



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES
OF
THE WEST SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Meeting Date: January 8, 2009**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008453

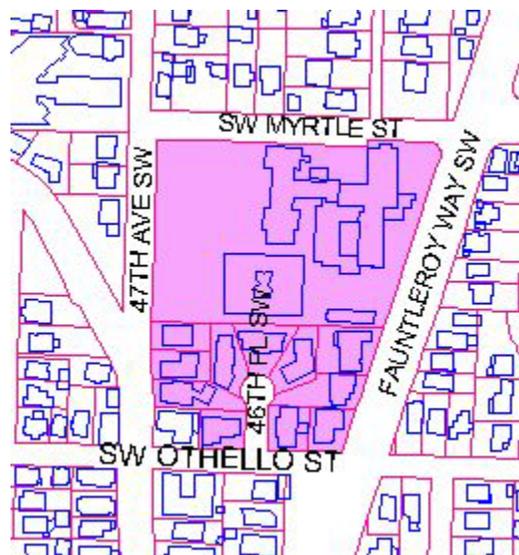
Address: 7125 Fauntleroy Way SW
Applicant: R. Kevin McFeeley, The Kenney

Board members present: David Foster (chair)
Joseph Hurley
Deb Barker (recused)
Christie Coxley
Vlad Oustamovich (for Brandon Nicholson)

Land Use Planner present: Michael Dorcy

VICINITY AND AREA DEVELOPMENT:

The site comprises the entire block bounded by Fauntleroy Way SW on the east, SW Myrtle Street on the north, 47th Avenue SW on the west and SW Othello Street on the south. The generally trapezoidal site measures approximately 536 feet in the north/south direction and varies in the east/west direction, from approximately 498 feet at the north to 330 feet at the south end of the site. A keyhole-shaped 46th Place SW penetrates the site at its midpoint along SW Othello Street for approximately 134 feet. The total development site is approximately 205, 739 square feet in extent. The northern portion of the site is zoned Lowrise (L-3) while the southern 222 feet is zoned LDT. There are eight existing residential structures within the LDT-zoned portion of the site, containing 23 residential units proposed for demolition in order to accommodate the envisioned development.



The general neighborhood and vicinity, located just a short distance from Puget Sound, is characterized by low scale development. Areas to the east, west and north are largely zoned single family (SF5000), with a small area of Lowrise-1 just the south of the site and pockets of Lowrise-1 and Lowrise-3 to the northwest. Gatewood Elementary School, a City of Seattle Landmark structure, lies across Fauntleroy Way SW, northeast of the site. Lincoln Park, a hilly and wooded parkland of some fifty acres overlooking Puget Sound lies one block south of the development site. South of the park is the Fauntleroy Ferry Terminal which serves Vashon Island.

The proposed development contemplates both the City's vacating the 46th Place SW right-of-way and a contract rezone (as yet unspecified) to accommodate the following programmatic objectives: 194 "independent living" apartments, 110 "assisted living" apartments (of which 46 currently exist), 15 "memory care" units, 20 "skilled nursing" units. Underground parking would be provided for 176 vehicles.

In addition to razing the smaller residential structures within the portion of the site currently zoned LDT, the development proposal contemplates demolition of several structures that comprise The Kenney, including the "Seaview" building which has been on the site for a century.

At the first Early Design Guidance meeting, held on Thursday, October 23, 2008, at the Library of the Madison Middle School, the Board members present recommended that, given the complexity of the site and the proposal, the applicants should return for a second Early Design Guidance meeting. The Board noted that at the second meeting they would further specify siting guidance and design guidance for the proposed structures and landscaping, as well as identify by letter and number those guidelines found in the City of Seattle's Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily a& Commercial Building of highest priority for the project.

The second Design Review Early Design Guidance meeting was held at 8:00 PM in the Social Hall of the West Seattle Christian Church.

ARCHITECTS' PRESENTATION

The design team's presentation, led by Gene Guskowski from the Milwaukee-based AG Architecture firm, examined five conceptual proposals for the site. The first two had been prepared in response to requests from the last meeting: One that would work within existing zoning for the site, and one that would save the century-old Seaview building.

The so-called "code-compliant" option was briefly presented but was said to allow 25 percent fewer new units than the Kenney's basic program requirement that would keep The Kenney financially viable. A second option was described as one that would save the Seaview building. In presenting that option, however, it was noted that the century-old building's "construction

type” was not conducive to a remodeling program that would transform its units into the larger, more comfortable retirement apartments that retiring baby boomers, the intended audience, would be expecting. Other difficulties lay in the facts that the existing corridors would result in inefficient floor plans and that existing floor heights would not line up with new ones elsewhere in the complex. Most importantly, a contemplated large, central underground parking garage, it would not be possible with the building still there. The proposal that would keep the Seaview building, however, would enable The Kenney to get the ultimate number of units it desired by converting the Seaview to something with four units per floor and increasing the height/density elsewhere on the site.

The presentation then moved to the three other options, A, B and C. Option A, it was explained, would require a two-step rezoning, changing the entire site to L-3, then a “contract rezone” - where the city and property owner agree to a zoning change with very specific terms. This would entail a denser, higher zoning at the center of the site in order to enable a larger building or portion of a building to be located there. Option A would include a “re-creation of the Seaview building” on the northeastern corner of the site. Option B, it was explained, would “spread out” across the entire site in order to achieve the project’s goals and arrive at a preferred number of 194 units. That scope of development, however, would mandate giving up the “park-like” area on the northwest corner of the property.

