



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***

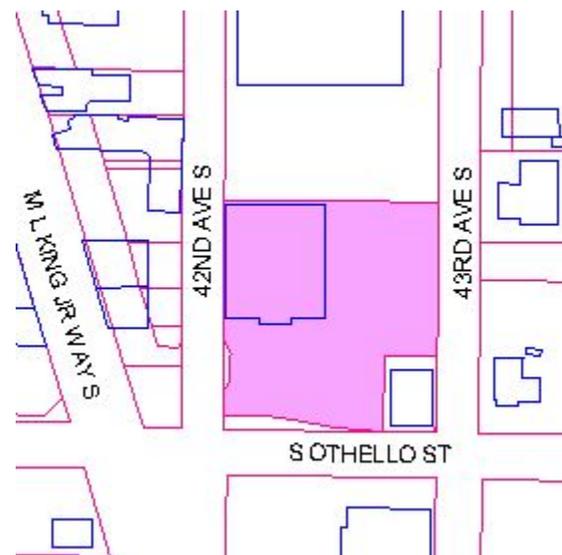
Project Number: 3007649
Address: 4200 South Othello Street
Applicant: Michael Hlastala, Othello Partners
Brad Hinthorne, Ruffcorn Mott Hinthorne Stine
Meeting Date: September 11, 2007
Report Date: October 4, 2007
Board Members Present: Steve Sindiong, Chair
Robert A. Mohn
Michele Wang
John Woodworth
Board Members Absent: Ann Beeman
Staff Members Present: Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Site Description

The development site combines two parcels of land to establish a total land area of approximately 81,281 square feet, in the Rainier Valley area of south Seattle. The site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial Three Pedestrian zone with a height limit of 65 feet (NC3P-65) that occupies the south half of city block, with street frontage on 42nd Avenue South to the west, South Othello Street to the south, 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 commercial



building, surrounded by hard surface parking, and three-story apartment building located at the corner of Othello and 43rd Avenue. The site is mostly flat with a subtle downward slope along the east property line. 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. Access to the development site is limited due in part to 42nd Avenue terminating just north of Othello.

Area Development

A significant addition to the area is Sound Transit's project to install a 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. Less than 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, and institutional uses to name a few. Due south across Othello, the applicant has proposed to development the site with a similarly scaled project. 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 a narrow Multifamily Lowrise Two (L-2) zone buffers an expansive Single family 5,000 (SF 5000) zone. This area is defined by spacious open spaces and moderate sized homes. Othello Playfield, a Seattle City Park is located one block south across 43rd Avenue. Abutting the site to the north is a religious institution, Miracle Temple of God. A large stand of mature trees provides a visual border between the two development sites.

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 of the immediate area. Mr. Hinthorne emphasized the contextual relationship of the development site to the south identified as Othello South, and the subject site of this proposal, Othello North. Additionally, he stressed the importance of in-fill projects taking cues from adjacent structures, open spaces, and street systems in the immediate area. This area is in transition architecturally and economically, Sound Transit will have a significant impact on the neighborhood. The architectural character of the proposed building will draw upon its unique corner block location, topographic site conditions, and influences from surrounding to create an active street presence. The design objectives include: design a thoughtful pedestrian oriented development; play to the curved form of the street system along 42nd and Othello; reuse building materials from the existing bowling alley that is slated for removal; and 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 residential levels with massing studies 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 (one level in commercial use and five residential levels above), with residential open space on top of one-story concrete base. In all schemes parking will be located

within the structure at and above grade, with access from the west (42nd Avenue South) and east (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 L-2 zone to commercial zone. The upper level massing would be oriented along the north and south axis, with open space between the two masses and at the south end to maximize natural light penetration. The building’s mass will be loaded at the corner of South Othello and 42nd Avenue (west wing), and east adjacent to 43rd Avenue (east wing). As depicted in all schemes, access to parking will be in two locations through 42nd and 43rd Avenue South. The design scheme establishes a strong corner presence at 42nd and Othello within a commercial corridor that 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, lack of response to the unique character of the Othello street alignment. The overall design does not adequately reinforce a sense of community.

Design Alternative “2” features a disjointed “C” and “L”-shaped upper level that reduces bulk along the east frontage adjacent to the multifamily zone. The south and west facing facades boldly hold the street edge except for a step area at the site’s southeast corner. The verticality of the facades creates a stark presence in area that is under developed. The separation between the two upper level masses invokes a canyon expression where the open space will be located. The orientation of the “C”-shaped upper level mass reduces the appearance of bulk along the north property line abutting the church site. Under this scheme as well as in the other schemes, retail space would be maximized at street level. Disadvantages cited were similar to the ones expressed in Alternative “3.”

