



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**FINAL RECOMMENDATION
OF THE
SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Meeting Date: December 17, 2009

Report Date: December 23, 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008002

Address: 2988 SW Avalon Way

Applicant: Alan Keimig for Transitional Resources

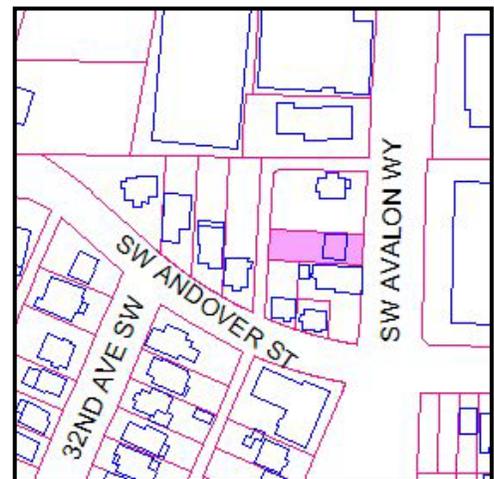
Board members present: Christie Coxley (Chair)
Joseph Hurley
Myer Harell
Norma Thompkins
Brandon Nicholson

Board members absent: Robin Murphy

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

SITE AND VICINITY

The proposed project is located on SW Avalon Way just north of the junction with SW Andover Street in the Youngstown neighborhood of West Seattle. The 8,000 square foot site currently contains a single family structure which will be demolished. The site slopes from an unimproved alley on the west to the east dropping approximately eighteen feet to the street at SW Avalon Way. The zoning is Commercial 1 with a 40 foot height limit (C1-40) as is the entire block face on the west side of SW Avalon Way. Across SW Avalon Way to the east the zoning is Industrial General 2 with a 85 foot height limit where the NUCOR Steel Plant is located. To the west, the zoning changes to Single Family and a mix of multifamily



and single family to the south.

There is an eclectic mix of uses around the intersection of SW Avalon Way and SW Andover including larger multifamily buildings, public storage and small businesses including a hair salon and café. To the west, up the hill, is a mix of older, well-maintained single family homes of various ages.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes a four story building 16 residential units for the mentally disabled. Four required parking spaces will be located at a shared lot adjacent to the site. A community open space is proposed between the site and the related project adjacent to the north.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: APRIL 9, 2009

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include approximately 1,295 square feet of ground level community space which will be occupied by the local mental health community facilities. In addition, all option will share parking and a community open/garden space with the related building to the north.

Alternative 1 (the preferred option) shows a four-story structure with architectural features that related it to the building to the north. A large community space at the ground-level street level opens into access to the studio units to the rear. Outdoor walkways on the north offer views to the shared garden space below. The mass of the building is set back from the unopened alley on the west to afford the greatest distance from nearby homes.

Alternative 2 features an L-shaped entry courtyard with the community room set back from the street. A roof terrace behind the main entry building affords views to the north and the common open space. An additional building section at right angles to the main building at the rear is located on an adjacent parcel.

Alternative 3 also features a rooftop deck with the massing of the structure nearly filling the site. Large balconies overlook the shared common garden. Little open space is on the site itself.

The overall building form shows the façade set back from street level with pitched roof forms and dormers. Materials have yet to be chosen but may consist of lap siding and cementitious panels.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eight members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting held on April 9, 2009. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Wanted to know who would be living in the building.
- Commented that the existing project is a great neighbor and they support the new project.
- Design should consider the future redevelopment of the adjacent building to the south which can build up to the property line.

The architect presented the refined design which places emphasis on the shared communal garden which will be planted with fruit-bearing shrubs and plants. Residential walkways face on to the garden which is the main focal point of the new and existing structures. The main residential entry is recessed between the two structures and is gated, secure and private. The upper levels of the south-facing façade are now pulled back five feet further from the property line in response to the Board’s concern about eventual development on the that side.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Two members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Questioned the purpose of the 10 foot setback at the sidewalk.
- The stair and elevator shaft should be placed at the south edge of the structure away from the garden area.
- Generally like the design.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

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*” of highest priority to this project. The Board’s comments and recommendation follow the guidance in ***bold italicized text***.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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-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.

