terrace level landscaped for open space. The façade along 43rd Avenue will be sculpted to scale its mass to be compatible with the residential character of a lower intensity zone. A townhouse concept will be employed across the street from the park. Several design problems have been solved under this scheme: The building’s mass along MLK and Othello addresses concerns with the rhythm of solids and voids. Entries to commercial, residential and parking, will be more readable and celebratory. All the advantages identified under the previous schemes will be obtained in the preferred design.

Departures may be requested depending on the final design configuration.

BOARD CLARIFYING COMMENTS

The Board stated that the general comments expressed for the South Othello site applied to the North Othello site as well. (See Early Design Guideline Priorities Board comments #3007649) The Board generally supported the applicants’ preferred option but wanted further refinement to resolve how the building will function, with regards to its unique location, access of opens space, and orientation of street level use areas. The Board initiated their inquiry with a clarification as to whether sustainable design principals are proposed. With the size of the proposed structure had the design team considered installing a green roof, to name just one sustainable design element. The design team stated they had not considered sustainable practices, but would explore options. The Board then followed with a question about the podium level courtyard,

would it meet the green factor requirement, and would it be accessible to the public. The green factor would be met at the development site but how the space would function had not been worked out. The design team felt that security concerns would limit access to podium level from public access.

The Board wanted to know what was driving the number of parking stalls (258) in an area that requires zero parking. The parking program anticipates a demand for parking that will be less than the residential unit count. The Board further inquired about the location and access to parking adjacent to the park. The design team stated that it was code driven to locate driveways with the fewest lineal feet of commercial frontage. It was unclear where the loading berths were being located which prompted the question from the Board. The loading berths would be full height and accessed off 43rd just south of Othello.

In the preferred design Alternative “1,” the relationship of the retail street level use and sidewalk areas needed further clarification. The Board wanted to know the required sidewalk width along Othello, and whether the current width meets requirements. The design team acknowledged that more than likely it did not meet minimum requirements. They would schedule a meeting with Seattle Department of Transportation and Sound Transit, to obtain determinations for level of required street improvements and identified potential conflicts. The Board asked if they knew if any Metro bus routes were being relocated that could potentially have an impact on their proposal. They responded that they would include Metro in the follow-up meetings to address impacts within the ROW. With the light rail station and bike lanes on the horizon, the Board inquired about bicycle amenities in and around the site. The design team said they would consider the suggestion to place bike racks in the ROW.

The Board wanted to know how the townhouse would function along the 43rd frontage. The design team informed the board that it was a market term for a type of façade presence they wanted to establish fronting the park. The units would not meet Land Use Code definition, but architecturally the units at street level would look like townhouses with stoops. It appeared the mass of the upper level façade was too prominent along the south property line when considering the abutting L-2 zone with its height limit of 25 feet. The development site has a chamfered-like feature along 43rd at this location. The design team is instructed pay particular attention to bulk impacts. The design team pulled a portion of the building back in recognition of the abutting L-2 zone, but will consider further alterations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Most of the public members present had comments to offer. Twenty-two public members in attendance filled out the sign in sheet. Public comments and clarifying questions focused on the following issues:

- A really good project concept, seems like they will make a good addition to the neighborhood.
- Pleased with design.
- Does the development really need to maximize the underlying zone height limit? New Holly Park developments stayed under height limits – a model project that should be followed.

