

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS
OF
SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

May 26, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008739

Address: 5022 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South

Applicant: Sam Cameron, Rolluda Architects, for Linh Tran

Board members present: Brett Conway
Robert Mohn
Steve Sindiong
John Woodworth

Board members absent: Michele Wang

DCLU Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips, AICP

Project Description:

The project consists of the demolition of the existing retail building and construction of a new mixed use structure. The proposal includes four potential retail spaces at ground level with three residential units above for a total of two stories. The proposed retail spaces will total approximately 6,000 square feet and the residential units will total 4,110 square feet. Parking for approximately 14 vehicles spaces is proposed both inside and outside of the structure.

The building plan forms an "L" shape set at an angle from Martin Luther King Jr. Way South. At grade facing MLK Jr. Way, the proposed structure would contain potentially four commercial spaces looking into an area of three parking spaces. Directly above the commercial spaces, three residential units with two to three bedrooms each would have a series of surrounding balconies and decks overlooking MLK Jr. Way and the adjacent properties to the north and east.

The architect proposes vehicular access along the south property line with the driveway descending toward the east. Beneath the commercial spaces, the structure would house

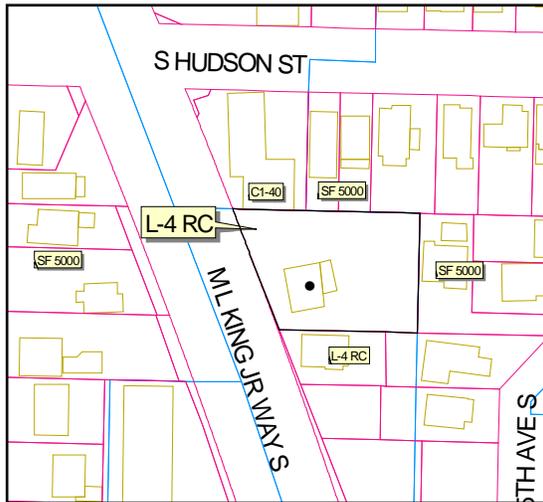
storage and five to seven space parking spaces. Along the east property line, the proposal illustrates open space, additional parking spaces and a semi-enclosed area for trash and recycling.

At the Recommendation meeting, the architect proposed brick (with brick banding) at the commercial level and at the west end of the residential floor, a metal clad elevator tower and horizontal siding to denote the residential portion. The design presented at the initial Recommendation did not entirely match the drawings provided in the packet for the Board. The proposed commercial area was expanded to the north with a residential deck above it. This triggered a departure request to decrease the required side setback. Other changes included alterations to the color and materials.

The irregular site comprises approximately 16,807 square feet with 119.5 linear feet along MLK Jr. Way S. From the arterial, the north and south property lines extend to the east and west by 174 and 130 feet respectively. The site's topography remains mostly level at the street, slopes about 6' in the first 50' from the west property line, and then drops dramatically toward the east. The land descends about 20' from the southwest corner of the property to the northeast.

The site lies within a Lowrise Four Residential Commercial Zone (L4 RC). This zoning classification allows residential densities of one unit per 600 square feet of property with a maximum 4,000 sq. ft. size limit on each business establishment.

Vicinity



Approximately one-third of the north property line is adjacent to a C1-40, Commercial One with a 40 foot height limit, zone. The remaining zoning adjacent to the north property line as well as the east property line is SF 5000 (Single Family). The parcel to the south is also zoned L-4 RC. The parcels directly across Martin Luther King Jr Way S are zoned SF 5000. The site falls within the "Columbia City Residential Urban Village" and the South Seattle Reinvestment Area.

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) classifies Martin Luther King Jr Way S as a principal arterial. The site is located in the Light Rail Construction Impact Zone along the future light rail system route. The Alaskan Street Station for the South Transit Light Rail lies approximately three blocks to the north. Sound Transit recently located and installed one curb cut for access to the subject site.

The majority of development in the vicinity consists of single family structures. An automotive repair shop occupies the parcel north of the site and retail uses exist further north of that. There is a motel south and west of the site. Multifamily structures currently occupy properties south along MLK Jr Way S with an additional multifamily project under development on a previously vacant lot. Recent development in the area consists mainly of additions and alterations to existing single family homes.

Before the meeting, DPD discovered that the survey used by the architect was out of date due to the right of way changes from the installation of the light rail system. The location of the sidewalk in relationship to the property line along MLK Jr. Way S. is much closer than depicted in the drawings.

Metro transit (bus route #42) serves the immediate area with a transit stop just north of the site on S Hudson St and MLK Jr. Way S.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES: EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING, May 27, 2008.

