



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning & Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
GREATER QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: **3006531**

Address: **1919 Queen Anne Avenue North**

Applicant: **Greg McDonald, DDG Architects
for Joe Geivett, Pacland**

Meeting Date: **December 5, 2007**

Report Date: **January 2, 2008**

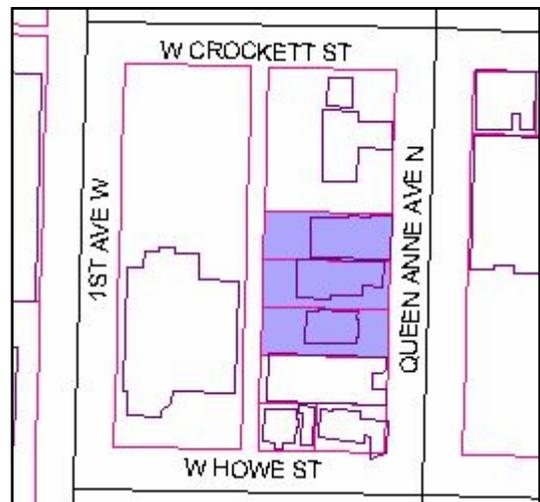
Board Members Present: **Maria Barrientos
Matt Roewe, Chair
John Rose
Bill Vandeventer**

Board Members Absent: **Patrick Doherty**

DPD Staff Present: **Lisa Rutzick**

SITE & VICINITY

The subject site is located within a Neighborhood Commercial 2 zone with a 40-foot height limit (NC2-40) with a Pedestrian 2 Overlay. This zoning extends north and south of the site, as well as across the street to the east. The lot size has increased since the Early Design Guidance meeting and is approximately 16,200 square feet and a rectangular shape. The relatively flat site is currently developed with one, one-story commercial structure. The property is bound to the east by Queen Anne Avenue North and an alley to the west. Across the alley, abutting the length of the site along the west side, the zoning changes to Single Family 5000, which is developed with the Queen Anne Community Pool. Across Queen Anne Avenue to the east is a grocery store.



Abutting the site to the north is a mixed use building, Eden Hill, which is under construction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a four story building with 12,474 square feet of ground level retail and 39,750 square feet of administrative and medical office and one residential unit above. All of the parking (approximately 120 stalls) for the proposed development is proposed in two and a half levels of below grade garage connected to the below grade garage of the abutting Eden Hill structure currently under construction. Existing structures to be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: MARCH 21, 2007

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include below grade parking (with approximately 24 stalls) and vehicular access from the abutting below grade Eden Hill garage. All of the alternatives show a pedestrian entrance off of Queen Anne Avenue next to ground floor retail space. The first scheme (Option 1) proposes a three-story commercial building, with two levels of office used above the ground floor. Some articulation of the east and west façade was shown along the mostly boxy massing. The second alternative (Option 2) is a four story building with a similar program as that shown in Option 1, but the fourth floor would contain both residential and office uses. The massing for this scheme includes a setback on the east (street-facing) façade, as well as a set back of the fourth floor mass. The third alternative (Option 3) is a four-story commercial office building with some modulation of the building facade along the front. This scheme includes shorter floor to ceiling heights and has smaller floor plates than Option 1.

A character board of images from the neighborhood was presented that included images of masonry materials, recessed entries, greenery and overhead weather protection.

PUBLIC COMMENT

One member of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. No comments were offered.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: DECEMBER 5, 2007

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The proposed program has increased considerably since the EDG meeting due to the acquisition of the two abutting lots to the south of original site. As a result the subject site is three times larger; the revised building program is described under the Project Description section of this report. The new building is intended to accommodate one of the existing businesses that currently operates on one of the newly acquired sites.

The expanded site allows more flexibility for vehicular access and proposes to ingress through the Eden Hill driveway ramp off the alley to a connected below grade garage that will egress from the proposed project onto the alley.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately seven members of the public attended the Initial Recommendation meeting and had the following comments:

- Would like to see the right-of-way improvements include the lamp post design selected by the neighborhood.
- Clarification of the proposed building height [46’].
- Concerned that the Green Factor requirement is being satisfied in a less meaningful way to the community (by having vines on the north façade) and circumvents the intent of the Green Factor and provide green features at the pedestrian level.
- Concerned with the proposed colonnade element at street level along Queen Anne Avenue. This will be a dark space and should be avoided by having the entire building façade set back (not just at ground level).
- Likes that the 135 foot long building has been broken down into 45 foot long unit, but would like to see the mass and scale further addressed so the building looks less monolithic at the upper levels.
- The continuous glass canopies should be broken up to reduce the overly horizontal emphasis along the long street front.
- Encourage the storefronts to be individualized by future tenants, so that each business has its own character at pedestrian level.
- The massing and modulation are well done.
- The setbacks and modulation at the upper levels are well-designed so that the pedestrian does not feel the massing or presence of the fourth floor.

PRIORITIES

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 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 guidance from the Initial Recommendation meeting follows in bold text.