- Proposed building is out scale with the neighborhood – it lacks human-scale.
- It is important that the development fits into our neighborhood character.
- Building’s mass along the north façade is not sympathetic to neighborhood
- Maybe more appropriate to place bulk at the northwest corner, then stepping back on the upper level along Othello.
- Avoid creating a canyon-like mass running along Othello; building should step back at the upper level to visually open the corridor.
- Setbacks should be more gracious along all property lines, to minimize impacts of bulk.
- Proposal appears to adversely impact the pedestrian experience in the right-of-way.
- Green wall may help reduce building’s scale adjacent to residential zones.
- Sidewalk may need to be widened.
- What is the traffic impacts associated with a proposal of this scale?
- Parking demand (residential, commercial) should be met on the development site, not the streets.
- Is parking located in a garage, it was not clear to in the plans?
- Concern with accessing to podium level, internally and externally. Is there direct access to the sidewalk? (Response) Undetermined at this time, there is security concerns for the developers.
- Without a thoughtful design, potential adverse impacts to the neighborhood park would be detrimental in the area.
- Design and materials should be high quality.
- Are you working towards sustainability/green design materials? (R) Yes.
- The building should address future environmental concerns.
- The unit mix should be broad economically – from studio apartments to four bedrooms.
- Are the units for rent or sale? (R) At this time the developer did not know.
- Unit count should be kept down to avoid potential crimes.
- Renters may bring more problems to the area.
- Building program should keep security in mind.
- Respond to Metro related activities, should provide overhead weather protection for bus stops.
- There is a school bus stop at 43rd and Othello, has the developer look at potential impacts during construction and after project completion?

Most of the public comments are incorporated into the guidance from the Board.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Southeast 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 Othello Neighborhood (MLK@Holly)*” of highest priority to this project.

Overall, the Board felt that the proposed buildings mass along Othello was of particular concern with proximity of exterior wall at street level and on the upper level. Othello will become a

prominent pedestrian street leading to and from the light rail station. Opportunities exist to provide a vibrant space that is welcoming. The building's scale is not that bad, however there appears to be a lack of graciousness to what is occurring in public spaces. The north prominent corners appear to turn its back from the public space. The building program will need to incorporate elements of the transit station and bus stop – more focused attention is needed to address the pedestrian experience along Othello. How does the building relate to the lower intensity zone? The preferred option appears too abrupt of a transition to the abutting single family zone to the east, and multifamily zone to the south.

MLK Jr. Way and Othello Street frontages must resolve street level proximity to sidewalks and transparency concerns to activate the pedestrian environment within the public right-of-way. Directed attention along MLK should seek to pull the building back from the sidewalk system to be more gracious along the southwest corner frontage. The Board encourages the design team to provide more engagement of the proposed commercial spaces abutting street fronts. The street pedestrian experience should be a high value design element. Ensuring a well proportioned scale at the development site is a critical factor to successfully integrating the project into the neighborhood fabric that is in flux. This building could influence future development in the area. The design team should incorporate design elements as necessary to create quality infill development; utilizing building materials and massing sensitive to adjacent zones and uses. The Sound Transit light rail station design should inform the development. Parking at grade must be designed with the highest level of effort to minimize visual presence.

The guidelines below were all chosen by the board to be high priority. The Board wants the developer to engage the streetscape wherever possible and scale the design to integrate itself into area at a site with three street frontages; MLK Jr. Way S., South Othello, and 43rd Avenue South.

A Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics

The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as nonrectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

A strong relationship between the building and the street adds character and quality to the Othello business district.

- Building spaces for commercial use at or near the edge of the sidewalk and limiting vertical grade separations is encouraged where commercial uses occupy the street-level floor.
- Shallow setbacks and a minor grade separation are encouraged between the first floor and the sidewalk where residential uses occupy the ground floor; this will promote privacy and also accommodate entry porches and stoops.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 Human Activity

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street. (Excerpted from the Citywide Design Guidelines)

The life of the neighborhood should be closely tied to the character of its public space. It is especially important to recognize streets as public space. The design of buildings can help determine the level of activity on the street. Where storefronts meet the sidewalk, social interaction can be intensified adding vitality. New development is encouraged to support the area’s pedestrian designated streets and the Station Area Overlay District by contributing to a consistent building line at or near the sidewalk.

