

**INITIAL DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
CAPITOL HILL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

March 3, 2010

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3007628

Address: 1601 16th Avenue

Applicant: Weinstein Architects for Jewish Family Services

Board members present: Evan Bourquard
Dan Foltz
Wolf Saar
Sharon Sutton

Board members absent: Lisa Picard

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips, AICP

Project Description:

The applicant proposes a 21,000 square foot addition to the Jewish Family Service's Jessie Danz Building (13,500 sq. ft.) located at the corner of 16th Avenue and East Pine Street on Capitol Hill. The proposed structure would occupy the surface parking lot immediately to the north of the two-story Jessie Danz Building. The proposal includes two floors of offices above a one-level, at-grade parking garage accessed from 16th Ave. Jewish Family Services, the applicant, operates a food bank in the basement and provides a variety of social services in its facility.

In design option #1, the architect proposes a U-shaped volume to be built above a plinth containing a parking garage. The elongated court would face north toward the four-story, masonry Garden Court condominiums. A service core or tower links the existing office with the new structure at the base of the "U". By slightly pulling back from the mass from the north property line and establishing an elevated court, the design provides spatial accommodation for the Garden Court residents. Offices in the proposal would have views toward the east and west along two double loaded corridors.

Option #2 places the service core in the same location as scenario #1 linking the existing with the proposed structure. Instead of an elevated courtyard, the architect proposes a rectangular mass with its length along the east/west axis. The proposed structure would have a greater set back on the north than Scheme #1 and would rise four floors above 16th Ave. grade, one floor higher than the other option. This scheme has more office space for the social service provide.

Each scheme displays a new entry lobby between the parking garage to the north and the Jessie Danz Building to the south. The porch in front of the proposed lobby extends the landscaped court in front of the existing structure. Due to the limited number of parking spaces and for security concerns, the applicant prefers to depart from the Land Use Code's prohibition of placing parking lots and garages on a street without an intervening use. An alternative offered by the architect places a small office room at the street between the lobby and the garage.

Although an unimproved alley extends behind the structure, the applicant has elected not to provide access from the alley. The Land Use Code also does not require alley improvement based on the lack of existing right of way improvements. A storage area and a waste/recycling area, however, would be accessed from the alley.

Under the preferred scheme, the applicant identified four departures from the Land Use Code provisions requiring sight triangles, intervening uses between parking and a sidewalk, driveway width and a 15 foot setback between the side lot line of a commercial zone and the front lot line of the neighboring residential zone.

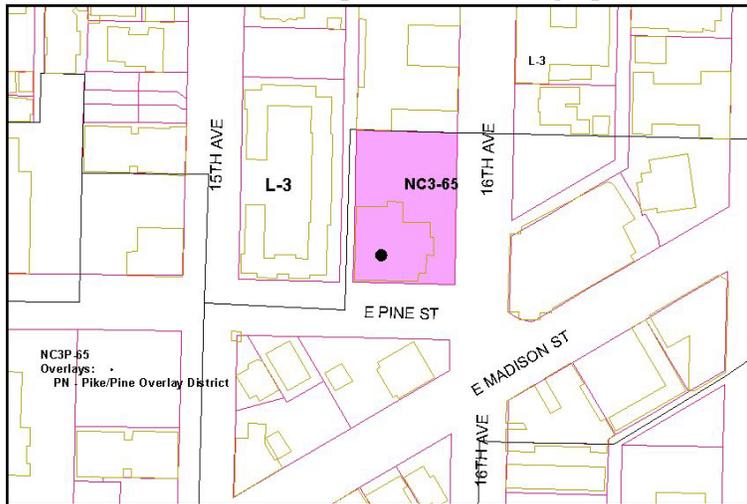
Site & Vicinity Description

The development site occupies an area of approximately 21,600 square feet, in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The corner lot has street frontages along East Pine Street to the south and 16th Avenue to the east in a Neighborhood Commercial Three zone, with a height limit of 65 feet (NC3-65). The site is located within the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village. A portion of the site is located in a designated (40%) Steep Slope Environmentally Critical Area (ECA). It is also within the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines area.

