



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

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

Meeting Date: March 17, 2008

Report Date: March 31, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008423

Address: 12318 15th Avenue NE

Applicant: Dykeman Architects for Safeway Stores

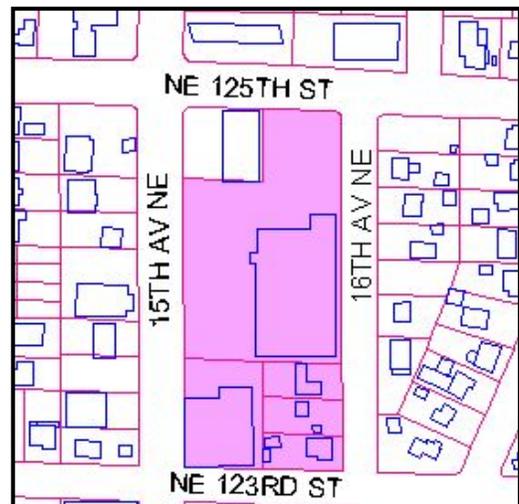
Board members present: Craig Parsons (Chair)
Susan Eastman Jensen
Thomas Nelson
Tricia Reisenauer
Shawna Sherman

Board members absent: None

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

SITE AND VICINITY

The proposed project occupies the majority of the block bounded by 15th Avenue NE, NE 12th Street, 16th Avenue NE and NE 123rd Street in the Pinehurst neighborhood of Seattle. On the central portion of the site is an existing 27,300 sq ft. Safeway store built in 1964. The southwest corner contains a vacant commercial building; the southeast corner is occupied by four vacant single family residences; and the northwest corner is occupied by convenience retail. The total site is approximately 3.28 acres. The zoning is Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 40 foot height limit (NC3-40) except for the southeast corner which is currently zoned Single Family with 7200 sq. ft. lot size (SF7200). The intersection of NE 125th and



15th Avenue NE is small commercial node with NC3-40 zoning extending north for almost one block changing to Lowrise 3. The intersection is identified in the Northgate Urban Center Design Guidelines as a “Gateway” location. The block to the south changes to Lowrise 3 with a Residential Commercial component. The surrounding neighborhood is zoned SF7200 and is developed with mostly mid-century single family housing.

There are two mixed use buildings on 15th Avenue NE and there two fuel stations and a car wash at the intersection. The northwest corner of the block has a separate owner and contains convenience retail, fast food and a cleaners. In general, this commercial area is underdeveloped as to it’s current zoning (NC3-40). There are transit stops on 15th Ave NE and NE 125th which is a major corridor connecting I-5 with Lake City Way NE.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to redevelop the site with a larger grocery store which will be approximately 50,000 sq ft. The proposal also includes surface parking for approximately 200 vehicles. The building design is proposed to be 25 feet high with some architectural features up to 35 feet. The proposal also includes a contract rezone from SF7200 to NC2-40 for the southeast corner portion that is currently occupied by four (vacant) single family residences.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include the 50,000 sq. ft. grocery store with surface parking for approximately 200 vehicles.

Design Option 1 locates the building at the north-center end of the site maximized between 15th Avenue NE and 16th Avenue NE. The main entry would be located at the center of the south façade with an additional entry from a plaza at the southwest corner of the store. Surface parking would be located on the southern 1/3 of the site with two auto entries from 15th Avenue NE to the parking. Truck access and receiving would be located at the north end of the building and accessed from NE 125th

Design Option 2 locates the building at the south end of the site with the truck access and receiving area on NE 123rd. Surface parking would occupy most of the center of the site with two access drives from 15th Avenue NE and one from NE 125th. The main store entry would be in the center of the north façade with another entry from a plaza located at the northwest corner of the building.

Design Option 3, the preferred option, is similar to Option 2 but with the receiving area at the northeast of the building and accessed from NE 125th. Parking, entries and plaza areas are the same as Option 2. There would be three auto access drives as in Option 2.

