



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
OF THE
NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Meeting Date: January 28, 2008

Report Date: February 6, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3007936

Address: 13716 Lake City Way NE

Applicant: John Parsaie of Morgan Design Group for Steve Smith

Board members present: Susan Jensen (Chair)
Thomas Nelson
Craig Parsons
Tricia Reisenauer
Shawna Sherman

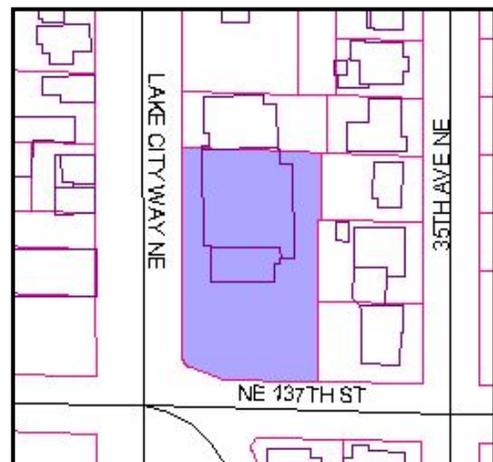
Board members absent: None

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

SITE AND VICINITY

The proposed project is located at the northeast corner of Lake City Way Northeast and Northeast 137th Street in the Lake City neighborhood. The 33,825 square foot site is currently vacant. The north portion of the site slopes gently to east approximately twelve feet while the south portion of the site is relatively flat and rises sharply approximately 16 feet at the east edge. The zoning is Commercial 1 with a 65 foot height limit (C1-65) as are the blocks to the south on both sides of Lake City Way NE. The block to the north changes to C1-40. Directly abutting the site to the east the zoning is Lowrise One (L-1).

Lake City Way in this area is characterized by a mix of



mostly small auto-oriented businesses. Many businesses on both sides of the street display “for sale” signs indicating a re-development trend. The site directly to the north of the subject project is a small auto-repair business. The site to the north of that is the subject of a future multifamily proposal.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes a 65-foot high, mixed-use building with approximately 5,414 square feet of retail and live/work at street level and residential units above. There will be approximately 160 residential units and parking for 165 vehicles at and below grade. Access will be from Lake City Way NE rather than NE 137th because of intersection controls at Lake city Way NE and NE 137th that prevent right or left hand turns eastbound onto NE 137th. There will be one egress point at Northeast 137th. This project will be for income-targeted seniors.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include ground level commercial retail with 5 levels of residential units above, parking located both at (behind the commercial use) and below grade. Access to the trash collection area would be via Northeast 137th Street.

Concept 1 shows a large mass with a large plaza at the southwest corner, a small internal courtyard on the second level at the north end of the building. This concept features extensive modulation and overhanging balconies on Lake City Way.

Concept 2 is similar to the first with the large plaza at the southwest corner, expansive roof gardens and a small internal courtyard. No balconies are featured in the design.

Concept 3 (the preferred concept) features two large second-level courtyards, landscaped rooftop open space and some units with private balconies. Several community rooms are provided on levels two and six. There is a minimum 10 foot setback at the north elevation and the applicant proposes stepping back the upper levels at the east elevation adjacent to the lower density residential zone.

Materials and color palette have yet to be chosen. The overall building form shows the façade up to street level, large corner plaza and the main residential entry at the corner. Green factor requirement would be met by extensive landscaping at street level and on upper level courtyards and rooftop.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

One member of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concerned about the impact of the project on tenants in building located adjacent to the north.
- Question about access to parking.
- Question about treatment and stability of steep slope at the rear of the property.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the Design Review Board members provided the siting and design guidance described below. The Board 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*” and the *North District/Lake City Way Guidelines* of highest priority to this project.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

A Site Planning

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the 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.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street *For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage 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

Buildings on corner lots should be oriented towards the public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.

- The Board would like the applicant to consider reducing the building massing along the Lake City Way façade in keeping with the Lake City Neighborhood Guidelines that seek to reduce the “canyon effect” along this corridor.
- As this is a corner site the Board feels that there is an opportunity for the building to present a prominent corner gesture. The Board directed the applicant to the Design Guidelines for examples of corner treatments.
- The residential entry at the corner needs to be clearly distinguished as a residential entry with maximum transparency and visibility to the outside for seniors waiting for rides or transit. The current design showing the entry beneath overhanging upper levels does not

interact well with the corner plaza. Outside seating and overhead weather protection should be considered.