The Jessie Danz building, a one-story structure with a daylight basement, sits on the south half of the lot. The north half features an accessory surface parking lot. The remaining grounds are landscaped with vegetation around the site's perimeter. The north portion of the site is relatively flat that slopes moderately downward from mid-lot to the southwest corner, approximately 12 feet over the south of 70 feet. The development site occupies one quarter of the block that is divided by a technically unimproved alley running north/south at mid-block. Jewish Family Services uses a portion of the alley for garbage and recycling. The neighbors to the west have created a nonconforming, private park in the alley. The remaining area of the block is developed with a moderate-sized residential uses including; a two-story condominiums across the alley to the west, and a four-story condominiums abutting the subject lot to the north. All street rights-of-way are fully developed streets with asphalt

roadway; curbs, sidewalks and gutters. East Pine Street is a primary arterial abutting the subject site. The area is served by Metro bus routes 10, 11, 12 and 84. East Madison Street, one block south, connects surrounding residential neighborhoods from Lake Washington to Downtown.

Located at the northwest corner of the intersection of East Pine Street and 16th Avenue, the site's neighborhood features a mix of older, multi-story residential and commercial structures and new mixed-use developments extending up to the zoned height limits. To the east across



16th Avenue; lots are currently developed with a mixed-use building containing Madison Market, surface parking, two-story single family structure, and a four-story condominium complex. To the southwest across East Pine, the Pearl, a new six-story structure has been recently completed. Zoning designation at the site and to the south and east is Neighborhood Commercial Three zone, with a sixty-five (65) foot height limit

(NC3-65). Abutting this commercial zoning band to the north at the property line and across the alley to the west, is a less dense Multifamily Lowrise Three zone (L3). Modest turn of the century multi-family and single family structures are prevalent in this area. The adjacent four-story residential building to the north, the Garden Court condominiums, is a good example of older well detailed buildings representative of the Capitol Hill area. Mature street trees within the 16th Avenue right-of-way provide a rich canopy that enhances the street experience.

Project Background

DPD held an Early Design Guidance meeting in 2007 for an earlier Jewish Family Services proposal. Several months later in 2008 the applicant applied for a Master Use Permit; however, after DPD's initial review, no progress occurred. In the beginning of 2010 the applicant brought significantly revised concept ideas to the attention of DPD staff. In the new schemes, the applicant reduced the scope of the building program and, in turn, the building size.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES: EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETINGS, December 5, 2007.

At the Early Design Guidance meetings held on December 5, 2007 and after visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, 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:

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access.
- B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility.
- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.
- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.
- D. Pedestrian Environment

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY: MARCH 3, 2010 MEETING

On March 3, 2010, the Capitol Hill Design Review Board convened for an Initial Recommendation meeting. Site, landscape plans, floor plans, and elevations were presented for the Board members' consideration. The applicant requested four departures from the city's Land Use Code.

Public Comment: Ten individuals signed-in at the Initial Recommendation meeting. The public commented on the following:

- A beautiful fence should provide continuity between the existing JFS office and the proposed addition. The fence should be porous and be an attractive addition to the neighborhood.
- Residents attending from the Courtyard on Capitol Hill condominium favored the proposal and praised the limited intervention proposed for the alley.
- Traffic on Pine St. is busy. An increase in traffic by vehicular traffic from the alley would be problematic.
- Security is an issue in providing an intervening use between the garage and 16th Ave.

Board Initial Recommendations: After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the Design Review Board members came to the following preliminary recommendations on how the applicant met the identified design objectives. Capitol Hill Neighborhood Design Guidelines are in italics.

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. *The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.*

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

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Retain or increase the width of sidewalks.*
- *Provide street trees with tree grates or in planter strips, using appropriate species to provide summer shade, winter light, and year-round visual interest.*
- *Vehicle entrances to buildings should not dominate the streetscape.*
- *For buildings that span a block and “front” on two streets, each street frontage should receive individual and detailed site planning and architectural design treatments to complement the established streetscape character.*
- *New development in commercial zones should be sensitive to neighboring residential zones.*

The Board directed the architect to conceive an exceptional landscape plan that would provide a sense of continuity for the entire length of the property from E. Pine St. to the north property line. Based on the Capitol Hill supplementary guidance above, the Board agreed in concept with the departure request to narrow the driveway width and reduce the width of the garage entrance.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

Because of the applicant’s reluctance to add offices or other uses related to its mission at street level or otherwise engage the programming of the building with the street due to security concerns, the Board emphasized the importance of creating a trenchantly attractive building façade and landscape plan along 16th Avenue

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.

