



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D.M. Sugimura, Director

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Meeting Date: August 20, 2008

Report Date: August 27, 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3009330

Address: 708 6th Avenue North

Applicant: Boyd Pickrell of Nicholson Kovalchick Architects for Steelhead Real Estate Investments

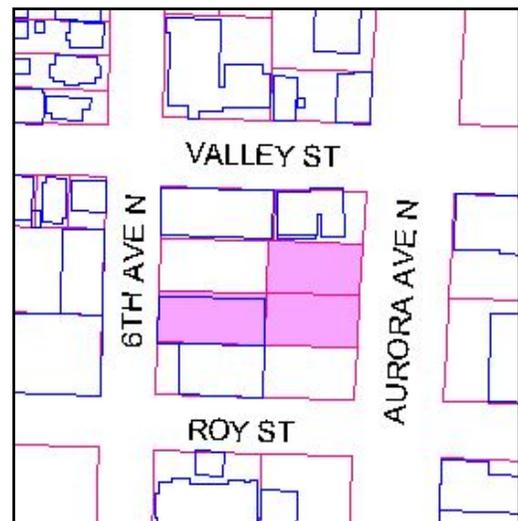
Board members present: Matt Roewe (Chair)
Mark Garrell
David Nemens

Board members absent: John Rose Jr.
Bill Vandeventer

Land Use Planner present: Marti Stave

SITE AND VICINITY

The proposed project is located on 6th Avenue North between Roy Street and Valley Street on the eastern edge of the Uptown Urban Center on lower Queen Anne. Aurora Avenue North abuts the site to the east and Mercer Street is two blocks to the south. The site slopes gently to east approximately two feet. The development consists of three parcels: the eastern two parcels fronting on Aurora Avenue North are zoned Commercial 1 with a 65 foot height limit (C1-65) and the western parcel fronting on 6th Avenue North is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 40 foot height limit. The block to the north changes to Lowrise 3.



The immediate area is dominated by light manufacturing uses, warehouses, office buildings, auto repair and motels. Abutting the site to the north is the offices of the Girl Scouts of America; to the south is a repair shop for the Auto Club. Across 6th Avenue North is an office building and an old warehouse housing the Ruins restaurant club. Seattle Center lies a few block to the west and the new Gates Foundation will be located just to the south across Mercer Street. The newest development in the area is the recently completed QFC/mixed use project at 5th Avenue North between Mercer and Roy Streets. To the east, Aurora Avenue North with its high speed traffic and center concrete barrier effectively isolates the neighborhood from Lake Union and South Lake Union.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes a mixed-use project consisting of 19 live-work and/or retail uses at street level and 99 residential units above. The western portion of the building (NC3-40 zone) is proposed to be four stories and the eastern portion (C1-65) is proposed to be six stories. Though the site is a through lot access to parking is not appropriate from Aurora Ave. North. Therefore, access to parking, trash collection and services will be from 6th Ave. North. Parking for approximately 85 vehicles is proposed on one below-grade level. Pedestrian entrances are proposed on 6th Ave. North and possibly on Aurora Ave. North.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include a four-level structure fronting on 6th Ave. N and a 6-level structure fronting on Aurora Avenue North. Parking access for all options is from 6th Ave. N. All options include a small commercial space on 6th Ave. N, Live/Work units on the ground or lowest level and residential units above.

Option 1 proposes two distinct structures over a single level of above grade parking. The structures would be separated on a podium-level by an open space plaza. The proposed massing at Aurora would be set back with open space separating the structure from the street.

Option 2 is similar to the first but with the parking located below grade. Circulation is outside for the smaller, four-story structure and within the building in the other. The large open space separating the structures is at grade overlooking the Girl Scout building parking lot.

Option 3 (the preferred option) features a single structure with the west portion four stories and the east portion six stories. The lower, four-story portion of the structure fronting on 6th Ave. N would extend several feet onto the C1-65 zone. This option proposes an additional one-half level of parking which would front onto Aurora Ave. N requiring a departure. Access to parking, trash collection and services would be from the 6th Ave. N frontage. Residential amenity space would be provide in a combination of street-level landscaped area, private decks, and a rooftop deck.

Materials and color palette have yet to be chosen. Green factor requirement would be met by extensive landscaping at street level and on rooftop deck.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

- Concerned that the new structure will block the light to building located adjacent to the north.
- When planning materials, consider that there is a lot of brick in the neighborhood.
- Concerns that the parking lot to the north might be used by building residents.
- Would like to see some softening treatment of the blank façade on the north.

