



City of Seattle

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

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIES OF THE SOUTHEAST AREA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3008863

Project Address: 3501 Rainier Avenue South

Applicant: Brittani Ard for
Pb Elemental Architecture

Board members present: John Woodworth (Chair)
Michele Wang
John Sindiong
Brett Conway

Board member absent: Robert Mohn

DPD staff present: Mark Taylor, Land Use Planner

Report Date: October 29, 2008

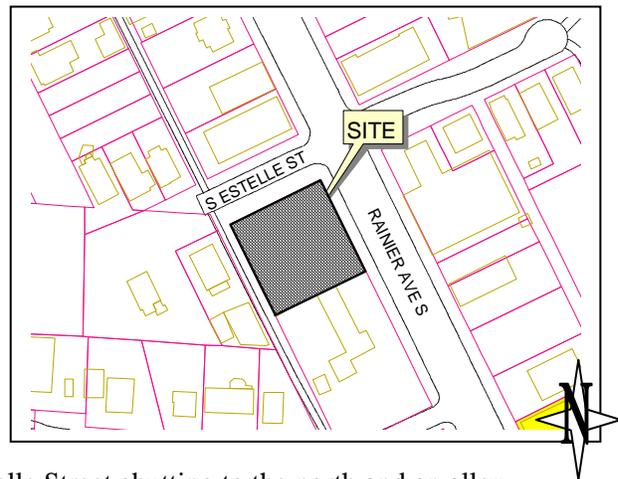
Date & Place of Meeting: September 23, 2008, Rainier Cultural Arts Center

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is for the design and construction of 19 live-work units. No off-street parking spaces are being proposed. The existing structure will be removed as part of the proposal.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is zoned Commercial 1 with a 65-foot height limit (C1-65) and developed with an existing structure. The site is relatively flat and contains approximately 14,400 square feet of lot area. The site is a rectangular shaped lot with Rainier Avenue South abutting to the east, South Estelle Street abutting to the north and an alley abutting to the west.



SURROUNDING AREA DESCRIPTION

The site is located within a commercial corridor along Rainier Avenue South. Much of the existing development along this stretch of commercial corridor is a mix of one and two story commercial and multi-family structures. A six-story mixed-use structure is located a block to the south. Properties to the west of the site across the alley are zoned Single-Family 5000 (SF-5000) and developed with a variety of single-family structures. The properties directly to the east across Rainier Avenue South are zoned C2-65.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: MAY 27, 2008
--

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The architect presented three schemes at the Early Design Guidance meeting. The first scheme (Option 1) was for a 6-story mixed used building with retail on the first floor off Rainier Avenue South, live work units off South Estella Street, residences located above and two levels of underground parking. The structure had a variety of modular elements designed throughout the structure on every floor and façade. The second alternative (Option 2, code compliant) was very similar to the first, as far as use layout but the structure was more box-like with significant less modulation elements within the design. The third scheme (Option 3) was for twenty, three-story live work units with a centralized courtyard and no off-street parking proposed. The preferred scheme was Option 3.

BOARD CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS WITH ANY ANSWERS

- *Question:* Will the public have access to the central courtyard?
Response: Yes.
- *Question:* Will there be vehicular access to the courtyard to allow deliveries?
Response: None is currently proposed but this will be considered in the future design.
- *Question:* Where will the entrance to the residential portion of the live-work unit be located?
Response: The residential entrance will be accessed internally from the live-work portion.
- *Question:* Why was the project scaled back from what was advertised in the public notice?
Response: The cost and time of burying the overhead power lines, having two levels of underground parking and preserving the existing street trees was difficult, and the scale and bulk of the proposal with comparison to the single-family zone to the west was inappropriate.
- *Question:* Will there be modulation elements such as decks incorporated into the design?
Response: There may be decks facing the courtyard. Decks are not proposed and are not well suited along Rainier Avenue South.
- *Comment:* Would have liked to see more massing schemes centered around 20 units for the site.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Approximately 5 members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:
- Wanted construction impacts such as noise and dust mitigated.
- The project may be located within a liquefaction area.
- Do not want to see a row of garbage cans off the alley.
- Will loading and unloading be off Rainier Avenue South.

