



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3008612

Address: 4106 Delridge Way SW

Applicant: Scott Starr, SMR Architects, for Trevor Simpson

Date of Meeting: Thursday, November 19, 2015

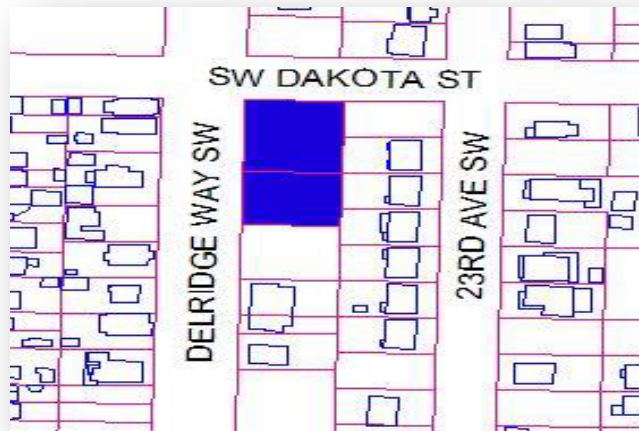
Board Members Present: Todd Bronk, Chair
Donald Caffrey
Alexandra Moravec
Matt Zinski

Board Members Absent: T Frick McNamara

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC1-40



Nearby Zones: (North) NC1-40
(South) LR1
(East) SF5000

(West) LR1

Lot Area: 15,750 sf

Current Development:

The site is undeveloped land on the steep hillside along the east side of Delridge Way SW, just south of the unopened right-of-way of SW Dakota Street.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

There are large commercial office buildings to the north and west of the site and heavy industrial uses further to the north across SW Andover Street. Residential development, primarily single family homes, with some multifamily structures lie directly east and west of the site.

Access:

Access to the site would be from Delridge Way SW.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

Parts of the hillside directly to the east are mapped landslide prone.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Thirty six residential units are proposed above a ground floor of 3.662sq. ft. of commercial space and interior parking for 37 vehicles.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (Will auto-update on save/print) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The mass of the proposed 5-story building would be pushed towards Delridge Way SW and set back more than 15 feet from the property line at the east. It would be set back between 8 ½ and 9 ½ feet from the southern property line. The front façade would be set back two feet from the front property line to allow for a narrow landscaping strip between the proposed retail spaces and the sidewalk. A recessed residential entry would be located off center in the northern fifth of the front façade and four slightly recessed entries would provide pedestrian access to the designated ground-floor commercial spaces. A parking entry would be located at the southern end of the structure, with access from Delridge Way SW. The residential units and entire façade at the fifth level would recede nearly an additional four feet from the front property line. A Common Courtyard, located at the second level and open to the hillside would be provided as an amenity to all residents, as would an area at the fourth floor rooftop overlooking the Courtyard. The apportioning of units provided would be: a single studio apartment, 12 one-bedroom and 23 two-bedroom apartments.

A concrete retaining wall, an upward extension of the rear wall of the underground parking garage but buttressed and with planter containers, would run the length of the cut in the hillside along the eastern property line. The base of a six-foot tall black vinyl-coated chain link fence would run parallel to and just outside the retaining wall. The structure would be crowned with a “butterfly” shaped, standing seam metal roof. A modest-sized, boxed-in elevator overrun would be located at the midline of the roof and would be the only piece of mechanical equipment protruding from it.

At the earlier recommendation meeting the Board had requested that the rooftop mechanical elements needed to be shown in some detail and the presentation clarified that the elevator over-run would be the only rooftop mechanical feature. Among other requests and guidance offered at the earlier meeting were the following:

- A clear preference was expressed for a finished concrete first floor façade, rather than the CMU units as shown. A smooth face, naturally colored concrete base was now presented as the material of choice;
- The Board had indicated that they favored a simplicity in the front facade expression; although the proportions and basic simplicity of the façade shown were generally acceptable, the Board was not favorable to the way the balcony indentations on the upper residential façade transgressed as entry insets into the ground floor commercial wall; they noted that there should be a clearer transition between the upper and lower facades. At the second recommendation meeting there was now a clear demarcation between the commercial base and the upper residential floors, the only continuous inset shown was that which connected the lobby entrance to the upper floors, and materially differentiated by the use of horizontal cedar siding which extended from the sidewalk level to the underside of the rooftop cornice.
- Several public comments had called for higher quality materials to be used on the building. There was general public and Board support expressed for a smaller garage opening onto the street, but concerns as well for providing adequate safety for pedestrians traversing the sidewalk near the vehicle opening. The presentation showed a

driveway dimensioned as 12-feet 6-inches in width, for which a departure would be required.