A. Site Planning

A-2 STREETScape COMPATIBILITY

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

A-3 VISIBLE ENTRIES

Entrances should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 HUMAN ACTIVITY

New development should be sited and designed to encourage pedestrian activity on 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.

The Board emphasized the importance of developing a respectful and consistent relationship of the overall massing and design of the development to the streetscape, pedestrian environment and general pattern of development in the neighborhood.

The Queen Anne façade should enhance and encourage safe and interesting pedestrian activity, while also integrating the commercial development along the length of the street. Along Queen Anne Avenue, in particular, efforts to create a sense of a wider sidewalk through recessed entryways and storefronts are strongly desired. The Board also wants the design to integrate large operable windows along both the Queen Anne Avenue sidewalk. The Board liked the concept of roll up windows for a restaurant tenant use at sidewalk level. The Board also suggests that the interior wall of the ground floor retail contain some transparency through to the proposed entry hallway to the north used by other tenants of the building.

In the event that the abutting single family structures to the south do not become part of the subject site, the Board wants the south façade to be well-designed to acknowledge its visibility and scale. The Board suggests that perhaps a green wall screen could be affixed to this façade to help soften this façade.

The Board strongly supports locating all of the parking underground with access from the Eden Hill garage.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board agreed that the front door entry needs more emphasis. The Board suggested exploring a retractable canopy at the entry plaza area that could respond to weather conditions.

The Board expressed concern with the proposed arcade feature along Queen Anne Avenue. They foresee that the space within the arcade will be dark and shadowed, especially since it will be located on the west side of the street and will not benefit from western solar exposure. The Board recommended that either the entire façade be set back or that a portion of the southern bay be set back to avoid an arcade scenario. The Board encouraged the recessed retail entries of 18-24” as shown.

The Board noted that the transition to the Eden Hill building should be well-considered and presented at the next meeting. They also discussed the possibility of pushing the building further back from the sidewalk at this northeastern corner, which would help in meeting the Green Factor requirements at the pedestrian level. The Board expressed support for the nostalgic, traditional medallion elements at the corners and cornice.

The Board was very supportive of the effort to create wider sidewalks, both physically and perceived.

The Board recommended that the design of the first floor be treated as three different buildings to emphasize the 45 foot wide modules and rhythm of Queen Anne Avenue. The Board felt that the extra modulation of the south bay was unnecessary and encouraged eliminating this feature.

B. Height, Bulk & Scale

B-1 HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

Provide sensitive transition to nearby, less intensive zones.

The Board notes that if the alley setback is not met, then the design should make efforts to be sensitive to the residential zone across the alley, even though it is currently developed with a large community swimming pool, surface parking lot and intervening park lawn. The Board agrees that the alley façade should be addressed as part of the overall building design and not ignored as an invisible part of the project. The ground level of the alley elevation, in particular, should screen the dumpsters. Also, shadow impacts from the proposed structure on the lawn area should be examined.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board agreed that the proposed building feels too top heavy and that the upper floors need to feel more like a penthouse that is secondary to the main body of the structure. The Board suggested that the parapet shown at the third floor was too low and should be set at a higher level (sill line of the windows above) to reinforce the dominant building body and help improve the building proportions.

C. Architectural Elements

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 CONSISTENCY

Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and architectural concept.

C-3 HUMAN SCALE

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to meet the 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.

The Board discussed at length whether the ground floor façade should be set back from the property line at the sidewalk and whether this same setback should continue up for the face of the building. The Board ultimately feels that a setback at the ground level of at least four feet would be beneficial to the pedestrian-friendly nature of Queen Anne Avenue by increasing the sidewalk width and allowing space for the retail use to spill out onto the pedestrian realm. The Board enthusiastically supports using this space to help integrate some Green Factor features such as art that catches rainwater run-off. Whether the Board prefers that the entire building face is setback or is cantilevered over the ground level setback will depend on the design studies and alternatives presented and how well it is detailed (such as transitions between materials and wrapping corners, etc).

The Board agrees that the proposed material palette of brick and masonry with is very desirable in the community. The Board acknowledges that the narrow site has only 45 feet of frontage along Queen Anne Avenue. Thus, the Board agrees that the treatment of this east façade is critical and will be scrutinized for a design that should integrate high quality materials and architectural detailing that includes simple, elegant features along the building façade. The pedestrian level, in particular, should seek to engage the passers-by. The Board feels that the architecture of this building should strive to be a special addition to the community.

The Board's reaction to the three schemes proposed for the east elevation was generally that the sharply contrasting materials and colors are too stark for such a narrow site. Instead, the Board encourages more traditional, small-scale details that will create a simple architectural statement.

The Board also suggests that a generous ratio of glazing to solid materials along the east façade is desired. Specifically, the Board notes that the windows should be larger than shown to reflect the commercial uses of the upper floors.

