



City of Seattle

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

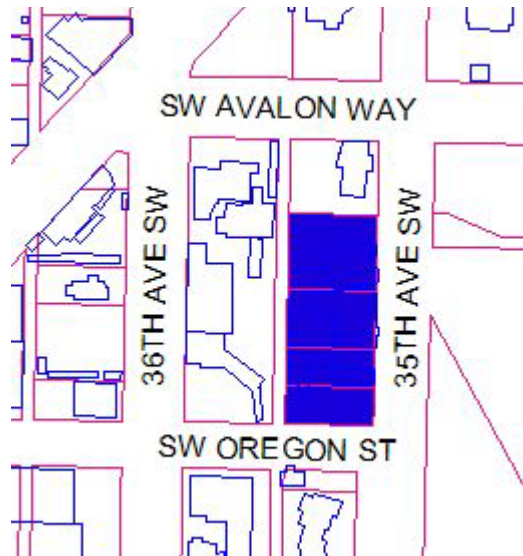
**DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES
OF
THE WEST SEATTLE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (AREA 5)
November 19, 2009
Notes available: November 25, 2009**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3009518
Address: 4435 35th Avenue SW
Applicant: Neal Thompson, Roger Newell, Roger Newell Architect
Board members present: Christie Coxley (Chair)
Joseph Hurley
Brandon Nicholson
Robin Murphy
Norma Tompkins
Myer Harrell
Land Use Planner present: Michael Dorcy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The .72 acre development site is located at 4435 35th Avenue SW. It extends north approximately 275 feet from an unimproved SW Oregon Street. The rectangular shaped site abuts a partially-improved alley to the west. A fast food restaurant, KFC, faces onto both 35th Avenue SW and SW Avalon Way and occupies the northwest portion of the property that lies directly to the north. Multiple structures of Alki Lumber occupy the western half of the block that rises steeply from the alley. The West Seattle Stadium lies directly across 35th Avenue SW to the east. Two apartment buildings, one with 22 residential units and the other with 23 residential units, comprise the block due south of the development proposal. The West Seattle Golf Course is located south and east from the site across 35th Avenue SW.



The development site slopes up dramatically to the west and the south of the site, a condition that has prevented the platted alley, open to SW Avalon Way, from extending as a passable roadway to SW Oregon Street and which has not allowed SW Oregon Street to connect 35th Avenue SW with 36th Avenue SW. The property is zoned Commercial 1 with a sixty-five foot height limit (C1-65') as are the properties to the west and south. Northwest of the site there is a small area of properties zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 65-foot height limit (NC3-65'). The stadium area and the golf course to the east and southeast across 35th Avenue SW are zoned Single-family (SF5000). The site is located within the West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village. The site lies within one block of the West Seattle YMCA.

ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION

Roger Newell made the presentation at the meeting on behalf of the developer of the site. The applicant proposes for this site of approximately 150,000 square feet a mixed use structure with ground floor retail commercial space of approximately 12,250 square feet, parking for approximately 158 vehicles, and five stories of residential development totaling anywhere from 100 to 150 units. Access to the parking would be both from the alley connecting to SW Avalon Way and from a driveway connecting through the unopened SW Oregon Street to 35th Avenue SW.

In making his presentation, the architect referred to the programmatic objectives regarding the site, which included providing increased housing opportunities within the hub urban village, adding opportunities for commercial tenant space and to the pedestrian environment by increasing the retail activity along 35th Avenue SW. A special opportunity provided by development of the site was that of opening a pedestrian connection to the business community to the west which could be integrated with the development of the site through the adjacent, unopened SW Oregon Street.

In order to achieve the programmatic objectives, the development team had explored seven conceptual schemes which were briefly presented to the Board. The first six schemes showed a first story base or plinth that held to the edges of the property lines with the five stories of residential units above the base which exhibited a reduced massing dictated by the Code limits of the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Setbacks, modulation and the selection and organization of units determined the variety of upper massing and articulations. A seventh scheme presented to the Board was defined by a two-story base that defined the 35th Avenue SW lower façade of the structure, with the mass of the building above the second floor then treated as a separate overall compositional element. The development team had not identified to date any departures from development standards that would be sought for the proposal.

The development team also identified for the Board those guidelines from *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings* and from the *West Seattle Junction Urban Village Design Guidelines* that they believed to be of highest priority for the project: A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-7, A-8, A-9, A-10, B-1, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-2, D-5, D-6, D-7, and E-1.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

After briefly asking some clarifying questions of the architect, including a clarification of intended materials to be incorporated into the project, the Board requested public comments regarding the presentation of the development proposal. There were 7 members of the public who signed in to become parties of record. The general tenor of the public comments indicated a favorable and even enthusiastic response to the proposal. Three members of the public offered specific comments which included the following observations:

- a strongly favorable response to the notion of providing a pedestrian connection from the upper portion of SW Oregon Street to 35th Avenue SW;
- a preference for the seventh scheme which showed the extension of the base to encapsulate the second floor of the structure;
- a strong desire to have multiple openings into the retail spaces along 35th Avenue SW;
- support for the idea of a strong base to the 35th Avenue SW façade, the strength being conveyed and re-enforced by the selection of strong materials at the base (e.g., stone, masonry, brick);
- a preference for condo ownership of the residential units.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

