



City of Seattle

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

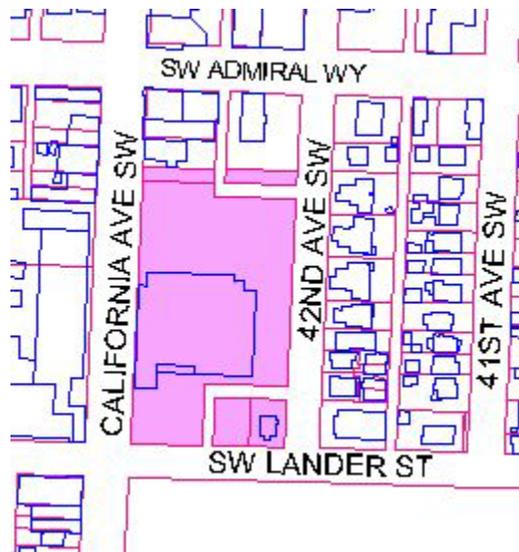
**RECOMMENDATION
OF
THE WEST SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (AREA 5)**
Meeting Date: December 17, 2009
Notes Completed: January 12, 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Numbers: 3009367 & 3010684
Address: 2622 California Av SW
Applicant: Bill Fuller, Fuller Sears Architects, for Safeway Stores, Inc.
Board members present: Christie Coxley, Chair
Myer Harrell
Joseph Hurley
Brandon Nicholson
Norma Tompkins
Board member absent: Robin Murphy
Land Use Planner present: Michael Dorcy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The site is located at 2622 California Avenue SW, extending between California Ave SW and 42nd Ave SW, and from SW Lander Street north to a point approximately 150 feet south of SW Admiral Way. The irregularly shaped site abuts two “L”-shaped alleys, one connecting between SW Admiral Way and 42nd AV SW on the north and a second connecting SW Lander Street to 42nd Ave SW at the southeast corner of the site. The site is currently occupied by the existing single-story Admiral Safeway store, surface parking and a single family residence located at the southeast corner of the site. Lafayette Elementary school lies directly across California Ave to the west. Hiawatha playfield lies directly south of the site across SW Lander St. The northern end of the block consists of several smaller commercial buildings that face onto California Ave SW and onto SW Admiral Way. Across from the site, the east side of 42nd Ave SW is



lined with multi-family residential structures.

The development site slopes up gradually from north to south. The property is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a forty foot height limit (NC2-40') as are the properties on the west side of California Ave SW. South of SW Lander Street the property is zoned Single-family (SF5000) and across 42nd Ave SW properties are zoned Lowrise (L-3). The site is located within the Admiral Residential Urban Village. The site lies within one block of four City of Seattle Landmark structures, the Admiral Theater and West Seattle Branch of the City of Seattle Public Library to the north, and the Hiawatha Community Center and West Seattle High School to the south.

Project Proposal

The updated proposal is for a Safeway grocery store occupying 59,581 square feet on the ground floor of a building that will also provide roof-top parking for 141 vehicles, 41 apartment units, and 20,100 square feet of flex-work units. A separate single-story building totaling 6,860 square feet and containing retail shops will be constructed at the northwest corner of the site facing onto California Avenue SW. Surface parking for 66 vehicles will be located to the east of the smaller building. A driveway/ pedestrian pathway, extending from California Avenue SW to 42nd Avenue SW, will separate the grocery store building from the smaller shops building and surface parking that will occupy the northernmost thirty percent of the site. The development proposal will require City Council actions to vacate the dog-legged alley at the southeast corner of the site and to approve a contract rezone that will designate the entire site as NC3-40. The latter approval will allow the grocery store to expand beyond a maximum size of 50,000 square feet.

Previous Activity

Notice of an upcoming Early Design Guidance meeting was given on September 4, 2008 and the Board meeting held on September 25, 2008. Notice of a second Early Design Guidance meeting was given on November 6, 2008 and the meeting before the Board held on November 20, 2008. In the interim the applicant presented the project to the Design Commission and received recommendation of preliminary approval of the proposed alley vacation on site. Application for a Master Use Permit was made on September 22, 2009. Notice of a Design Review Board Recommendation meeting was given on October 1, 2009 with a meeting held on October 22, 2009.

At the October 22, 2009 meeting of the Board, the so-called "shops" building, with further development by the design team of the considerations noted by the Board, was recommended for approval. At that time it was the Board's expectation that the grocery store building, with its apartment and flex-work components, together with the rest of the site and adjoining right-of way, would undergo further design development in response to the design issues raised by the Board. Those portions of the project would then be returned to the Board for its further review and recommendation.