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*" of highest priority to this project.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from 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.

- The Board acknowledged that the site is difficult with two distinctly different frontages. Because Aurora Ave. N., with its high speed traffic, is not very inviting for pedestrians, the proposed parking podium at street level and raised plaza in front of the proposed live/work units appeared to be a reasonable design option. The board observed that this actually makes this façade more defensible. The Board would like to see entrances either to the live/work units or the proposed lobby at this end of the structure from Aurora Avenue North, however.
- The Board agreed that the preferred Option 3 made the most sense in terms of circulation between the two sections of the structure, however they liked the idea of two separate buildings which would allow light through to the site to the north.

- The Board expressed concern about the proposed open space areas and questioned whether they would be functional. The fact that the areas may meet the development standards does not necessarily make them an attractive, functional amenity. The Board is looking forward to a more detailed design that will show how private balconies and rooftop decks as well as ground-level areas are incorporated into an overall residential open space amenity plan.

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.

- While the Board supported the preferred Option 3 that proposes a single building connecting the four-story and six-story portions they agreed that it is not without problems. The Board agreed that the visual interest of two separate buildings is lost with Option 3 and is also sensitive to the neighbor's concerns about blocking sunlight to their site. The Board encouraged the applicant to explore ways to lighten the mass in ways that would have less impact on the site to the north. If the applicant can find a way to make the two-building option work, the Board would be pleased.

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-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.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances

The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

- The Board agreed that this neighborhood located at the edge of the Uptown Urban Center has lacked significant redevelopment and there are, therefore, few design cues with the exception of the new QFC/mixed use project a block to the west. In general, the Board liked the proposed architectural concepts shown observing that it appeared to relate more to a 50's and 60's apartment building but with a modern industrial effect.

- The use of brick in the materials selection is not endorsed by the Board. They are comfortable with the use of metal siding and wood for a softening effect.
- The Board would like to see details of the proposed parking garage entrance doors.

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.

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-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of the a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened form the street and adjacent properties.

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 e a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

- The Board instructed the applicants to bring cross-sections that illustrate the balcony units and the live/work units on Aurora Avenue North and how they relate to the adjacent properties.
- The Board concluded that the blank wall on the parking lot near 6th Ave. N. is quite small compared to the rest of the building but directed the applicant to provide detailed elevations at the next meeting to judge its true impact. They did observe that the applicant did have the right to build to the property line in this zone and the step back of the rest of the structure was a nice gesture to the adjacent property. They also encouraged the applicant and the property owner to the north to mutually explore ways to provide landscaping or other softening strategy for this wall section.
- The Board instructed the applicant to address how the garage will be ventilated and to avoid ventilation that impacts the pedestrian realm on Aurora Ave North and adjacent neighbors.
- The Board looks forward to proposals for commercial signage and exterior lighting plans.
- With respect to the proposed commercial space at the 6th Ave N façade, the Board would like to see this space designed for eventual use as a commercial space rather than meet the code requirement for residential uses on the street-level, street-facing façade. Therefore, the Board is very receptive to the requested departure from the code standard for residential uses on a commercial street front.

E **Landscaping**

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 agreed that the Aurora Ave. N. environment is not very pedestrian friendly but would like to see landscaping along the building edge to soften the blank wall of the garage level.
- The board is looking forward to a detailed landscape design that addresses the Green Factor and special treatment for sidewalks, street trees and fencing.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Departure Summary Table