- The Board would like to see more detailed sections that show the relationship to the Lowrise zone to the east with clear indications of screening and landscaping that reduces the impact on these neighbors.
- The Board would like the building to exhibit massing and use of materials that convey a sense of permanence that this area of Lake City Way currently lacks.
- The Board agreed that there is generous residential open space however some of the second-level open courtyard space should provide more privacy and noise (from Lake City Way traffic) screening. Sun and wind protection should be provided for the rooftop garden areas. Connecting interior community rooms would be desirable.
- The parking at grade level as proposed within the building is inefficiently laid out and may even be dangerous for maneuvering for seniors. The Board directed the applicant to revise the parking plan at grade level.

B **Height, Bulk and Scale**

B-1 **Height, Bulk and Scale**

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.

- The Board supported the preferred Concept 3 with it's generous supply of indoor and outdoor community open space. However, the board feels that the mass of the building should be presented in sections with differing materials and massing and a common vocabulary that ties them together. Horizontal lines should be limited as they emphasize the bulk of the building. See above comments also regarding stepping back at upper levels to reduce "canyon effect" along Lake City Way.

C **Architectural Elements and Materials**

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.*

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

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 commercial base as presented appears disconnected from the residential housing above. A strong two story base, even though there are residential uses on the second level, along with creative use of materials and window types contribute to reducing the apparent bulk of the building.
- Other options for overhead weather protection should be explored that are more appropriate to the design and uses proposed.
- It appears that there is a masonry base proposed and the Board encouraged this to be further explored. The Board cautioned that if architectural concrete is proposed that it be used in an appropriate way and texture be included.

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.

D-2 Blank Walls

Buildings should avoid large blank walls. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security

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

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 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. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops, and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

- The Board liked the large plaza at the corner but feels that it would benefit from expert advice of a landscape architect for creative ideas that would provide a sense of protection to those using the plaza, including seating, lighting and some type of landscape and/or architectural barriers.
- The Board suggested the use of landscaping to reduce the impact of blank walls on the north and south facades. They also directed the applicant to pay close attention to the proportion of windows to solid walls.
- See comments above regarding visibility and lighting for residential entry as it relates to personal safety and security.
- The Board looks forward to proposals for commercial signage and exterior lighting.
- The Board would like to see some strategic breaks in the long residential corridors either with the use of windows or glass doors to allow natural light in and to afford a sense of security.

E Landscaping

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.

- The Board encouraged the applicant to include large scale trees in the landscape design for the streetscape. They are looking forward to a design that will incorporate the Green factor in a sensitive and sustainable way.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Departure Summary Table

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
Parking location and access (SMC23.47A.0321c) Access to parking must be from the street with the fewest lineal feet of commercially zoned frontage.	Request access to parking from Lake City Way NE. One egress point is proposed on NE 137 th .	Intersection controls prevent access to NE 137 th from Lake City Way NE.	The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.
Street level development standards (SMC23.47A.008D) Residential uses are limited to 20% of the street level street facing façade.	Residential use exceeds 20% of street level street facing façade at NE 137 th .	Because of grade change, auto egress and trash enclosure, the residential lobby will exceed the 20% requirement.	

NEXT STEPS

Using the design guidance above the architect should develop the next iteration of the design response. The following items summarize what should be included in the submittal materials for MUP application and recommendation meeting. See guidance above for applicable details.

- 4 sets of MUP plans, 5 copies of the filled out and signed SEPA checklist, owner authorization form, financial responsibility form, site plan (8.5"X 11") for SEPA large sign (see **Director's Rule 29-2006**).
- Provide a written response to the Design Review guidelines and guidance above at MUP submittal (see attachment B of CAM 238). Please send the planner the electronic version of the narrative design response via email.
- Provide the topographic survey in the recommendation packet.
- Provide detailed large scale street level vignettes for the street level along Lake City Way and at the corner plaza lobby entrance to illustrate the streetscape experience.
- Provide a full color rendering of the building looking northeast from southwest corner of Lake City Way and NE 137th.
- **Provide a full color materials board with tangible examples at the recommendation meeting. Also, provide some pictures of the material applications in built projects.**
- Provide full color shadowed elevations in the MUP plans (N-S-E-W) with material callouts.
- A conceptual plan for signage type and location as well as lighting design should be presented at the next meeting.
- Provide a large scale full color landscape plan in the MUP plans.
- Provide larger scale site plans at the recommendation meeting.

- Please call the Planner (Marti Stave at 206 684-0239) when you have made your MUP intake appointment.

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