The Board agrees that the design should use high quality, functional and attractive windows, as well as other high quality materials throughout the building. The Board would like to see a color and materials board presented at the Final Design Review meeting which illustrates both the materials and colors proposed.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board was concerned that the proposed design was too reminiscent of a suburban office building. They agreed that the material changes should be more distinctive between the ends and the center portion. As discussed under B1, the Board reiterated that the top story should be lighter and increased glass at the middle third and fourth levels would help achieve this effect. They also suggested that the column expression at the top story is not necessary and overly heavy, as are the tapered detailed of the columns. Instead this level should endeavor to be clean, transparent, light and fade into the background.

The Board was very supportive of the brick and glass material palette shown.

The Board felt that the alley elevation was too busy and should be simplified. They also encouraged that brick is wasted on this elevation and is especially superfluous over the cantilevered portion of the building on the alley.

The Board recommended fenestration that has a more historic industrial character with richer mullion patterning at the second and third levels.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-1 PEDESTRIAN OPEN SPACES AND ENTRANCES

Convenient and attractive access to the building' entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from 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.

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.

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 the building. Blank walls should be avoided.

Given the location along the commercial spine of upper Queen Anne, the Board feels strongly that the design should reinforce and enhance pedestrian and sidewalk activity along Queen Anne Avenue North. The Board was supportive of plans to improve the right-of-way along Queen Anne Avenue with street trees, landscaping, lighting, seating, textures, paving and other elements that contribute to a vibrant and interesting streetscape.

Additionally, the Board would like to review a conceptual signage and lighting plan for the proposed building.

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board felt that the ground level commercial spaces should have different canopies to help distinguish and

individualize the retail tenants. The Board would like to see a canopy and blade signs that differentiates among businesses.

The Board also recommended that the columns at ground level be more substantial and of a consistent pattern. The Board liked the recessed entryways to the street level retail spaces.

The Board was very enthusiastic about the integration of a public art installation in the entry plaza area.

E. Landscaping

E-1 LANDSCAPING TO REINFORCE DESIGN CONTINUITY WITH ADJACENT SITES

Where possible, special consideration should be given to abutting streetscape and neighboring properties.

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 discussed at length how the Green Factor requirements could and should be integrated into the building design and program. The Board wants to review some alternatives as to how these factors might be reasonably addressed on this site, while also celebrating sustainability. Some of the Board's suggestions include public art that catches runoff, urban window box planters and green roofs at the various setback portions of the building at lower levels. The Board enthusiastically encouraged that the design use the Green Factor requirement to incorporate both whimsy and functionality.

The Board supports the idea of windows on the north elevation, offering views of the second level courtyard being constructed at Eden Hill (if this can be approved by the building code).

At the Initial Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended that the green factor requirements be integrated into the entry plaza area and street facing facades. The Board agreed that meeting the Green Factor at the street level, which is visible to pedestrians, is preferable to providing it at roof level.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Two departure requests were made at the time of the Initial Recommendation meeting.

1. ALLEY SETBACK: The Code (SMC 23.47.014.B4) requires that the portions of the building above 13 feet are set back 15 feet from the center line of the alley because the site is across the alley from a residential zone. The existing alley is 16 feet wide, so the set back requirement would be seven feet east of the west property line. None of

the options specifically responded to this requirement, but all three could be adopted to meet the standard.

The Board was unanimously inclined towards departing from the alley setback as requested or even more if the entire façade along the Queen Anne Avenue side of the site is set back to avoid the arcade configuration and allow greater sidewalk width, interesting building modulation and articulation and superior quality materials along the east façade.

2. GREEN FACTOR: The Code requires the project to reach a Green Factor of 30% of lot area, which is based on inclusion of vegetation, especially that visible in public areas, as well as features such as rainwater harvesting, selection of drought-tolerant species, street trees, tree preservation, green roofs and walls. The proposed departure request would be to provide far less than the required amount of features (i.e., landscaping, water feature, green roof and walls, etc) that count towards the Green Factor calculation.

The Board was not inclined towards recommending such a departure without a fuller understanding of the requirement itself and how the project could endeavor to provide as many of the features as possible, particularly those visually accessible by pedestrians. Simply stating that the Green Factor cannot be achieved on a project such as this is not acceptable. The Board wants to see creative exploration of how the Green Factor can be integrated into the building while also providing urban design enhancement. See discussion under E-2.

NEXT STEPS

Next Recommendation Meeting:

1. Provide boards with large scale graphics that are shown in the submitted packets, including floor plans.
2. Present a graphic that shows the code-complying setback, as well as the requested departure.
3. Organize the presentation so that only person is presenting the proposed development design.
4. The renderings should be lightened so that the details of building recesses are more apparent.
5. The Board would like to review details of the landscaping and open spaces at the second floor and at the rooftop.
6. The Board would like to review three-dimensional renderings showing how the ground level uses, details and design relate to the sidewalk. The Board would like to see ½” section through the sidewalk and storefront that illustrates lighting, canopies and signage designs.
7. Please submit a color and materials board. Please also provide colored renderings and/or graphics showing the proposed development from the pedestrian perspective, as well as from the parking lot to the west.
8. Please prepare conceptual signage and lighting plans.
9. Please prepare a study showing the building shadows cast on the park area to the west of the site.