- The Board generally agreed that the preferred alternative design is the most appropriate for the site. They agreed that the new building with the proposed shared garden courtyard completes the complex.
- The Board wants the communal garden courtyard to work well with both buildings and provide a truly usable space for the residents. The refined design will need to show how it makes the overall project a better design and justifies the requested departure. At the next meeting, the Board wants to see a detailed design showing how the open space works with site characteristics and relates to each building.
- The board is particularly interested in seeing how the design of the transition between the sidewalk and the ground level community room provides for a neighborly space and how the transition to residential areas is achieved.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board was please with design of the shared open space agreed that it works together for the new and existing structures. Some Board members questioned the necessity of the 10 foot setback at the front of the building; because the site is so constrained reducing this setback may provide opportunities to refine the location of the stairwell and elevator shaft elements. The entrance to the residential area is located between the two structures and is accessed by a communal walkway and secured by a locking gate.

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 feels that the proposed massing is somewhat chaotic and unresolved. The design should create a better connection with the original building completing the complex as a whole.
- Because the site is narrow, the structure appears bulky. The design should be simplified to reduce the appearance of bulk.
- The Board commented on the large number of windows on the south façade next to a site that could redevelop to the property line. The design should explore options that re-orient these views to the north with views to the communal garden. The design should carefully consider the location of any windows on the south façade in the likely event of the future redevelopment of the adjacent property.

The design presented at the Recommendation is simplified and works well with the site and the related building to the north. The applicant presented a study of alternatives showing the windows and walkways reversed and the Board agreed that this approach did not fit well with the applicant's program. However, the design, as presented, necessitates the location of the stair tower and elevator shaft where it blocks the desired view of the communal garden for units on the east of the building. The Board recommended that the applicant use elements of the alternative design presented to relocate the stair tower and elevator shaft so that all units have unobstructed visual access to the community garden. The Board also agreed that if additional departures were necessary to allow these design elements to be relocated, the Department was authorized to grant them. The Board agreed that if this approach is entirely unworkable with respect to other

elements of the applicants' program for serving the mental health community, they would agree to recommending the design as presented.

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-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 observed that the courtyard side of the building is dominated by circulation and railings diminishing the experience of the courtyard. The applicant should consider an alternative design that reverses the location of the windows on the south façade with the circulation patterns on the north façade. (See above).*
- *The entry design should present a welcoming feeling and more detail should be provided at the next meeting.*
- *The Board would like to see materials and color selections that lend to reducing the appearance of bulkiness. The examples provided at the EDG meeting gave an appearance of business; simplicity is a better direction for this structure on a narrow site.*

At the Recommendation Meeting, the presented an alternative design with windows and circulation reversed from the original design (see discussion above at B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale). The applicant explained the reasoning behind the design of the walkways and railings facing onto the community garden and how it fits with the programs need of the building. The materials palette has been simplified and better integrated with related building to the north. The choice of darker colors reduces the appearance of bulkiness.

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-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 thinks that the refined design should create an optimum relationship between the sidewalk, the community room and the entries to the residential spaces.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board questioned the need of the 10-foot setback from the street given the Board’s desire for the applicant to explore the relocation of the stair tower and the elevator shaft. The relationships of the sidewalk, community room and the residential entry appears to be optimum but could be moved closer to the street.

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 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas and boulevards.

- The Board encouraged the applicant to return with a detailed design that specifies areas of open space including a specific landscaping plan with vignettes showing how the spaces would be used by residents. The sloping site should be carefully considered in the garden design. Green Factor calculations should be provided.

The Board was pleased with the design of the community garden space and the circulation between the two buildings.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Departure Summary Table

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT’S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
Residential Amenity Area (SMC23.47A.024) Residential amenity areas are required in an amount equal to 5% of the gross floor area in residential use.	Reduce the amount of amenity area to less than required.	Residential amenity area will be shared with adjacent related building. Design will include access and areas to shared by residents of both buildings.	The Board unanimously agreed that the design of the community garden carefully integrates the open space needs of the two related buildings and grants this departure.

The five members of the Board present unanimously recommended approval of the design subject to the following condition:

1) The applicant is to work with the Department to explore the use of elements of the alternative design presented to relocate the stair tower and elevator shaft so that all units have unobstructed visual access to the community garden. The Board also agreed that if additional departures were necessary to allow these design elements to be relocated, the Department was authorized to grant them. The Board agreed that if this approach is entirely unworkable with respect to other

elements of the applicants' program for serving the mental health community, they would agree to recommending the design as presented.

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