- Recessed building or individual shop entrances to help create a traditional “main street” feel;
- Stoops or landscaping to help provide privacy for residential use at street level;
- Large developments are encouraged to include plazas or gracious entry forecourts along the street edge, provided street continuity is not unduly interrupted along the majority of the block. (This guidance addresses a potential unintended consequence of NC zoning and the P1 designation that when applied to a very large, full-block development, could create a long, uninterrupted street wall not conducive to pedestrian comfort;
- Overhead weather protection along the sidewalk for pedestrian comfort; canopies and awnings are encouraged.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent sites**Othello-specific supplemental guidance:**

Several zone edges between commercial (C1) and single family-zoned properties exist in the neighborhood. This could result in visual impacts, as well as traffic and noise conflicts between these properties. To help prevent these situations, consider:

- Preventing service, loading and storage areas from directly facing single family residential areas;
- Buffering single family areas from the undesirable impacts of commercial-related service facilities; use landscaping or cohesive architectural treatment to screen service areas and facilities.

A-6 Transition between Residence and Street**Othello-specific supplemental guidance:**

Ground-related residential development, such as townhouses, is encouraged at locations along public open spaces such as Othello Park to create human activity along the park and provide for social interaction among residents and neighbors.

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

A-10 Corner Lots**Othello-specific supplemental guidance:**

Consider siting and designing structures on corner lots to take advantage of their role as gateways and activity nodes in the community. Locating open spaces such as plazas for public use can promote a physical and visual connection to the street.

- Consider adding a focal element, for instance, a sculpture or civic art piece to outdoor space. Consider building on current public art themes in the neighborhood, including a kiosk for the use of the community.
- Employ strong building forms to demarcate important gateways, intersections, and street corners. Strong corner massing can function as a visual anchor for a block.

Recommendations Meeting:

- Parking at grade must be designed with the highest level of effort to minimize visual presence from abutting streets.
- Traffic circulation within development site should consider impacts upon surrounding streets and properties.
- The design should explore stepping the footprint back at the southwest corner to open up the street experience for pedestrians along MLK and to align more with the curving right-of-way.
- The design should optimize activating the street level, with storefront glazing, street furniture, landscaping, etc.
- Focused attention to reduce the appearance of bulk along 43rd Avenue, be sensitive to the abutting residential zone.

B Height, Bulk and Scale

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

Much of the MLK@Holly business district is zoned for large, 65' tall buildings. Careful siting, building design and building massing at the upper levels is encouraged to achieve a sensitive transition between the 65' commercial zone and adjacent residential zones. Large, monolithic buildings are discouraged. Consider the following:

- Design building volumes to maintain a compatible scale with smaller buildings nearby.
- Rely on building massing and orientation to place strong visual emphasis on the street in activating public space.
- Use smaller sub-volumes in the massing of a building to create a transition in size to adjacent residential structures that are smaller in scale.

Recommendations Meeting:

- Consider smaller sub volume at the southwest corner adjacent to MLK to provide a greater depth from ROW.
- The design should be sensitive to the adjacent zones.

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 complements 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.

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

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

Encourage High-Quality Construction

All new buildings are encouraged to be constructed as long-term additions to the urban fabric.

Commercial and Mixed-Use Development

- Use exterior building materials typically found in traditional storefront design. This includes brick, masonry and metal on the ground floor. Mixed-use developments could use a combination of materials, such as brick, masonry, metal, wood and stucco in a manner that creates a coherent overall building design.
- Consider window design as an opportunity to provide variation and definition along building facades. Avoid monotonous repetition of window types.

Recommendations Meeting:

- The design should minimize canyon-like presence around outdoor use areas within Othello.
- Incorporate two-story materiality of townhouse vernacular along the east façade adjacent to residential zone.

D Pedestrian Environment

D-1 Pedestrian Open Space and Entrances

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

Activate the Street Edge

Providing space for intermingling of pedestrians and shoppers at the street-level on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South will help create a socially and visually stimulating MLK@Holly business district. Multiple storefronts, shop entrances and activities enliven the street and provide a safe pedestrian environment. Generous windows placed at the ground floor give people inside an awareness of activity on the street. This is commonly referred to as “eyes on the street,” and supports an active day and night street environment.