Recommendation Meeting, December 17, 2009

ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION

Five members of the Board attended the meeting which commenced after 8:00 PM and was held at the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center in West Seattle. Bill Fuller of Fuller Sear Architects began the presentation by providing a brief introduction to the Board and public, recounting reviews by SDOT and the Design Commission as well as recalling that recommendation of approval of the smaller, separate commercial building, with a separate MUP (3010684), had been at the previous meeting in order to allow its development to proceed prior to the grant of approvals (alley vacation, rezone) needed for development of the entire site. By separating the approval of the small "shops" building from the larger development, Safeway, it was noted, would be able to provide a continuity of pharmacy services to prescription customers during the time that the grocery store structure was being demolished and under construction. (The separate approval of the so-called "shops" building would also require a Lot Boundary Adjustment (MUP 3010683) to segregate the structure and parking area, and DPD has accepted an application seeking that approval.)

The bulk of the presentation dealt with the California Avenue SW façade of the grocery store and the Board's general concern for promotion of human activity along that street and the interface of sidewalk and the store front. The Board had felt that the location of some proposed grocery store functions prevented the full enlivening of the California Avenue SW they desired. The interior of the grocery store building, the Board had indicated, needed still greater connectivity with the California Avenue SW sidewalk and the pedestrian experience along that sidewalk.

In making those general observations at the last meeting, the Board had indicated that actual penetration of the façade "*at some mid-point*" would be required to provide for the pedestrian movement from the outside into the interior of the building to meet their expectations for interior/exterior connectivity.

In making their presentation to the Board the design team pointed to a number of enhancements that had been made in response to the public's concerns and the Board's guidance expressed at the previous meeting: further greening of the rooftop parking area and screening to soften residents' views; an enlarged and more inviting plaza at the southwest corner of the building; extended depth to the flex/work units on the ground floor facing 42nd Avenue SW; and, especially, the addition of new entry into a raised coffee shop space along California Avenue SW. The raised platform provided considerably more interaction between the inside and the sidewalk, it was explained as well as actual penetration into the structure. Several drawings were used to show and explore this interplay of inside and outside spaces.

The development team showed examples of materials proposed for the development and noted that, in order to achieve the overall programmatic objectives, the development team would continue to seek both an alley vacation and a rezone from NC2-40 to NC3-40. In addition, the development team identified the following departures from seven development standards that would be sought for the proposal. Two departures previously requested had been omitted and two new departures had been added to the list:

- a departure for not meeting the minimum depth for commercial spaces (30 feet) for the street-level flex work units proposed along 42nd Avenue SW (23.47A.008);
- a departure from prohibition to take vehicular access from the street(s) when there is alley access to the site-- from the alley on the north, an alley which would not be included in the vacation petition (23.47A.032);
- departure to allow parking between a structure and the street (23.47A. 032);
- departure to allow less than 60 percent façade transparency (23.47A.008);
- departure to allow for dwelling unit entries to be less than ten feet from the sidewalk (23.47A.008 D3).
- departure from the requirement to provide a five-foot walkway through a parking lot when parking lot is oriented to a pedestrian entry (23.47A.032 H1);
- to allow less than 60% transparency along street-facing facades (23.47A.008).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Several members of the public spoke to the proposal. One indicated unqualified support for the project, noting that the details of the proposal and design were in keeping with the Admiral neighborhood plan and neighborhood-specific guidelines. Others expressed a qualified approval of the design as presented, noting that it had come a long way from its original conception. . Others suggested that the California Avenue façade of the grocery store still needed a greater sense of interplay with the interior of the building. A couple of the comments questioned the adequacy of the proposed rooftop greening effectively to screen the rooftop parking from residents who would occupy units above the parking. One individual called for street improvements proposed along 42nd Avenue SW to be continued all the way to SW Admiral Way, an opinion voiced at earlier meetings. Other comments recalled comments from earlier Board meetings, questioning, for instance, the proposed location of the residential portion of the program and insisting that it should have been worked into the south façade across the street from the park, and chiding the decision not to underground all the parking.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

A significant amount of the Board's deliberation time was given to a discussion whether the proposed new entry into the elevated coffee shop space along California Avenue met the Board's directive to enhance the interior/exterior connectivity along the street and adequately enhanced the pedestrian experience as the Board had required. At the previous meeting the Board had indicated that actual penetration of the façade "*at some mid-point*" would be required to provide for the pedestrian movement from the outside into the interior of the building to meet their expectations for interior/exterior connectivity. There was discussion whether this single entry point at this place, now that the applicant had provided it, adequately responded to the Board's concerns about interior connectivity from the sidewalk.

More broadly related to the interior/exterior sidewalk experience was the discussion regarding the appropriateness of what the transparency of the curtain wall revealed to the pedestrian passer-by on California Avenue SW. The Board members generally were in agreement that the view down onto functional hallway and ceiling tops of restrooms and management offices could

benefit from some rethinking and rearranging. Finally, there was discussion and deliberation regarding whether it would be more appropriate to recommend approval of the project with a thick layer of conditioning or to ask the applicant to return with some more finely tuned elements to present at another recommendation meeting to be held before the Board.

At evening's end it was DPD's expectation that the project would undergo further design development which would be focused on the California Avenue SW façade of the grocery store building, in response to the design issues raised by the Board. The design of the project will then be returned to the Board for its further review and final recommendation.