

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NORTHWEST
SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
TO DPD DIRECTOR**

January 26, 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3006540

Address: 5501 15th Ave. N.W.

Applicant: Freiheit & Ho Architects for Rhapsody Partners

Board Members Present: Guy Peckham, Chair
Mark Brands
Joseph Giampietro
Bill Singer
Jean Morgan

Board Member Absent: none

DPD Representative: Scott Kemp

BACKGROUND:

The project was the subject of an Early Design Guidance meeting on March 22, 2007. Following the meeting, the applicant applied for a Master Use Permit, and it is currently under review. On December 17, 2007 the project underwent a first Recommendation meeting, at which time the board gave recommendations for project improvement. At the second Design Review Meeting the applicant provided Board members with revised floor and elevation plans, landscape plans, perspective drawings, and samples of materials that will be used to construct the mixed-use project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Market Street Landing is a proposed mixed-use building located at the northwest corner of NW Market Street and 15th Ave. NW. The project straddles a City of Seattle Zoning boundary which designates the easterly third of the property a C1-65' Zone and the westerly two-thirds a NC3-85' Zone. The proposed project will require removal of the existing structures on the site. These consist of a 1-story CMU and wood retail store, and a 2-story wood house. The proposed building will cover the entire property. The easterly third of the project will be five stories and approximately 64 feet tall. The westerly two-thirds of the project will be eight stories and approximately 84 feet tall.



MARKET STREET LANDING

BUILDING PERSPECTIVE 2: MARKET & 15TH



The project will include retail uses and residential units with parking for each use provided on-site. There will be 32,953 S.F. of retail space located on the ground level (including 16,382 S.F. proposed as a drug store). Above this, occupying the 2nd thru the 8th floors, approximately 264,919 S.F. of residential units are proposed. These 287 units vary in size from approximately 480 S.F. to 2,300 S.F.

Parking for this project will be provided in structured parking at grade level and in a 3-level underground parking garage. The total number of parking stalls that will be provide on-site is 445 stalls. Of these, 28 stalls are located on grade level, with the remaining stalls located in three below grade parking levels. These parking area can be accessed through a Right-In-Right-Out access off of NW Market Street and a full In-and-Out access from NW 56th Street. This garage will be shared by both the retail and residential uses, with the 88 stalls on the first level dedicated to retail and residential guest parking.

The remaining 329 stalls will be dedicated to the residential occupants and will be separated by security fencing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was received. Questions and comments included:

- There aren't any gabled roofs on Ballard Avenue; the design should reflect historic Ballard.
- Ballard has lost the Denny's and replaced it with a boring building. The design should be more fun and quirky.
- The building is too traditional looking and should have some more modern flare to it.
- The windows looked too repetitive and should have more variety to them.
- The bus stop must have good visibility so that buses know when they need to stop and pick up people who are waiting.
- There should be benches at the bus stop for older citizens, and good lighting to provide safety and good visibility for passing buses.
- There should be more transparency in the tower body, and the top needs to be more unified with the rest of the tower.
- The overall building appears a little disjointed and repetitious.
- The building mass is a little too long, flat, and unbroken.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities, drawings and model showing the proposal, the Design Review Board members offered further comments, but no recommendation to the DPD Director.

Board members praised the project team for the improvements in the project design since it was last presented and agreed that the project was heading in the right direction. It was commented that the retail spaces added to the N.W. 56th street frontage were an improvement, and that the circulation within the parking levels has been greatly improved as well. The fact that all parking levels were connected and vehicles no longer needed to leave the building and enter at a different drive to access another parking level addressed most of the previous on-site parking issues. The majority of the recommendations and discussions of the board revolved around the massing, scale, and circulation through and around the project.

Board Deliberations

Tower Element

The Board accepted the tower element on the corner of N.W. Market St. and 15th Ave. N.E. as “headed in the right direction.” The blank spaces just above the canopies at its base should be made transparent. It was suggested that the brick may not need to be extended the full height; that a more transparent expression in the body may be interesting. The tower top should be differentiated further from the adjacent roof line and additional height should be added, if possible. The Board would be interested in the use of departures to allow the location of elements given additional height in the Seattle Land use Code, such as equipment penthouses, to be located as a part of the tower in a way which gives it additional height. The Board encouraged the applicants to have the top of the tower occupied as an amenity of the roof garden.

Roof Gables

The board repeated the comments from the public that the gable roof elements on the lower building mass did not seem to fit in well with the overall design of the project. It was suggested that the gables could be removed from the lower building mass, and replaced with a simpler more unified expression, perhaps with a more continuous cornice line below the top story. It was discussed that the gable element seemed more appropriate on the taller eight story portion of the design. It was suggested that the roofline could be made more interesting with varied parapet heights.

Building Massing

It was recognized the three building masses along N.W. 56th were an appropriate solution to relieving scale along the north façade. However, the uniform application of architectural details, materials and color across all facades is a problem. They suggested doing variations on elevation treatment for each building mass to help break the enormous scale of the building down.

On both the North and South facades a greater definition in building masses could be created through changes in building materials and colors.

Public Open Space

On such a large site with such extensive development at heights of 65 and 85 feet the Board thinks the applicants can find more opportunities to incorporate public space at the pedestrian level. Short of providing a park, there could be smaller places for people to step off of the side walk and get out of the main pedestrian flow. The gateway tower element could have its base recessed to provide such a space. If the base of the tower wasn't open, it could be a coffee shop or other similar activity that creates a connection between the inside and the corner.

Requested Departures:

- 1) Allowance of vehicle access from N.W. Market St. and N.W. 56th St. and not 15th Ave. N.W. Code access is code required off 15th as the street with least commercial frontage. Here 15th a poor choice as heavily trafficked and there can be long queues from the Market St. intersection, it would need to be right in and

right out only, and the access on 15th would be the least safe of the alternatives. The Board favors a departure to allow the two access points shown at the meeting.

- 2) Elimination of sight triangles. The Board expressed a willingness to recommend departure from the standard for the driveway at the northwest corner of the site in order to preserve as much frontage for commercial use as possible and position the driveway next to the property line.
- 3) Increased limit for the maximum curb cut width for the vehicle access on NW 56th. Code states that the maximum curb cut can be 30 feet on this type of street. However, the project is proposing a combined a vehicle parking entrance and an onsite loading dock entrance with a curb cut width of 44 feet. This combined entry would allow for the internal vehicular circulation to work in a way that reduces the number of curb cuts proposed for the project from three to two. The Board favors this departure to allow the reduction of access points shown at the meeting.