- Buildings that are designed for multi-tenant occupancy and walk-in pedestrian traffic at the street level are encouraged.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

Othello-specific supplemental guidance:

Defensible Space

“Defensible space” is the term used to describe an area that has been made a “zone of defense” by the design characteristics that create it. Under the defensible space guidelines, areas associated with a development site are categorized as either public, semi-public, semi-private or private. This designation helps define the appropriate activity and use for each area.

- Consider the type of “zone of defense” most appropriate for specific spaces and entries included in the development proposal. Private open spaces and entrances should include physical barriers, such as fencing, some forms of landscaping and locked doors. Symbolic barriers are appropriate for semi-private spaces, and require only a visual perception that a transition has occurred. Nearly anything could serve as a symbolic barrier, and examples include: bollards, flower beds, changes in sidewalk patterns or materials, and signs.

Lighting

Good lighting is one of the most effective crime deterrents. When used properly, light discourages criminal activity, enhances natural surveillance opportunities, and reduces fear. Lighting can influence an individual’s feelings about his environment from an aesthetic as well as a safety standpoint. A bright, cheerful environment is much more pleasing than one that appears dark and lifeless.

- New developments are encouraged to provide lighting on buildings and in open spaces. This includes: exterior lighting fixtures above entries; lighting in parking areas and open spaces; and pedestrian street lights near sidewalks. To the degree possible, a constant level of light providing reasonably good visibility should be maintained at night. Bright spots and shadows should be avoided. Highly vulnerable areas and those that could conceal a potential attacker should be illuminated more brightly than areas designed for normal activity.

Landscaping

Landscaping, like architectural design, plays a significant role in CPTED. One function of landscaping in crime prevention is aesthetics, as an attractive environment generates a sense of pride and ownership. Landscaping can be used to perform a variety of design functions, as outlined below.

- As a symbolic barrier, landscaping can mark the transition between zones. Consider employing features such as decorative fencing, flower beds, ground cover, and varied patterns in cement work to clearly show separation between zones. If more substantial barriers are needed, shrubbery such as evergreen hedges can be used to create more formidable edges.

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 the commercial districts evening hours.

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.

D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions

For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and be visually interesting for pedestrians.

Recommendations Meeting:

- Create an inviting public open space that is welcoming and accessible.

E Landscaping

E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

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.

Recommendations Meeting:

- The design should optimize protecting the pedestrian experience within the right-of-way, and attention should be directed towards developing a highly evolved landscape site plan in and around the perimeter with attractive landscaping flourishes.

O Othello Neighborhood Site-Specific Design Guidelines

O-2 Northeast and Southeast Corners of Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and South Othello Street

Consideration of the following neighborhood recommendations is encouraged:

- Consider orienting buildings around a community kiosk, and create a public open area using the kiosk as a focal point.
- Employ highly visible and accessible entrances to ground level commercial uses, particularly around a public open space plaza.
- Create a mid-block pedestrian plaza adjacent to the sidewalk and enclose the plaza with active retail uses. This could also aid in reducing the bulk of a large development on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South.

- Avoid a “monolithic” building mass at this location; rather, break up the development site into multiple buildings.

Departure from Development Standards:

The applicant did not request or identify possible departures from the Land Use Code development standards. The Board will entertain future departure requests so long as the applicants can show clear evidence of how the overall design meets these priority guidelines.

<i>Development Standard</i>	<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Comment/Rational BY Architect</i>	<i><u>Board Recommendation</u></i>
<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

The architect should submit the Master Use Permit (MUP) application to DPD with the following:

- Include colored and shadowed elevation drawings, sketches, and landscape/site plan illustrating the visual and textural design elements of the proposed building in sheets labeled DR.
- Well developed landscape plan and character sketches.
- Provide illustrative detail of the appearance of street level frontages and how it relates to street experience.
- Include a narrative and graphic rationale for granting any requested design departures.
- Identify and illustrate Green LEED elements.

Please call Bradley Wilburn at 206.615.0508, when you have determined the MUP application intake date.