

**Early Design Guidance  
of the  
NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

**OCTOBER 12, 2009**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3010238, 3010375

**Address:** 2020 NW Market St  
2021 NW 56<sup>th</sup> St (30012)

**Applicant:** Cliff Hasert, EHS Architecture  
for Washington Federal Savings

**Board Members Present:** Mark Brands (chair)  
Joe Giampietro  
Guy Peckham  
Jean Morgan  
Bill Singer

**Board Members Absent:** none

**City Staff:** Scott A. Ringgold, Land Use Planner

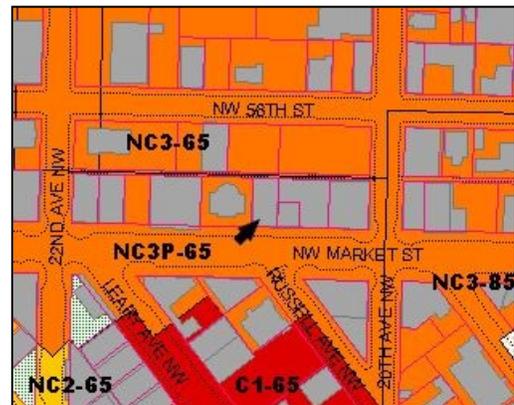
---

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Proposal for a 2-story building containing 8,400 sq.ft. of office space (Washington Federal Savings Bank). Parking for about 15 vehicles to be provided at grade across the alley, to be accessed from NW 56<sup>th</sup> St.

**VICINITY AND SITE**

The project is located on two sites in the Ballard neighborhood (divided by an alley), midblock between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenues NW. NW Market is a minor arterial at the site, and 56<sup>th</sup> is a nonarterial. Both streets are developed with sidewalks, curbs, and sufficient right-of-way to accommodate full improvements. The alley is 10' wide, less than the standard 20' in this zone.



**Figure 1.** Vicinity Zoning

The vicinity is relatively flat and slopes gradually down to the south toward Salmon Bay. The property is located in the Ballard Urban Center Village.

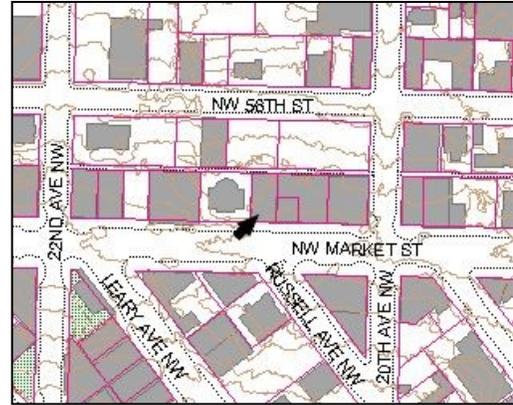
To the south of the alley, the site is zoned Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a 65-foot base height limit and a pedestrian designation (NC3P-65, see Figure 1). Properties to the east and west and across the street along Market are also zoned NC3P-65. To the north of the alley, the zoning is consistent, but the pedestrian designation does not apply. Further to the southeast, land is zoned NC3-85. To the south along Leary and Russell Avenues NW, the zoning transitions to Commercial 1 with a 65-foot base height limit (C1-65).

Development in the vicinity reflects its zoning, though much doesn't approach full zoning potential, suggesting that the area could experience future redevelopment. The NW Market St corridor is characterized primarily by lowrise commercial buildings, mostly in good repair, as well as newer midrise mixed use buildings located to the east. Directly to the west is a historic Carnegie Library, owned privately and occupied by various commercial tenants. Several businesses have large accessory surface parking lots located across the alley, adjacent to NW 56<sup>th</sup> St.

The south site is rectangular, 50' wide by 95' deep. The north site consists of two original platted lots, and measures 100' wide by 95' deep. The alley is paved, though its 10' width is substandard, and it currently appears to be largely impassible, functioning primarily as storage for commercial dumpsters. The site is essentially flat (see Figure 2). No portion of the site is designated as Environmentally Critical Areas on City maps. The site is currently occupied by a one-story office structure (Washington Federal Savings Bank), with a partial mezzanine. The site's only vegetation is planted in pockets of the existing surface parking.