Option C was described as the “new, preferred alternative.” This would require seeking a rezone of the entire site to Midrise (MR) but with some mitigation imposed by following Lowrise -4 standards which are allowed by the Land Use Code. In this scenario the northwest corner would remain a “park-like” space, and the buildings would mostly be four stories high.

At this point, renderings were shown that indicated the potential height and bulk of the project under that proposal, from higher vantage points to the east. These were offered as evidence that views of the Sound from nearby residences would not significantly be obstructed.

Following the design team’s presentation, the Board spent some time asking clarifying questions. One of the members, skeptical of the proposed “re-creation” of the Seaview building at the northeast corner of the site, asked whether the architects or developers had looked into the possibility of moving the historical structure to a new location. Responding to a follow-up question about any particularly “Seattle-style” aspect of the project, the architect added that he wished he had more height so to could bring in more light.

Public Comment

Among public comments solicited by the Board were the following:

- concern about the project increasing The Kenney's height and breadth along Fauntleroy frontage and making it more "fortress like"
- disappointment not to have seen more elevation drawings or sidewalk-level perspectives that would better convey the project's bulk and scale;
- concern about that the "tall, beautiful trees" on the site's northwest corner might be lost; annoyance that a tree survey had not been shown as had been requested by the Board at the first Early Design Guidance meeting;
- a daughter of a Kenney resident cautioned critics that a successful design must be a design from the viewpoint of what the seniors who would be housed there need: "If the Seaview building does not meet what today's seniors need to live, that building should be discarded;"
- and from a current independent-living resident of The Kenney, "I would not like to see the designers and architects be so constrained by height that we will ... be 'squished'."
- concern that the height, bulk, and scale of this project really is incompatible with the surrounding single-family neighborhood;
- a suggestion to pay special attention to the project's roof, given how visible it would be from uphill residents;
- a request to preserve that "park-like" area at the northwest corner because current residents enjoy walking there;
- an alternate suggestion for a "green roof" where residents could take such walks instead;
- concern expressed about the proposed west-side wall which would cut off the campus from the neighborhood..

Board's Deliberations

The Board chair began by asking for a reiteration of how the "contract rezone" process would work; the staff planner said recommendations from the Board would inform that process, and before the City Council signs off on any such proposed rezoning, it would want to know that the impacts had been looked at and evaluated by the Board and the community. One Board member suggested to other members of the Board that the best way to approach such a large project was to deal with the edges of the site first, look at all those conditions, then leave it to the architects

to see how they can work from the outside in, instead of the inside out. The Board then urged the development team to take a “wholistic” look at the site, rather than building by building, and to pursue a real connection to the neighborhood. The Board noted that a successful development on the site should not present a formidable, institutional edge to the larger community. They requested that the site be kept as open as possible, and that special attention be paid to landscaping and to opening and modulating structures along the periphery of the site. “Reducing bulk and scale around the perimeter in favor of more intensive units around the center, is what we’re getting to,” the Board chair summarized. The Board indicated it would be willing to support more stories in the middle of the site if it meant a reduction in bulk and greater permeability around the outer edges of the campus.

Overall, a majority of board members preferred the general spirit of Alternative B to the other two.

The Board also stressed the importance of carefully addressing details of parking and access, especially because by nature, there are more ambulances visiting senior-living centers. One member of the Board commented that he would like to see “something that has the flavor of the Northwest, if not West Seattle itself” in the style of the proposed structures. Another Board member stressed that it was important to approach the proposed development as a series of separate buildings rather than striving for strict consistency of design between the individual elements, since that had been the manner in which The Kenney has evolved to date.

Based upon the Board’s expressed issues and concerns, the following Design Review Guidelines from *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings* were determined to be of highest priority for this site and this development project: A-2, Streetscape Compatibility, A-4, Human Activity, A-5, Respect for Adjacent Sites, A-7, Residential Open Space, A-8, Parking and Vehicle Access, B-1, Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility, C-1, Architectural Context, C-2, Architectural Concept and Consistency, C-3, Human Scale, D-1, Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances, D-6, Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, & Service areas, D-7, Personal Safety & Security, D-12, Residential Entries & Transitions, E-1, Landscaping to reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites, E-2, Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site, and E-3, Landscaping Design to Address Special Site Conditions.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and deigned to encourage human activity on 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-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well integrated open space

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.

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. 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 zone.

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

C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale

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-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.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security

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

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 provide for a visually interesting street front for the pedestrian. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements....

***E-1 Reinforce existing landscape character of the neighborhood
Landscaping should reinforce the character of neighborhood properties and abutting streetscape.***

***E-2 Landscaping to enhance the building and site
Landscaping should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project***

***E-3 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 members agreed unanimously to recommend that the project proceed to Master Use Permit application. One member of the Board suggested, however, that the design team might wish to request a third Early Design Guidance meeting. The applicants had just been given so many suggestions for how to shape the project that it might be too much to expect the design team to bring in a fully functioning building (or set of buildings) at the next go around.

Staff Comment

The Kenney development team has chosen to bring their proposal back to the Board for a third Early Design Guidance meeting before proceeding to MUP application. A 3rd Early Design Guidance meeting will be scheduled before the Board at a future date.