The “Preferred” Alternative (“1”) introduces an upper level more gracious in its relationship to adjacent uses and zone transitions. The northeast upper level corner will be chamfered in acknowledgement to the lower density zone to the east and the Othello South site. The upper level will be divided into three sections that will hold the street edges. The terrace level open space will feature a courtyard garden open the southern solar exposure to optimize natural light, with each unit having outdoor views. The façade along 43rd Avenue will be sculpted to scale the mass to be more compatible with the residential character of a lower intensity zone. A townhouse concept will be employed along the east property line across from the L-2 zone. Similarly, a townhouse styled look will be introduced along the west property line, abutting 42nd Avenue. Several design opportunities have opened up with the alignment of the street system. Potentially, a public plaza can be incorporated into building design where the main residential entry will be located adjacent to the turnaround at the terminus of 42nd Avenue. Othello Street widens at the junction of 42nd and interesting design features could create a more dramatic street presence. 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 North Othello site applied to the South Othello site as well. (See Early Design Guideline Priorities Board comments #3006405) The Board asked the design team whether they were looking for any development departures for this project. The design team stated that no development departures have been identified at this time. The Board was not satisfied with the massing study analysis; the code complying concept was not presented as well as viable options. The Board expressed concern that a more thorough alternative analysis was not presented for a viable design option. The Board then next turned their attention to the preferred scheme. They inquired about what appeared to be a connection corridor between the middle and eastern masses on the upper level. The design team explained that the passageway would be approximately 10 to 12 feet in width and exterior walls would either be transparent or translucent. The passageway would be setback 20 to 30 feet from the buildings north edges.

The Board wanted more clarity along the west façade. Townhouse-like units were in fact being planned along a significant portion of 42nd Avenue South. The stoops would be inset creating alcoves along the street frontage. The Board was concerned that this design could raise pedestrian security problems with these cavities at street level creating pockets of shadows. The design should open up to the street experience, activate use, and not create voids along the streetscape. This area needs additional focused attention, explore options make this a focal point area.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

- Liked modernist styled building in the neighborhood, another sign of revitalization is occurring in our community.
- Incorporate materials that are more familiar with the residential uses along the facades adjacent to multifamily zones.
- The proposed building should be scaled at a lower height where adjacent residential zones.
- The building should be limited to four stories in height.
- One bedroom and studio apartments would be more appropriate for the site.
- Scale the project in context of the neighborhood – note: New Holly Park as an example of design within scale.
- Access to residential units should be visible from the street.
- It's important to have open space oriented to optimize internal use
- Streetscape experience is a serious problem along all street frontages - how the building steps back, use of glazing and green walls, etc. should be taken seriously as the design moves forward.
- External lighting may be a problem, would like to see lighting detail.
- Can DPD consider an alternative location for the Design Review meeting that is closer to our homes? *DPD will hold the next meeting closer to the project area.*

- Vehicles cutting through the church parking lot just north of the development site could be disruptive due in part to the limited access to 42nd.
- Parking demand (residential, commercial) should be met on the development site, not the streets.
- Is parking located in a garage, it was not clear in the plans?
- Will the two projects be built at the same time? *The design team responded that they did not know, but felt it was unlikely.*

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 building's mass along Othello was of particular concern with its verticality of exterior walls at street level and at the upper level. Othello will become a prominent pedestrian street leading to and from the light rail station. An opportunity exists to provide a vibrant space that is welcoming – do not let this pass by. 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 site's southwest and southeast corners are prominent but appear to turn its back from the public space. How the building program incorporates the street level plaza and Othello frontage will be critical to the success of this proposal. Additionally, the proposed passageway between the two upper level building masses poses several problems that will need further refinement.

The design team should explore stepping the lower level back at the southeast corner in acknowledgement of the lower density uses to the east. The townhouse-like portions of the building should visually read two-story with the upper level stepping back.

The Board feels that there should be more synergy between the two (Othello North & South) upper level courtyards, at present there is limited engagement between upper levels. The Board instructed the design team to incorporate comments from both projects where applicable as they move into MUP into one design response for each project. Specifically, ensuring a well proportioned scale is a critical factor to successfully integrate 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 this site with three street frontages; 42nd Avenue, 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:

- Resolve the solid elements along the curve portion of the lot, there appears to be competing elements, curves vs. straight edges.
- Explore incorporating more residential open space at street level with elements to encourage use and open up accessibility to the outside, if feasible.
- The design should optimize activating street level with storefront glazing, street furniture, landscaping, etc. - and should provide quality elements to encourage use.
- Avoid creating deep recesses along the façades at street level.
- Seek to create an engaging sidewalk experience, increasing sidewalk width and establishing a woonerf at the terminus of 42nd are good ideas that should be carried forward.

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:

- The design should be sensitive to the adjacent zones.
- The building's facades should seek to minimize bulk

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.

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:

- There is no room for blank walls.
- Pedestrian open space is a high valued element.
- Street level residential uses should take on the appearance of townhouse units – stoops are encouraged.

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>
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

- Present outcomes from SDOT, Sound Transit, and Metro Transportation meetings, and how it will shaped design proposal.
- Include colored and shadowed elevation drawings, sketches, and landscape/site plan in MUP plan sets illustrating the visual and textural design elements of the proposed building in sheets labeled “DR.”
- Well developed landscape plan and character sketches.
- Provide illustrative details of the appearance of street level frontages and how it relates to street experience. 3-D street level modeling is encouraged.
- 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.