The project also involves the reconfiguration of the parking lot adjacent to NW 56<sup>th</sup> St. The intent is to provide 15 parking spaces and queuing associated with drive-through banking, serviced from the main building via underground pneumatic tubes.

The site is served by public transit. Metro routes 44 and 46 pass by the site along NW Market St.



**Figure 2.** Local topography



**Figure 3.** Aerial View

## **EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING**

The Early Design Guidance (EDG) meeting took place on October 12, 2009, in the library of Ballard High School. The applicant submitted an early design packet, which provides a site and vicinity analysis that informs this report. The packet is available for public review at the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Public Resource Center, located on the 20<sup>th</sup> floor of Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.<sup>1</sup>

### **10/12/2009 EDG: ARCHITECT'S PRESENTATION**

Cliff Hasert of EHS Architecture presented the project's program and described the site and vicinity, referring to some of the information presented above. The design intent is to create a two-story building, largely covering the whole site, with expansion space located on the second floor. Principal pedestrian accesses would be on its north and south sides, so the architecture applied to front and back would be equally important.

An important design consideration is to create an appropriate relationship with the Carnegie Free Library building to the west, as well as to address and extend the existing pedestrian walkway, which runs along the neighbor's property line and provides an effective midblock connection for this otherwise long Ballard block.

The parking area off 56<sup>th</sup> provides several landscaping opportunities, though each site must account for its own landscaping requirements.

Mr. Hasert presented four design concepts for Board consideration. Concept 1 represents a full buildout of both sites, to the maximum height allowed by the zoning. This concept provides an overview of what might otherwise be allowed, but Mr. Hasert noted that it does not address the client's design strategy, and would not be the appropriate direction for this site.

Mr. Hasert characterized Concept 2 as a "building-in-a-slot scenario". Typical of midblock properties in a commercial zone, it features a firewall located along the property line, which would present a blank wall against the neighbor's pedestrian path, considered by the design team to be an inappropriate response.

Concept 3 would set back from a portion of the west property line, allowing for windows facing out to the pedestrian path, in a style that is "similar to buildings you'd see along Ballard". This concept features an overhead canopy, a traditional parapet top, and a relatively flat façade, consistent with what one would see in a traditional commercial district.

Mr. Hasert identified Concept 4 as the client's preferred option. It features sloping roof elements partly inspired by the Ballard library. There are two separate entries with canopies located at different levels. A similar architectural vernacular would be applied to the back of the building. Exterior cladding would include brick and metal.

---

<sup>1</sup> The EDG design packet is also available online: <http://bit.ly/3010238EDGpacket>

Concepts 2-4 all provide surface parking on the north lot, alongside drive-aisles that service a drive-through bank, serviced from the main building via pneumatic tubes. They all propose to extend the neighbor's midblock pedestrian walkway by creating a paved path through the northern site. All three concepts also include overhead weather protection through the site.

**10/12/2009 EDG: CLARIFYING QUESTIONS BY THE BOARD**

*What opportunities do you see in adjusting the size of the program relative to the footprint of the site?* The design doesn't quite fill out the full site, because we're setting back at the southwest edge to allow for windows near the property line. We can also pull back the upper level, for decks. We've had no specific direction to build out the full site, but if we start to decrease the available space at the lower floor, it starts to constrain their functions. The bank's divisional office could expand into the second level. The ground level would support all the bank's customer service functions.

*You show only one concept for the northern lot. Were there more?* Internally, we went through a lot of options, and we'd be happy to share those with you. This is the one that met the requirements, even though the remote tellers are extremely far away, and pushing money that far is going to be tough.

*There are some nice trees in the alley behind the building. Are you able to preserve those?* They're big trees. There's also a sculpture, which we'll try to relocate. We haven't yet had that discussion with the owner. We need to get the massing part done, then we'll work in conjunction with that to design the landscaping.