Placing a structure to the south of the Garden Court condominium’s landscape court would block sunlight into the residences and alter the quality of the large green space between the structure and the shared property line. The Board expressed a reluctance to allow the departure for the triangular 15 foot setback at the zone edge without serious rethinking and modeling the design of the proposed elevated courtyard. Board members observed that it appeared quite possible to preserve the 15 foot setback; they will expect to see analysis and new design studies.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Preserve and enhance the pedestrian environment in residential and commercial areas by providing for continuous sidewalks that are unencumbered by parked vehicles and are minimally broken within a block by vehicular access.*

Locating a driveway on 16th Ave. would conflict with the desire to enhance the pedestrian environment as elucidated in the guideline. The Board conceptually agreed with the departure request to reduce the driveway width while at the same time denying a departure recommendation for the sight triangle in order to promote pedestrian safety along 16th Ave. By accepting the reduced width and denying recommendation of the sight triangle, the Board recognizes that these actions may minimize the intrusiveness of the driveway/garage and comply with Land Use Code acceptable measures to ensure pedestrian safety.

A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts. Parking on commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.

The general unacceptability of placing parking on a commercial street frontage without an intervening use was thoroughly discussed by the Board. The proposal by the applicant to place a “volunteer room” between a row of parking and the street did not receive Board support. Rather the Board strongly expressed its desire to have the wall of the parking garage pushed back away from the sidewalk to create a much deeper landscape edge between the structure and the right-of-way providing a stronger sense of continuity between the south court of the Garden Court property and the landscape area in front of the Jessie Danz Building.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Break up building mass by incorporating different façade treatments to give the impression of multiple, small-scale buildings, in keeping with the established development pattern.*
- *Consider existing views to downtown Seattle, the Space Needle, Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains, and incorporate site and building design features that may help to preserve those views from public rights-of-way.*
- *Design new buildings to maximize the amount of sunshine on adjacent sidewalks throughout the year.*

The applicant should provide a study showing how the proposal will maximize the amount of sunshine on the adjacent Garden Court condominium and its south court.

With the height of the proposed structure lower than what is potentially allowable and with the upper U-shaped mass facing the adjacent condominium, the proposed structure's height and bulk generally met with the Board's preliminary approval. Future modifications to the design by the architect should focus on preserving the 15 foot triangular setback and creating a useable and desirable court at the upper levels.

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 complement 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. 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 façade walls.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate signage that is consistent with the existing or intended character of the building and the neighborhood.*
- *Solid canopies or fabric awnings over the sidewalk are preferred.*
- *Avoid using vinyl awnings that also serve as big, illuminated signs.*
- *Use materials and design that is compatible with the structures in the vicinity if those represent the desired neighborhood character.*

The Board's attention will focus on the design of the building's street front façade particularly at sidewalk level at the next Recommendation meeting. There is an expectation that each detail must be purposefully and exquisitely designed. A perforated screen between the garage and the sidewalk will not be enough. Wall, door, planters, benches, signage, lighting, fence, gate shall combine to form a jewel box like container.

C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Incorporate building entry treatments that are arched or framed in a manner that welcomes people and protects them from the elements and emphasizes the building's architecture.*
- *Improve and support pedestrian-orientation by using components such as: non-reflective storefront windows and transoms; pedestrian-scaled awnings; architectural detailing on the first floor; and detailing at the roof line. (These details make buildings more "pedestrian-friendly"—details that*

would be noticed and enjoyed by a pedestrian walking by, but not necessarily noticed by a person in a vehicle passing by at 30 miles per hour.)