At the Early Design Guidance meeting held on May 27, 2008 and after visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance and 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:

- A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics.
- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility.
- A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street.
- A-4 Human Activity.
- A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites.
- A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street.
- A-7 Residential Open Space.
- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access.
- A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts.
- A-10 Corner Lots.
- B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility.
- C-1 Architectural Context.
- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency.
- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials.
- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances.
- D-2 Blank Walls.
- D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks.
- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas.
- D-7 Personal Safety and Security.

- D-9 Commercial Signage.
- D-10 Commercial Lighting.
- D-11 Commercial Transparency.
- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions.
- E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites.
- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site.
- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY: MAY 26, 2009 MEETING

On May 26, 2009, the Southeast Design Review Board convened for an Initial Recommendation meeting. Site, landscaping, and floor plans, and elevations were presented for the Board members' consideration. The applicant requested five departures from the city's Land Use Code.

Public Comment: Four individuals signed-in at the Recommendation meeting. Comments focused on the following concerns: the lack of privacy due to the northeast deck's proximity to the neighbors; the close proximity of parking next to neighboring single family residences; the location of the trash collection area next to the neighbors' house when it could be fully contained inside the garage; and the need for more substantial fencing or wall between the neighbors and the proposed project.

One neighbor provided the Design Review Board with a list of questions and comments. She asked for the following revisions to the proposal: constraints on the amount of spillover lighting into the adjacent single family residences; greater amounts of green space; increased amounts of safety features to ensure security around the perimeter of the project site; and a maintenance management plan to ensure removal of litter, weeds, broken glass and graffiti. The individual also asked for a plan for garbage movement and pickup on garbage day. Large commercial garbage canisters on sidewalks impede pedestrian movement and create blight and dirty streets. Lots of children live in the area. Overall safety and cleanliness are important to the community.

Board Recommendations: After considering the proposed design and the project context, hearing public comment and reconsidering the previously stated design priorities, the Design Review Board members came to the following preliminary recommendations on how the applicant met the identified design objectives.

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-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

The Board recommended that project comply with the city of Seattle's Land Use Code's requirements for quantity of screening and landscaping at the front of the building. Board members agreed that a wall or fence screening the parking was not needed; however, plants and shrubs should be of a sufficient height to screen the parking.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

The Board recommended adding a small residential entry vestibule at street level to contain the elevator and possibly a second stairs to the upper level.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed 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.

Considerable discussion focused on the proposed extension of the commercial space and the residential deck into the side setback along the northern property line. Due to the adjacency of the single family zone north of the site's property line, the Board will not recommend a setback departure in any of the area that abuts the Single Family 5000 zone. The Board, however, will consider a departure for the western portion of the side setback site adjacent to the C-40 zone as privacy and need for an adequate landscape buffer are not as necessary. The applicant will need to explain how the requested departure better meets the design review guidelines. Obtaining greater commercial square footage for the applicant could occur by other strategies: shifting the building closer to MLK Jr. Way S. and/or reducing the amount of parking.

The location of the most useable open space should occur in the northeast area of the site adjacent to the back yards of the neighboring single family homes. This entails removing the extra parking spaces (numbered 10, 11, 12 and possibly spaces 8 and 9) and reconfiguring the rectilinear island of open space along the east property line in order to consolidate the open space and make it contiguous with the proposed structure. Rather than have children cross the driveway and parking spaces to play in the open space, they would be able to exit the building and enter directly onto the play area. It creates continuity of landscaping among the neighbors and augments the sense of privacy.

The proposed placement of the garbage/recycle collection area near the neighboring residences remains problematic. Locating the collection area in the basement area near the parking is preferable. However, if the applicant prefers the southwest corner location, the

Board recommends a landscaped area immediately surrounding three sides with trees capable of shielding the wall or fence enclosing the dumpsters. See D-6.

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.

An entry vestibule for the elevator and secondary stairs will provide better access for the tenants and help create a nicer transition between residences and the street. A reconfigured parking lot (see guidance D-4) and full landscaping between the parking lot and the Martin Luther King Jr. Way right of way will help meet the guideline.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

Much of the landscaping presented to the Board appeared isolated and disconnected from the apartment tenants. The Board recommended consolidating much of the open space. Landscape areas to the rear of the property should be contiguous to the proposed structure as well as to some of the adjoining residential properties. These could be reconfigured nicely in the northeastern portion of the site. Children and adults will more likely use the outdoor area if it is safe, removed from the driveway and parking spaces, and well designed.

Landscaping as a buffer or screen should occur along the south property line (see guidance A-8) particularly between the bulk of the southern portion of the proposed structure and the neighboring house.

The Board will not approve a departure request reducing the quantity of open space or landscaping.

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.