*Are there opportunities for green space on the second level?* Either as deck or as green space. It could be an elevated planting level.

*Are you requesting any design departures?* We haven't requested any.

*How do the proposed 15 stalls compare to your need?* The bank is located in a pedestrian zone, where no parking is required. The identified parking satisfies the client's programmatic needs.

*Is there any thought of building a structure on the 56<sup>th</sup> St side?* It wasn't part of the pro forma.

*Is there any chance to use the alley as vehicle access to the north lot?* This alley is unique – it's 10' wide, essentially for pedestrians only. It's dominated by trash dumpsters. We're in negotiation with the City to determine whether the alley should be widened or left as-is. Queuing for the drive-through was a real challenge.

*Most of the area buildings shown in the design packet are iconic, such as the library, the high school. You're next to what I'd consider to be an iconic building. Have you considered what to do to make this more of a background building? You should consider comparably sited buildings in the surrounding context.* [no response noted].

*Can you talk a little more about how you're addressing this pedestrian link? Are there more concepts that would pull back from the edge and widen the walkway? Any further setbacks begin to infringe on the functions of the bank space.*

*Would you describe more about what makes Concept 4 the preferred option? Early concepts don't have much in the way of glazing – they extend the 40-year history of the existing blank wall here. On the east side, there's a chimney-like element that anchors the building, almost like a knuckle. Everything orients from there to the west. We announce to a lesser degree the secondary entrance to the second floor. This isn't an overstated tribute to the bank, but a neighborly addition to the community. The scale is right, the materials are right, it's all tied together, so we're happy to get to this point.*

### **10/12/2009 EDG: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eight members of the public signed in at the Early Design Guidance meeting on October 12, 2009. Comments from the meeting focused largely on how the project relates to neighboring properties, including possible construction impacts and effects on barrier-free access to neighboring properties. Comments related to design review included the following:

- Concept #4 is disappointing.
- We've seen earlier sketches that included a glass canopy over our walkway. That would be very attractive as you drive east on Market. Right now, it's a boring invitation for graffiti. It would be nice to have something for tenants and neighbors to appreciate.
- The midblock walkway is used by so many people. Passersby, bank customers, and restaurant patrons. You want more pedestrian friendly features along the walkway.
- The "chimney" feature [at the eastern property line in Concept #4], paired with the slanted roof, presents a "stop". It's a design element that bothers me, because it doesn't show continuity with the buildings past it. Ours is a historic 1909 building.
- We have second story west-facing windows – they're art studios. If their light is blocked, it impacts us.
- I'm concerned about the design of the walkway.

By late October, DPD had received no written comments.

### **GUIDELINES**

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 guidelines of highest priority to this project, found in the City of Seattle's *Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* (supplemented 1/20/2007), and further supplemented by the Ballard Municipal Center design guidelines. They gave the following design guidance to the applicant.

**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.*

***Ballard-specific guideline:***

*Where appropriate, mid-block pedestrian connections are strongly encouraged. The Design Review Board may consider a departure to reduce open space requirements in exchange for a mid-block pedestrian connection. Such spaces shall be sited and designed in a manner that are clearly public in nature and engaging to pedestrians.*

**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-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-8 Parking and Vehicle Access**

*Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.*

***Ballard-specific guideline:***

*Vehicular access to sites is most appropriate along NW 56<sup>th</sup>, 57<sup>th</sup>, and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets. Commercial vehicular access is most appropriate on NW 56<sup>th</sup> and/or NW 57<sup>th</sup> Streets.*

*New at-grade parking areas should minimize exposure to the street edge.*

*Where curbcuts are provided, the number and width should be minimized.*

**A-9 Location of Parking on Commercial Street Fronts**

*Parking on a commercial street front should be minimized and where possible should be located behind a building.*

**10/12/2009 Guidance – Site Planning**

Board members expressed reservations about the range of siting options presented, noting that the zone's 65' height limit should allow for considerable flexibility in massing, but that most of the concepts presented are essentially variations on a two-story full-site buildout. Another Board member felt the overall simplicity of the development program led the design team to legitimately focus on this preferred massing scheme. After some discussion, the Board agrees that the massing is generally appropriate for the site, and that the identified alternatives present enough variation to satisfy the Board's expectations at EDG.