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECOMMENDATION
<p>Parking location and access (SMC23.47A.032B) 3. C1 and C2 zones structures with residential uses in C zones...must meet the requirements for parking location for NC zones as provided in subsection B.</p>	<p>On the Aurora façade, the upper parking level is only partially buried below grade. Due to the sloping grade, the vertical exposure varies from 3' to 6' above grade. This parking level occupies the entire street frontage of the building.</p>	<p>The proposed solution is a compromise between the desire to buffer building occupants from Aurora and the desire to acknowledge the sidewalk in some way. We have provided a bit of relief to the first occupied level by raising the lid of the parking level a few feet off of grade, yet we have not raised it so much that there will be a large blank wall at the sidewalk level. This response relates to the following DR guidelines: A-1 Responding to site characteristics; A-2 Streetscape compatibility</p>	<p>The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>
<p>Street level development standards (SMC23.47A.008B) . Transparency. a. Sixty (60) percent of the street-facing facade between two (2) feet and eight (8) feet above the sidewalk shall be transparent.</p>	<p>Because the upper parking level is only partially buried below grade (see above), the building will not meet the transparency requirement on the Aurora façade.</p>	<p>This departure results from the decision to only partially bury the garage. See the departure above for justification and DR guidelines.</p>	<p>The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>
<p>Street level development standards (SMC23.47A.008D) . When a residential use is located on a street-level street-facing façade... Either the first floor of the structure at or above grade shall be at least four feet above sidewalk grade or the street-level façade shall be set back at least ten feet from the sidewalk.</p>	<p>A residential lobby or spaces accessory to the residential use, will be located on a street-level street-facing façade. We propose that these spaces not be subject to the required grade or setback rules.</p>	<p>Lobbies, leasing offices and other residential accessory units do not suffer from being adjacent to the sidewalk. Such uses can be very lively and engaging at the sidewalk and are, therefore, supportive of the following DR guidelines: A-2 Streetscape compatibility; A-3 Entrances visible from the street; A-4 Human activity.</p>	<p>The Board directed the applicant to design this space at 6th Ave N to accommodate a future commercial use. The Board will continue to entertain this departure based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>
<p>Street-level uses 23.47A.005.B ...utility uses may not abut a street-level street-facing facade in a structure that contains more than one residential dwelling unit.</p>	<p>The solid waste storage room will be located at the street-level, street-facing façade on 6th Ave. This room will occupy 12' max linear feet of street frontage.</p>	<p>6th Ave is the only street with vehicular access. Therefore, we have no alternative but to locate the trash room on 6th. We have minimized the impact on 6th by: setting it back from the street 10'; obscuring the room from the street with a gate or door in keeping with DR guideline D-6 Screening of dumpsters, utilities and service areas.</p>	<p>The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>

<p>Street-level uses 23.47A.005.B Parking...uses may not abut a street-level street-facing facade in a structure that contains more than one residential dwelling unit.</p>	<p>On the Aurora façade, the upper parking level is only partially buried below grade. Due to the sloping grade, the vertical exposure varies from 3' to 6' above grade. This parking level occupies the entire street frontage of the building.</p>	<p>See departure above for parking Location and Access</p>	<p>The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>
<p>Vertical clearance at solid waste storage 23.47A.029.D.2.c When accessed directly by a collection vehicle into a structure, a 21' overhead clearance shall be provided.</p>	<p>Request a 7' 6'' clearance min.</p>	<p>May or may not need this departure. C-5 Structured parking entrances; D-5 Visual impact of parking structures; D-6 Screening of dumpsters, utilities and service areas</p>	<p>The Board will continue to entertain these departures based on how well the design responds to the Design Guidelines noted.</p>

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 and signed SEPA checklist, owner authorization form, financial responsibility form, site plan (8.5"X 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 a departure matrix as shown above in the plan sets. Requested departures shall be expressed as exact numbers comparable to the particular development standard. (Example: Setback requirement is 10 feet; request is a 7' 6'' foot setback or a 2' 6'' foot departure from the standard). Please cite exact code sections.
- Provide the topographic survey in the recommendation packet.
- Provide detailed large scale street level vignettes for the street level along 6th Ave. N., Aurora Ave. N. and the view from the adjacent parking lot.
- Provide a full color rendering of the building looking southeast from across 6th Ave. N. and northwest from the middle of Aurora Ave. N.
- **Provide a full color materials board with tangible examples at the recommendation meeting. Also, provide some pictures of the material applications in built projects.**
- Provide full color shadowed elevations in the MUP plans (N-S-E-W) with material callouts.

- A conceptual plan for signage type and location as well as lighting design should be presented at the next meeting.
- Provide a large scale full color landscape plan in the MUP plans.
- Provide larger scale site plans at the recommendation meeting.
- Please call the Planner (Marti Stave at 206 684-0239) when you have made your MUP intake appointment.
- Note that per CAM 238, updated March 13, 2008, it is now the applicant's responsibility to submit a PDF file of the 11 X 17 design proposal packet to DPD at least 5 days prior to the public meeting. Instructions can be found in the CAM or on the Design Review website at www.seattle.gov/designreview.

Stavem/DOCS/Design Review/3009330 6th Ave N/3009330 EDG.doc