- What “green” construction elements will be incorporated into the design.
- The newer projects tend to look very “modern”. Consider using materials and design elements which blend better with the surrounding residential neighborhood which is more craftsman style.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING: SEPTEMBER 23, 2008
--

The applicant applied for a Master Use Permit (MUP) on July 29, 2008.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The general massing concept presented at the Recommendation meeting stayed relatively the same as the preferred alternative from the EDG, nineteen, 3-story live-work units around the perimeter of the property with a centralized courtyard. Pedestrian access to the interior courtyard is off South Estelle Street and the abutting alley to the west. The design proposes aluminum panel and an abundance of commercial windows on individual storefronts on the 1st story and a mix of aluminum clad composite panel, cedar rainscreen and vinyl windows on the 2nd and 3rd stories. Street trees are proposed along South Estelle Street. No off-street parking spaces are proposed.

BOARD CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS WITH ANY ANSWERS

- *Question:* Will the public have access to the central courtyard?
Response: Yes.
- *Question:* Are there windows located above the South Estelle Street pedestrian entrance.
Response: No. These are openings along the façade to continue the fenestration.
- *Question:* Is there bicycle parking in the ROW or on the site?
Response: Bicycle parking is proposed on the site. We will consider locating bicycle parking in the ROW.
- *Question:* Are there public entries accessed off the alley for the alley facing units?
Response: Yes.
- *Comment:* Discuss how the 1st floor design interacts with the 2nd and 3rd stories.
Response: The design was to have a distinctive contrast between the 1st story commercial storefront with the 2nd and 3rd story residential components. The amount of commercial glazing on the first floor and the 2nd and 3rd stories overhanging an additional 18 inches gives the sense the 2nd and 3rd stories are floating on a glass base. The idea was to have a continuation of one building instead of many individual units along Rainier Avenue South and South Estelle Street while also maintaining distinctive individual storefronts along the 1st story.
- *Comment:* The public entrance along South Estelle Street into the courtyard needs to be more visible to passing pedestrians.
- *Comment:* The windows on the second and third story should wrap around the corner and continue along the NW façade.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were offered by the attending general public:

- The windows along the alley façade look directly into my house.
- Will people have to walk along the gravel alley to get to the alley façade commercial spaces?
- Approves of the proposed location of the garbage area.
- How is the project designed to promote personal safety?
- Can I see all they way through the units into the courtyards?
- Will the construction noise be limited?

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, 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. Site Planning

- A-2 **Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**
- 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 on the street.**
- A-8 **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-10 **Corner Lots. Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

EDG Comments May 27, 2008

The street facing façade should engage and activate Rainier Avenue South and South Estelle Street by having visible entrances facing the streets. The Board believes the bulk of the proposed three-story structures off the alley are more compatible with the single-family structures located across the alley, in comparison to the height allowed in a C-65 zone. The Board wants appropriate design treatment on the corner of the structure to acknowledge the intersection of South Estelle Street and Rainier Avenue South.

Final Recommendation Meeting Comments, September 23, 2008

The design of the building as a singular structure instead of many individual units is visually functional along Rainier Avenue South. The use of soffit lighting to readily identify individual commercial entrances is appropriate. The abundant glazing and appropriate scale of the structures is an environment designed for the pedestrian scale. The Board wants more visibility for the South Estelle Street pedestrian entrance. This can be achieved by signage, lighting or use of different materials along the sidewalk. The scale of the project allows for more privacy for the abutting single-family zone across the alley. The Board deems the design of the corner of the building satisfactory.

B. Height, Bulk, and Scale

- 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 nearby, 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 on the adjacent zones.**

EDG Comments May 27, 2008

The Board believes the mass of the proposed three-story structures off the alley is more compatible with the single-family structures located across the alley, in comparison to the height allowed in a C-65 zone.

