



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3009726

Address: 2406 32nd Avenue West

Applicant: Neal Thompson

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Board Members Present: Mindy Black
Jacob Connell
Bo Zhang

Board Members Absent: David Delfs
Jill Kurfirst

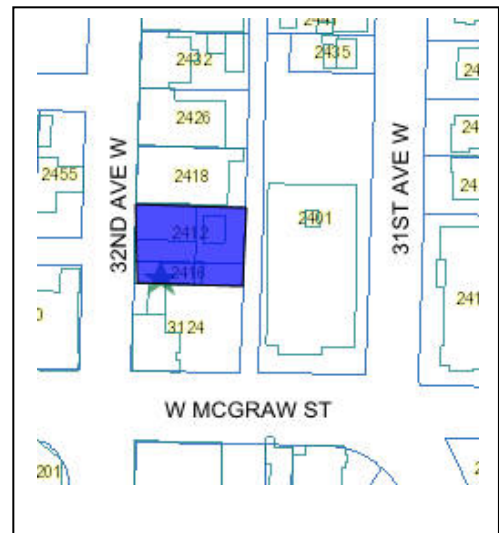
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Two with a 40' height limit. (NC2 40)

Nearby Zones: North: NC2 40 extends to W. Raye St. at the edge of West Magnolia Playground
South: NC2 40
East: Single Family 5000 east of the adjacent alley.
West: NC2 40

Lot Area: 11,334 sq. ft. Dedication of 3' for 32nd Ave reduces size to 11,065 sq. ft.



Current Development: Two buildings occupy the west portion of the site. On the eastern portion, a shed and parking comprise the remainder of the two parcels.

Access: Alley access.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: The site sits within the heart of Magnolia Village a low and mid-rise neighborhood comprising commercial uses (numerous restaurants, offices and retail uses), newer mid-rise residential structures and institutions. West Magnolia playfield forms a strong edge along the north portion of the neighborhood. To the east of the development site, two churches flank 31st Ave W. Shops and a variety of commercial uses line 32nd Ave W with the Magnolia Garden Center anchoring the neighborhood south of the playfield. The commercial district continues west toward 35th Ave W and south across W. McGraw St. The neighborhood has a strong identity with single family homes nearby and a pedestrian character.

ECAs: No environmentally critical areas on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four story mixed use structure with approximately 3,500 square feet of commercial use on the first level and 28 dwelling units behind the commercial space and on three levels above it. Parking to be located below grade

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant provided four design options to DPD and the Design Review Board. The variations in the concept schemes focus on location of the residential entry, garage access from the alley and massing. The primary residential entry located in the center of the parcel facing 32 Ave W in option #1 shifts to the south property line for the three other options. In the first option, the residential entrance splits the commercial space into two equal spaces. The ramp to the parking garage varies within options as well. In Options # 1 and # 3, the entry ramp to the garage hugs the south property line. Options #2 and # 4 illustrate a ramp descending from the alley along the north property line beginning at the higher portion of the site.

The schemes or alternatives share a desire to create a commercial storefront along 32nd Ave W and place apartment units directly behind and above the first floor. Option #2 alters this condition somewhat by proposing to establish a mezzanine parking level close to the alley. Massing for Option #1 illustrates a large unarticulated cube housing apartments along a double loaded corridor. Units would either face east or west. Option #2 varies the massing only in carving a deep residential entry into the lower southwest corner of the building. The third option increases the size of the void at the southwest corner and terraces the two upper floors.

The units resemble those of the other options with the exception of those on the fifth floor. The fourth and final scheme forms a symmetrical plan with the corners of the mass equally eroded away from the property lines. This option acknowledges the importance of the penetration of natural light into the units yet doesn't necessarily recognize the potential influence of varying site and vicinity conditions. A core of stairs and elevator would form a vertical circulation spine pushed to the south property line.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eight members of the public affixed their names to the EDG sign-in sheet. Those who spoke raised the following issues:

- Consider the visibility of the south façade which will rise above the bank building and be seen by those in the village. (mentioned by several speakers)
- Set back the south façade from the bank.
- Use a modern vernacular. Go bold. Be inspiring. Emphasize glass.
- Adjust the ceiling height of the commercial space. The area needs effective commercial spaces.
- Don't use the building context as clues to the building design.
- Use the site for its full effect. Build as high as the zone allows.
- Redevelopment of the site is exciting.
- Consider the people-scape of the street. This neighborhood has intense pedestrian use. Activities include summerfest and Halloween. Make a gathering space for pedestrians.
- Enliven the streetscape. Placing the entry at the southwest corner is awkward with its adjacency to the bank drive-thru lanes.
- Create a space for tables near the sidewalk.
- The neighborhood lacks adequate on-street parking. The proposal should have enough parking to accommodate the tenants.
- The east side should have decks and windows. The east façade will also have considerable visibility.
- A roof deck creates an opportunity for excessive noise which would be bothersome to the people who live nearby.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

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. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

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 proposed demolition of the existing building provides an opportunity to create a viable retail and/or office space(s) that enhances the neighborhood commercial district. The Board agreed with the applicant's approach of not splitting in half the commercial space with a residential lobby.

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

The deep residential entry court was discouraged as being too far removed from the life of the street and in the wrong location. The depth of the court and the structure over it placed the entry in shadow much of the year. Move the residential entry closer to the north property line.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

See guidance for A-2, A-6, .B-1, C-1, D-1 and D-7.

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.

The roof of the structure will be visible to residents living up the hill to the east. The architect should consider the roof as a fifth elevation and devote considerable attention to its design. The roof garden and the penthouses (mechanical and stair/elevator) should have a higher quality design than most comparable projects.

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.

The Board discouraged the covered, deep residential entry. Both the commercial spaces and the residential entry should take advantage of the western exposure.

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

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.

Parking access should occur from the alley and descend along the south property line to the garage.

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 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 anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

The Board encouraged the applicant to achieve the maximum height in the prevailing zone.

The schematic modulation of the façade in option #4 suggested a thoughtful consideration of unit design, views, and solar access. Not as well evident in the concept diagrams was the critical relationship of the commercial base and the upper floors. How does the massing of the base visually support the upper levels? How does the storefront appear distinct and yet part of a larger whole?

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.**

The architect's useful pictorial analysis of contextual architectural elements (awnings, entrances, finish materials signage etc.) should assist in the process of designing a viable commercial storefront or base. The Board encouraged the architect to create commercial spaces with heights exceeding the minimum of 13 feet.

- 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 facade walls.**

This will be an important consideration as the design develops. See Board guidance discussion for B-1.

- 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 successful choice of finish materials must relate to the architectural concept and its consistency (Guidance C-2). This will represent an important consideration at the Recommendation meeting.

- 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 strongly recommended that placement of the driveway from the alley should occur at the lower portion of the site closest to the south property line. The Board also liked the mezzanine parking level as it would provide the units directly above the parking level with better access to light.

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.**

As the architect studies programming and design of the commercial space(s) along 32nd Ave. W., he should consider creating a small plaza to accommodate the potential for a sidewalk café or seating. The business district thrives on pedestrian activity.

- 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-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.**

Placing the driveway ramp along the south property line would benefit the project by shortening the ramp's length and freeing a larger area for below grade parking.

- 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.**

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

The Board strongly recommended placing the residential entrance to the northern portion of the site's 32nd Ave. frontage in order to prevent pedestrian conflicts with the bank drive thru lanes. The closer proximity to the playfield was also seen as beneficial.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

Scheme #4's idea of placing commercial uses or live/work units facing the alley intrigued the Board members. The applicant should continue to study the viability of this concept. See C-5. The Board requested an analysis of pedestrian movement on the alley. Is the entry stairs to the neighboring church used extensively? Do other pedestrians use the alley?

The design of the alley façade should be carefully considered.

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.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant shall prepare a signage concept plan.

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 during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant shall prepare a lighting concept plan.

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.

The use and detailing of the glazing influences the success of commercial storefronts with the result of creating an active street frontage. The Board welcomes tall commercial spaces with extensive glazing.

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 a visually interesting street front 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.

See Board guidance for D-7. After considerable deliberation, the Board strongly encouraged the placement of the primary residential entry away from the bank's drive thru lanes.

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.**
- 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.**

The roof top amenity space should be as capacious as possible. Ensure quality landscaping on the roof.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s).

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant did not request a departure request.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

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