- Concern was expressed for the privacy of those living uphill of the proposed retaining wall. The Board noted that the privacy issue earlier raised by neighbors above and behind the site should be addressed by providing a study of proposed window placement vis-à-vis the neighbors' existing window locations. At the second recommendation meeting the applicants responded that since the west facades of the three residences whose privacy could possibly be affected were approximately 60 feet from the east façade of the proposed structure, manipulating window placements would not appreciably alleviate the concerns expressed. (While accepting the applicants' assertions that there would be no appreciable impacts because of the distance between the existing and proposed structure, now set back a greater distance than previously, the Board expressed chagrin that the applicants did not respond directly to what had been a clear directive and request.)
- At the earlier recommendation meeting the Board had requested that impacts from the retaining wall and proposed construction to the trees uphill of the project be assessed. A professional arborist had been employed to categorize and assess neighboring trees that might be adversely affected by the rear retaining wall. A single 15-inch caliper Alder located some 7 and ¼ feet east of the proposed wall was identified within an impact area, but its root zone would not be adversely affected by excavation or construction of the wall.
- The designers had been advised of the need to keep in mind that the proposed rooftop would be visible to neighbors east of the project. In response, the design team eliminated the need for any rooftop mechanical extrusions except for the elevator overrun nestled neatly into the valley of the "butterfly" roof. The butterfly roof had earlier been acknowledged by the Board as an improvement over an earlier expression of a gable rooftop, but as expressed in materials shown at the first recommendation meeting seemed somewhat flimsy, given the overall massing of the building, and needed to be toughened up. The Board agreed that the bolstered cornice of the roof now held its own against the rest of the building.
- The applicant had been requested to return for a Second Recommendation meeting to address concerns of the Board, noted above, but only after any need for possibly setting the structure back from the power lines as dictated by Seattle City Light had been resolved. The power lines and poles along Delridge Way SW had been replaced in the interim and level 5 of the proposed structure had been set back to allow adequate clearance from the lines and meet SCL requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Supportive of proposed materials pallet; supportive of departure to narrow driveway width;
- Questioned viability of commercial at this location;
- Stated appreciation for several good moves in the design since the last iteration;
- Thought the choice of blue color a good one;

- Commercial spaces seemed an afterthought and conveyed a limited experiential impression, especially at the entries;
- Encouraged extensions to the canopies at the commercial and lobby entries;
- Supported the departure for decreasing the width of driveway; supported the requested departure for less than the required width of commercial frontage, and would support a departure for even less commercial width to allow for an increase in the width of the proposed residential lobby.

BOARD'S DELIBERATIONS

The four members of the Southwest Board present commended the applicants on an improved product and improved presentation. The following directives were characterized as “minor clean-up” items intended to rectifying certain anomalous details and to improve the overall project.

Improve the ground floor composition and transitions between the ground floor and residential upper floors. The visible edge of the transfer slab should be thickened. The columns uniformly should be co-planer with the slab to establish a recognizable frame, or uniformly slightly recessed or slightly proud, with the transfer slab appearing as an architrave above the columns. The relationships of columns to slab should be uniform, clearly articulated, and create a clear rhythm along the streetscape, discernible from the pedestrian realm.

Carefully study and make improvements to the manner in which the five residential bays on the west façade meet, align with, and respond to the slab above the commercial first floor. (The perspective views on pages 2, 25, 26 and 27 show the bays overlapping the slab edge; the sections (see pages 14, 17, and 18), plans, perspective on pages (1), and elevation on page 16 suggest the bays co-planer with the slab edge.) The perspective view on page 25 suggests an overlap of 2 or 3 inches, which seems the minimum necessary to convey a sense of aesthetically successful jointure. The Board clearly stated that their design approval rested upon an understanding that the retail and residential levels of the building be more carefully aligned and this included window alignment, columns, and any other vertical elements that connected the two, as well as landscape elements, including tree placement and spacing. The Board cautioned that the building should in no case give the impression of a few floors of residences places randomly atop a floor of retail uses. The uses should be harmonious and work together vertically, even if composed of different materials denoting different uses.