General Directives

The members of the Board expressed the following, generally shared, concerns regarding the proposal which echoed some of the comments from the public:

- the public stair would be a vital element in integrating the neighborhood; while it need not be *grand*, it should be offered as a safe and attractive neighborhood amenity and should be integrated into the SW Oregon Street façade of the proposed structure;
- taking access into the parking garage from SW Oregon St was a good solution, but the potential conflicts between pedestrian and driveway uses would have to be carefully addressed;
- the strong two-story base as shown in scheme 7 had much to offer compositionally as well as functionally, since it opened up the possibility of more varied commercial uses at that second level;
- the compositional attractiveness of the strong two-story base called out for utilization of strong materials to support that massing;
- the real challenge of the residential-over-commercial-base typology of the mixed-use structure is the architectural integration of the upper and lower massing, and the successful integration was especially important in this instance;
- this is a corner lot, and even though SW Oregon Street would not be activated as a fully functional street, the opportunity for enlivening the corner condition vis-à-vis pedestrians should not be minimized or overlooked;
- discussion of the *strength* of the base does not mean that the street-level façade along 35th Avenue SW would not benefit from the creation of smaller spaces at sidewalk level that could be created from discrete erosions of the base;
- the articulation of the north façade offered a challenge; it offered some of the best views; development of the commercial property to the north could mean a 65-foot wall at the property line; actual development of the site to the north could be years off and the north

façade of the proposed structure could be a highly visible element of the development being proposed on the subject site for years to come;

- while the Board generally felt that scheme 7 had the most to offer in setting a general direction for the project to pursue, there were gestures within the other schemes, for instance Scheme 2, Scheme 3, Scheme 5 (with courtyard reversed), and Scheme 6, that held elements that might be explored as design development progressed.

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 siting and design guidance described below and identified by letter and number those siting and design those guidelines found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings* as well as *West Seattle Junction Urban Village Design Guidelines* which are to be considered of highest priority for 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.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

A-4 Human Activity

New development should be sited and deigned to encourage human activity on the street

The guidelines above were all chosen by the board to be of high priority. The Board desires that future design development should clearly demonstrate how the design responds to the topography at the south and west edges of the site and to the proposed public stair. These conditions might be demonstrated most effectively through a series of sectional studies that show the proposed structure in relation to the overall setting and especially in relation to the proposed stair along SW Oregon Street. This was deemed an important edge, one requiring a substantial response.

The Board affirmed the desirability of the proposed vehicular access from the driveway within the SW Oregon Street right-of-way but were desirous of seeing in more detail the drive, turnaround, any required retaining walls and their relationship to the public sidewalk and stair. The Board also noted that the structure should relate to and demonstrate a substantial integration with the stair.

Human activity on the street should be promoted by the interface of sidewalk with retail spaces, commercial and residential entries; the applicant should be prepared to demonstrate how these relationships would provide for a general enlivening of the street and would be further integrated with expanding bus stop activities along the street.

The location and quality of usable open space for the residents should be considered a significant element of the design.

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.

In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its façade walls

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.

The Board indicated these guidelines to be of highest priority for the project. They related directly to the General Directives cited above, specifically:

- the compositional attractiveness of the strong two-story base called out for utilization of strong materials to support that massing;
- the real challenge of the residential-over-commercial-base typology of the mixed-use structure is the architectural integration of the upper and lower massing, and the successful integration was especially important in this instance;

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-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 a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.

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.

Under General Directions, the Board had observed the following:

- this is a corner lot, and even though SW Oregon Street would not be activated as a fully functional street, the opportunity for enlivening the corner condition vis-à-vis pedestrians should not be minimized or overlooked;

- discussion of the *strength* of the base does not mean that the street-level façade along 35th Avenue SW would not benefit from the creation of smaller spaces at sidewalk level that could be created from discrete erosions of the base;

Explore the opportunities for outdoor plaza(s). Explore opportunities for blending public and private spaces. The design team should be prepared to provide studies of the proposed pedestrian environment on the two street sides of the project, SW Oregon Street (at the corner and as the façade interacts with the pedestrian stair) as well as 35th Avenue SW.

E Landscaping

E-2 Landscaping to enhance the building and site

Landscaping should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions

The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

Landscaping should be designed with the goal of realizing the prioritized guidelines, should soften the edge conditions where appropriate, and should contribute to attractive and usable open spaces. The SW Oregon Street edge of the development was singled out as of particular importance since it would interface with the proposed public stair.

Departures from Development Standards:

The architectural team indicated that there had been no departures from development standards identified to date.

The Board unanimously recommended that the applicants proceed to design development and MUP application at which time they will return for a Recommendation meeting.

Staff Comments:

DPD concurs with the Board's recommendation that development of the design should follow the Board's General Directives and Guidelines selected to be of highest priority for the project as noted above and proceed to MUP application.