The architect should imbue the façades of the lobby entrance and the parking garage with craftsmanship. The details that form the hardware, joinery, **fenestration** and form work should possess a custom quality rather than the design relying on standardized or off the shelf materials. This level of detail and nuance will imbue the structure with 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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Avoid wood or metal siding materials on commercial structures.*
- *Provide operable windows, especially on storefronts.*
- *Use materials that are consistent with the existing or intended neighborhood character, including brick, cast stone, architectural stone, terracotta details, and concrete that incorporates texture and color.*
- *Consider each building as a high-quality, long-term addition to the neighborhood; exterior design and materials should exhibit permanence and quality appropriate to the Capitol Hill neighborhood.*
- *The use of applied foam ornamentation and EIFS (Exterior Insulation & Finish System) is discouraged, especially on ground level locations.*

See guidance for C-2 and C-3.

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.

A reduction in the size of the garage entrance is welcome. The garage door should be well designed and meaningfully contribute to the sense of human scale and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment.

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.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Provide entryways that link the building to the surrounding landscape.*
- *Create open spaces at street level that link to the open space of the sidewalk.*

- *Building entrances should emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.*

All of the Capitol Hill specific guidance written above will be important to implement.

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.

Emphasis should be placed on architectonic solutions for the parking garage's blank wall rather than the use of green screens or vegetation to hide the wall. The wall, in its own fashion, should possess human scale and texture to provide the same amount of visual interest as the best masonry walls on Capitol Hill.

D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

See guidance for A-1, A-4, A-7, C-2, C-3, and D-2.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

Capitol Hill-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Consider:*
 - pedestrian-scale lighting, but prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties;
 - architectural lighting to complement the architecture of the structure;
 - transparent windows allowing views into and out of the structure—thus incorporating the “eyes on the street” design approach.
- *Provide a clear distinction between pedestrian traffic areas and commercial traffic areas through the use of different paving materials or colors, landscaping, etc.*

According to the architect, security concerns for the users of the building drove much of the programming. The quality of the materials and the design of the architectural elements that provide security at street level should have multiple functions. A barrier, for example, can be a seating wall and a planter. A custom made fence and gate will contribute a higher aesthetic sense to the neighborhood.

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 evening hours.

The Board will need to review a concept lighting plan for the project site. The applicant should consider providing pedestrian scale light fixtures along the perimeter of the property

near the sidewalk with the garden and the lighting contributing to the neighborhood and establishing the transition between the residential zone and the commercial corridor along Pine/Pike and Madison.

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.

The applicant proposes to leave a five foot wide green buffer along the north property line. Providing the 15' triangular setback would assist in preserving the catalpa tree rooted near the property line. By setting the wall of the parking garage further back from the sidewalk to align, at least, with the lobby entrance if not a few feet further back, the swath of landscaping from E. Pine Street to the Garden Court condominiums will be perceived as one continuous, linear garden.

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.

Green screens should not be utilized along the sidewalk façade to detract from the architectonic qualities of the facade. Rather the emphasis should be on the materials and the detailing of the wall.

Consider creating a thematic garden along the 16th Ave. swath of open space that provides a transition between the right-of-way and the JFS property. The applicant should also consider what the many recipients of assistance from JFS could contribute in terms of art and landscaping to the entry experience.

DEPARTURES

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT JUSTIFICATION	PRELIMINARY RECOM-MENDATION
1. Setback requirements. SMC 23.47A.014B.1	15' triangular setback at the intersection of the side lot line and the front lot line of the neighboring residential zone.	Minimal setback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building to the north has a garden adjacent to the proposed structure. 	Board would need a justification based on better meeting DR guidelines to consider departure. See guidance A-5.
2. Intervening use between parking and sidewalk. SMC 23.47.032B.1	Within a structure, street-level parking shall be separated from street-level, street-facing facades by another permitted use.	No intervening use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide additional parking. ▪ To provide enhanced security. 	Board is inclined to recommend favorably but would need a reason based on better meeting DR guidelines.
3. Parking location and access. SMC 23.54.030D2.a.1	Minimum standard is 22'	To allow 19' driveway width.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	How does the departure request better meet DR guidelines?
4. Sight triangle. SMC23.4.G3	10' standard	Request for 5' triangle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides more parking spaces. (Staff note: This rationale does not provide a reason that the project better meets the guidelines. 	Board is not inclined to recommend departure.

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