No specific materials are proposed as yet and landscaping plans are conceptual. The applicants have stated their intention to pursue LEED Silver status for this project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Approximately 20 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- The discussions with Safeway have been very positive. The community has expressed a strong desire for a store that achieves LEED status; bioswales for drainage; a community gathering space; noise and sound mitigation; varied roof design; and lots of landscaping in the parking lot.
- Concern about whether there will still be parking on 16th Avenue NE.
- Would like to have sidewalks on 16th Avenue NE and NE 123rd where there are currently none.
- Concerned about the noise from delivery trucks and garbage collection on 16th Avenue NE. Would like the store moved away from 16th Avenue NE.
- Would like to know when demolition of the current store would begin.
- Noise from the loading dock and trash compactor on 16th Avenue NE is bad. Concerned about lights from the parking lot. Would like applicants to consider an enclosed loading area.
- Would like to see an interesting façade. Design should break up large walls and include public art and be semi-transparent.
- Concerned about removing too many trees on 16th Avenue NE which could help with noise problems.

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 “*Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District*” of highest priority to this project.

“**Hot Button Issues**” are items initially discussed by the Board and include items of top importance for the design. For this project, the Board determined the hot button issue were:

Site Planning: A-3; A-4; A-8; A-10

1. None of the design options appear to recognize the intersection at NE 125th Street and 15th Avenue NE as a “Gateway” as identified in the Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District Guidelines. All options appear to be standard grocery store planning with respect to locating the building and parking on the site.
2. The large parking lot creates a gap in the desired urban fabric where retail should front on busy streets. There should be more attention given to integrating the parking into the development.
3. The goal is to have an energized, activated frontage on a busy street. A stronger urban gesture would be to have the storefront on 15th Avenue NE.
4. Potential blank walls on 15th Avenue NE, NE 123rd and 16th Avenue NE present security and safety concerns.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

A Site Planning

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity along the street.

A-4 Human Activity: Street Level Transparency (Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District)

The intention of transparency in the street level façades of commercial and civic buildings is to provide for interaction between people in the interior of a building and people near the exterior of the building, particularly on the sidewalk, through a direct visual connections. The following are examples of less desirable design treatments that should be discouraged:

- *Windowless walls*
- *Mirrored or non-transparent glass*
- *Glass block*
- *Display cases*
- *Narrow windows not meeting the intent above*
- *Windows located above waist level to persons on the sidewalk*
- *Windows into areas that are too small, shallow or narrow to support human activity*
- *Any interior wall, equipment, or functional layout that hampers the intent of transparency stated above.*

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-8 Parking and Vehicle Access

Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access (Northgate Urban Center a& Overlay District)

Site and design driveways to minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. This is especially important along...15th Avenue NE,...[and] NE 125th Street. Where surface must be located to the side of structures, the following is recommended: Place surface parking away from the corners of blocks fronting on...15th Avenue NE, [and] NE 125th Street. Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways and curb cuts along these streets.

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 noted that none of the design options would achieve the desired human activity on 15th Avenue NE. They encourage the applicants to return with a design that energizes both 15th Avenue NE and NE 123rd possibly by locating a entry plaza at each corner of the building. This would improve security on both of these streets.
- The applicants should pay particular attention to noise and lighting concerns of the neighbors.
- The applicants should evaluate the necessity for two large curb cuts on 15th Avenue NE which is not pedestrian friendly when added to the curb cut for the corner convenience store.

- The Board would like to see an option where the building faces onto 15th Avenue NE with more transparency. The Board believes that there are other options to a one-sided building facing a large parking lot which the applicant should vigorously explore.

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 design is not sufficiently advanced as yet, however, the Board is concerned that the building not look like a large “box”. The massing should be broken down along 15th and rooflines be brought down provide shading for those using the proposed outdoor gathering places.

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-3 **Human Scale (Northgate Urban Center & Overlay District)**

The ground level of [commercial] buildings must offer pedestrian interest along sidewalks. This includes windows, entrances, and architectural details. Signs, overhead weather protection and ornamentations are encouraged.

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 noted that artwork and landscaping could be used effectively to create a better human experience on the site.
- The Board has high aspirations for the eventual choice of materials.

D **Pedestrian Environment**

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-4 Design of Parking Lots near Sidewalks

Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk and minimize the visual clutter of parking signs and equipment.