Final Recommendation Meeting Comments, September 23, 2008

Comparative to the bulk allowed by the zone, the 3-story proposal is compatible with the scale of the surrounding area and offers a smooth bulk & height transition to the single-family zone across the alley.

C. Architectural Elements

- 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-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.**

EDG Comments May 27, 2008

The Board wants to review a material and color board and a conceptual signage and lighting plan to see how these different elements will make the overall design unified. The Board also wants the architect to develop street level vignettes from a variety of viewpoints to illustrate how passing pedestrians and residents will interpret and interact with the commercial storefronts, entryways into the courtyard and the courtyard itself. The Board wants additional design elements such as structure modulation and/or decks included along the street and internal facades.

Final Recommendation Meeting Comments, September 23, 2008

The Board is satisfied with the overall design concept. The idea was to have a continuation of one building instead of many individual units along Rainier Avenue South and South Estelle Street while also maintaining distinctive individual storefronts along the 1st story by use of lighting and signage aids in creating the individual storefronts. The Board applauds the amount of commercial glazing proposed along the 1st story, which encourages pedestrian activity.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 **Pedestrian Open Space 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.
- D-2 **Blank Walls**, Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable, they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.
- D-6 **Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service Areas**, Building sites should located service elements such as 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 screen from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.
- D-7 **Personal Safety and Security**, Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.
- 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.
- 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.

EDG Comments May 27, 2008

The Board wants to review a conceptual material and color board and a signage and lighting plan to see how these different elements will make the overall design unified. The lighting plan should ensure the site is appropriately illuminated to increase personal safety while not overwhelming the senses. The sign plan should show smaller appropriately scaled signs, which tie the businesses together, but provides the opportunity for each business to display individuality. The Board also wants to see street level vignettes from a variety of viewpoints to illustrate how passing pedestrians and residents will interpret and interact with the commercial storefronts, entryways into the courtyard and the courtyard itself. The Board is weary of granting a departure to the transparency requirement, but will entertain the request if the proposed design can capture the intent of having viable commercial spaces off Rainier Avenue South and South Estelle Street by incorporating quality materials, appropriate levels of glazing and avoiding blank walls.

Final Recommendation Meeting Comments, September 23, 2008

The Board wants the South Estelle Street pedestrian entrance to the courtyard to be more visible from the sidewalk. This can be achieved by signage, lighting or use of different materials along the sidewalk. The Board is satisfied with the amount of commercial glazing along the 1st floor. The tasteful use of lighting and signage will form individual storefronts along the 1st story. The amount of glazing on the first floor, upper story window facing the courtyard and well placed lighting will enhance personal security in the courtyard and along the sidewalks. The location of

the dumpster area on the southwest corner of the site is functional and visibly screened from the abutting residential properties to the west.

E. Landscaping

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.

EDG Comments May 27, 2008

The Board will want to review a landscaping plan. The courtyard should use a variety of surface and functional features to enhance the user experience.

Final Recommendation Meeting Comments, September 23, 2008

The Board was satisfied with the green roof on each unit, the bamboo planting in the courtyard, green wall over the trash disposal area and the retention of the existing street trees along Rainier Avenue South.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Departure Summary Table

STANDARD	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
SMC 23.47A.008.B.3.b Requires a 13-foot floor to floor height along Rainier Avenue South & South Estelle Street	Reduce requirement to 12 feet.	Stairs could be designed without a landing, allowing for more useable square footage on 1 st floor.	Recommend approval.

SMC 23.47A.008.B.3.b Floor to floor height – The applicant prefers 12 foot high ceilings, which would allow the stairs to be designed without a landing. The Board recommends unanimous approval of the proposed departure.

Applicable Design Guidelines – A-7, B-1 & C-3.

Final Approved Design:

1. The four Board Members want the South Estelle Street pedestrian entrance to the courtyard to be more visible from the sidewalk. This can be achieved by signage, lighting or use of different materials along the sidewalk.