The Board requested a reduction in the driveway width extending from the curb cut to the rear of the site. The Board members will entertain a departure from driveway width if needed. It appears excessive for the amount of vehicles using it. Landscaping should be added along the south property line in order to create a buffer between the driveway and the adjacent home.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility. 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 zones.

The Board did not think that height, bulk and scale concerns applied to the current design.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials.

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.

In order to promote safety by having “eyes on the street”, the Board recommends replacing the columnar shaped, glass block window on the west façade’s second floor with more conventional (and transparent) residential windows.

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.

The east elevation has a large expanse of blank wall between the garage and the residential floor. This portion of the wall should have windows. The Board understands the need for tenant use of interior commercial wall space; however, the Board members recommended placing the windows close to the ceiling in order to maintain wall area for back office use.

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 portion of the south elevation closest to MLK Jr. Way S. has considerable visibility from the street and sidewalk. The Board recommends extending the brick to cover the second floor so that it wraps around the corner from portion on the west elevation already faced with brick. The brick would terminate at the metal clad elevator shaft.

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.

The Board recommended an expanding the small plaza to the north of the parking area and using plantings rather than a hard surface. See guidance A-2, A-6 and D-4. Reconfiguration of the parking spaces should assist in creating more area for landscaping.

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 lot signs and equipment.

The Board recommends shifting the three parking spaces 90 degrees. Backing by vehicles would occur in the primary driveway creating additional open space and landscaping opportunities. The walkway and plaza (shown with benches and red pavers in the landscape plans) should be expanded with more planting area.

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 from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

See the Board discussion and guidance A-5. By the next Recommendation meeting, the architect will need to present a credible plan based on the advice of a hauling company on how garbage and recycling trucks will maneuver ingress and egress on the site.

D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

See guidelines C-1 and D-10.

D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street from 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.

A lighting concept plan will be required for the next Recommendation meeting. It should promote a sense of security along the sidewalk and path to the entrances. It also needs to address the landscaped areas along the site's edges, yet limit spillover lighting onto the neighbors' properties.

D-11 Commercial Transparency. Commercial store-fronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blanks 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 be 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 recommends a residential entry vestibule facing the parking area. This will enclose the elevator (or possibly a resident tenant staircase) and provide a nicer transition between the apartments and 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.

See guidance A-5, A-7 and A-8. Consolidating open space areas at the rear of the site, adding landscaping along the south property line and surrounding the garbage/recycling enclosure with trees will emphasize continuity with adjacent properties.

E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site. Landscaping including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Limited amounts of landscaping were shown at the rear of the site. More generous amounts of plantings and play area should be added to the reconfigured open space at the rear of the site. Plantings should be added at the small plaza north of the parking spaces, to the south property line and surrounding the garbage/recycling area, and along the portion of the south elevation closest to the driveway.

DEPARTURES

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOM-MENDATION
1. Screening & landscaping. SMC 23.45.015A.1	An area of landscaping equivalent to 3 times the total length of all property lines shall be provided. Total equals 4,812.	Provide a total of 4,374 sq .ft. of landscaping. This amounts to 438 sq. ft. less than required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicant requested that the Board include landscaping in the ROW. ▪ Note: Applicant used wrong survey and most of ROW would not be landscaped. 	Board favors denial based on applicant’s desire to have 10 more parking spaces than Code required and awkward design of parking areas.
2. Screening of parking. SMC 23.45.018D	Parking shall be screened from view from the street by a fence or wall between 5 and 6 feet high, with 3’ of landscaping on the street side of the wall.	To allow screening by landscaping only. No wall or fence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wall or fence would block visibility of commercial frontage from MLK Jr. Way S. 	Applicant needs to refer to specific guideline and how request better meets it.
3. Maximum structure depth. SMC 23.86.016B2	The maximum depth shall be 65% of the distance between the midpoint of the front lot line and the midpoint of the rear lot line. Project total equals 98’ 8”.	To allow an overall depth of 107’ 8”. Exceeds required structure depth by 9’.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Longer building helps define parking courtyard and acts as screening. 	Board preliminarily accepts applicant premise. Applicant needs to refer to specific guideline and how request better meets it.
4. Open space. SMC 23.45.016A	An area equivalent to 25% of the lot area, or 4,213.	To provide a total of 3,960 or 253 sq. ft. less than required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Count 700 sq. ft. of residential deck as open space. 	The Board favors denial of the departure. Reconfiguration of parking, driveways and open space will allow adequate open space.
5. Side setback. SMC 23.45.014C	Average setback is 14’. Minimum setback is 7’.	From 5’3” to 7’3”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To create a larger commercial space and additional deck. 	The Board will allow setback departure in area abutting C-1 40 zone, but will not grant departure for setback adjacent to S.F. 5000 zone.