North District Neighborhoods-specific supplemental guidance:

- *As sties with large surface parking areas, such as auto dealerships, are redeveloped, consider locating parking under, beside or behind new structures. If surface parking lots are located between structures and sidewalk, vegetated areas should b e provided along the sidewalk to provide a buffer from the parking lot. Vegetation should be of a height that pedestrians can still see above it and/or placed so they have visibility around it for safety.*
- *Vegetated Islands that include trees and safe, well-defined pedestrian pathways should be considered at locations throughout large parking lots to enhance pedestrian activity, minimize storm runoff, and reduce the heat island effect of large parking lots.*
- *Pervious pavements should be considered to assist groundwater recharge and removal of pollutants.*
- *Green spaces at regular intervals can provide attractive surface parking lots and reduce drainage runoff in large parking lots.*

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas

Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away front the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

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.

- The Board is concerned that pedestrians have a positive experience walking along 15th Avenue NE and not feel like they are walking along the side of a store.
- The Board would like to see a through-block crossing connecting 15th Avenue NE and 16th Avenue NE.
- At the next meeting the Board would like to see colored and shadowed schematic elevations and site sections for all four sides of the buildings showing the parking lots, loading areas, building and beyond to the residential uses across 16th Avenue NE and NE 123rd.
- At the next meeting the Board would like to see more detailed drawings and concept studies for freight loading and trash collection areas and how these relate to the neighboring properties.
- The Board would like to see maximum transparency along NE 15th Avenue particularly with both corners of the building activated at this façade.

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.

- The Board was pleased to see a tree survey as part of the submittals and encouraged the applicant to preserve as many of the existing trees as possible, especially along NE 16th Avenue.
- The Board looks forward to a much more detailed site plan showing how they will be meeting the Green Factor requirement. The applicant should also include detailed landscape studies for the parking lot.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Departure Summary Table

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
Blank facades (SMC23.47A.008A2) the total of all blank façade segments may not exceed 40% of the width of the structure	Some blank facades along 15 th Avenue NE and NE 123 rd may exceed 40%	Merchandising requirements of grocery stores require maximum utilization of perimeter wall space.	The Board did not discuss the details of the departure requests and will address them at Recommendation. They are willing to entertain these requests depending on how well the design responds to the priority guidelines.

Transparency (SMC23.47A.008B2) 60% of the street facing façade between 2’ and 8’ above the sidewalk shall be transparent.	Request to reduce transparency to 30% along 15 th Avenue NE and NE 123 rd .	Same as above.	
Access to Parking (SMC23.47A.032A1) Access to parking must be from the street with the fewest lineal feet of frontage.	Request departure to allow access from both NE 125 th for trucks and autos and from NE 15 th avenue.	The development will more that one access point because of the large volume of customer traffic. No access is proposed from the residential streets.	
Parking to the side of a structure (SMC23.47A.032B1) Parking to the side of a structure shall not exceed 60 lineal feet of street frontage.	Request that the lineal frontage on NE 15 th Avenue exceed 60 feet.	The size of the parking lot required for 200 vehicles will require more than 60 feet in frontage.	

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 SEPA checklist, 2 copies of the draft recommendation packet (more will be requested prior to the meeting), owner authorization form, financial responsibility form, site plan (8.5”-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 all four frontages of the site.
- Provide a full color rendering of the building looking southeast and looking northeast.
- Provide a full color and materials board with tangible examples at the recommendation meeting. Also, provide some pictures of the material applications in built projects.
- Provide detailed drawings of the loading dock/trash collection area and how this will relate to the residential neighborhood on NE 16th Avenue.
- Provide detailed sections through the site including parking, building, streets, and residential areas showing relationships to surrounding properties.

- Provide full color shadowed elevations in the MUP plans (N-S-E-W) with material callouts.
- Provide a conceptual plan for signage type and location as well as lighting design in the plans with depiction and analysis of lumen levels in the parking lot and adjacent properties.
- Provide a large scale full color landscape plan in the MUP plans. Include detailed drawings of the landscape and circulation plan for the parking lot.
- Provide larger scale site plan's at the recommendation meeting.
- Please call the Planner (Marti Stave 206 684-0239) when you have made your MUP intake appointment.

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