Consider making the top tier of lights of the storefront window walls into continuous louvered openings that match the material and scale discussed for the podium level, or otherwise make adjustments to diminish the impression of an overweening commercial presence, perhaps one out of step with this particular location and setting.

“Hide” the vent covers on the west façade. Integrate them so as to be less visible, for instance by relocating them beneath of balconies. Do not make them a part of the west façade composition.

Move the garage door forward, closer to the sidewalk, with care for pedestrian safety and comfort. Provide, with SDOT co-operation, a differentiation in paving treatment to mark vehicle and pedestrian pathways and to signal safety considerations.

Break down the scale of the podium portion of the building by examining and determining the best pedestrian scale and size of component materials, including the detailing of the concrete work, both walls and columns, beyond form and tie, as well as the alignment and joinery of all materials, with a goal of creating a comfortable pedestrian scale.

Carefully articulate the residential lobby. Possibly make it be slightly wider. Compositionally align the street trees as much as possible with the composition of the building’s columnar expression and columniation. Use these compositional variables to highlight the residential entry. Include distinctive paving at the residential entry to distinguish the lobby from retail uses.

Consider integrating benches into the landscaping along Delridge Way SW. Move the exterior bike racks away from the residential entry. Consider locating them in the planting area between street and sidewalk, but not in front of the residential lobby area.

Because of its visibility to residents, give careful thought to the finish of the concrete retaining wall at the rear of the site. Provide it with some kind of architectural detailing, something “beyond form and tie.” Provide a cable system between the buttresses to assist climbing plants, or some kind of screen or trellis. “Flip” the unit at the north east corner of the second level to relieve the harshness of the blank wall at that location. Add a planter to the edge of this wall and provide an architectural trellis system to match. Both the Board and the public had concerns that when plantings would die back in the winter months the wall would return to being blank.

Provide a defined private deck area out of the larger “common roof deck” area for the exclusive use of the “studio” unit on level 5. This will assure a modicum of privacy for the unit. At the same time, do not allow access from the private deck area to the residential public space, so that the private deck area cannot lay claim to the area intended for more public use.

DEPARTURES

Four departures from Code development standards were requested by the project applicants. The Department has determined that only three of the departures are applicable to the proposal. The Departure from standards for vegetative walls in Director’s Rule 10-2011 does not apply to this proposal.

SMC 23.47A.014 (15-foot corner set back required where the NC1 commercial zone meets the residential zone, at the southwest corner of the proposed structure). The driveway wall and entry would be built into the setback at the ground level only. *The Board conditioned the*

granting of this departure with the stricture that no portions of the upper floors would intrude into the set back and on the condition that the architect align the podium and residential facades, adjust and align the column spacing, adjust the streetscape planting to appropriately align with building elements and create a more distinctive pedestrian paving pattern and materials to distinguish it from the retail entry points.

SMC 23.47A.008.D.3 (80% of street frontage—less 20 feet for a driveway opening—is required to be in non-residential use). While the average depth and height of the commercial space is greater than that required by Code, the proposed width of non-residential space is 2.2 feet less than the requirement. *The Board indicated a willingness to grant even a slight increase in the requested departure if doing so would provide for a slightly more commodious and attractive residential lobby. The Board also conditioned the granting of the departure with the stricture that the architect align the podium and residential facades, adjust and align the column spacing, adjust the streetscape planting to appropriately align with building elements and create a more distinctive pedestrian paving pattern and materials to distinguish it from the retail entry points.*

SMC 23.54.030.D.2 (22-foot wide with 10-foot sight triangles required) —a 12.5 foot driveway, with conforming sight-triangles is proposed. *The Board approved the departure request on the conditions that the garage door be moved forward, closer to the sidewalk, with care for pedestrian safety and comfort and providing, with SDOT co-operation, a differentiation in paving treatment to mark vehicle and pedestrian areas and to signal safety considerations.*

See page 34 of the presentation packet for a fuller presentation of the departures and rationales for the requests.