Board members request that future design iterations consider the possibility of eroding and/or landscaping the upper story.

The Board identifies as a high priority the enhancement and extension of the existing pedestrian midblock crossing. They support the location of windows on the walkway, and encourage further attention to the walkway toward the back of the site, between the Carnegie building and the proposed bank.

**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.*

**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.*

***Ballard-specific guideline:***

*New development should exhibit craftsmanship through the use of durable, attractive materials. Building materials and interesting details found on older buildings on Market Street and the Ballard Avenue Landmark District should be recalled.*

**10/12/2009 Guidance – Architectural Elements and Materials**

The Board agrees that the design should demonstrate a strong awareness and alignment with its context along NW Market St. The design should fit with the rhythm and scale of the block's background commercial buildings. It should avoid any visual competition with the Carnegie building, and should draw instead from the palette of design cues present in other nearby buildings. In this regard, they question the effectiveness of Concept 4's "powerful angular roof form." One Board member wondered whether a contemporary roof form might more successfully orient toward Market.

For the recommendations meeting, the Board requests three colored elevations of the north, south, and west façades. The front elevation should also be shown in the context of the entire block front. A photomontage might be the most successful approach.

**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 spaces should be considered.*

**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-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks**

*Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking signs and equipment.*

**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 it is not possible to locate these elements away from the street front, they should be screened from view using high quality and compatible materials 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-8 Treatment of Alleys**

*The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.*

**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 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.*

## **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.*

### **10/12/2009 Guidance – Pedestrian Environment**

Much of the Board’s deliberations centered on the pedestrian experience of the site – the midblock crossing, continuity with other pedestrian-oriented businesses, and the appropriate design treatment of surface parking on the northern site.

If at all possible, the Board encourages the design team and the property owner of the Carnegie building to work together and to identify mutually beneficial strategies for enhancing the midblock crossing, potentially with a canopy that would relate well to the bank’s sidewalk canopy and the old library, and would function to draw pedestrians through the site.

Board members are concerned about how the parking and drive-through bank will be perceived from the sidewalk, stating that “simply continuing it as a parking area is not a very good response”. While landscape screening along NW 56<sup>th</sup> St is required, the Board instructs the design team to go beyond the basic requirement, and to present variations in how to address the adjacency of parking and sidewalk.

In a relatively minor point, Board members agree that the drive-through might benefit from a slight adjustment to the curbcut location, to facilitate better maneuvering. They understand that this may involve a departure from the curbcut spacing standard.

The Board supports the proposed extension and enhancement of the midblock pedestrian crossing, and they recognize the proposed trellis/canopy as a reasonable design approach. Such a canopy should be compatible with its surroundings, and it should draw from visual cues from the design of the main structure. It doesn’t necessarily need to be made of the same materials, but it should show some continuity with the design of the whole walkway experience.

Board members predict the pedestrian walkway will be significant from the pedestrian point of view. Currently, the design of the pedestrian path shows a pronounced jog toward its northern end. Board members suggest this space should involve wider paving, so it doesn’t result in a rapid 90°/90° transition. It could act “more like a knuckle”.

Where the pedestrian path crosses the drive-through lanes, it should be visibly, texturally, and/or physically distinguished (raised?) from the driveway. “The effect should be of vehicles passing through a pedestrian way, rather than the opposite.”

**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.*

**10/12/2009 Guidance – Landscaping**

The Design Team suggest landscaping opportunities in a curb bulb, which might include a midblock crossing across NW Market St. Board members encourage further consideration of this, in consultation with SDOT.

**DEPARTURE FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The applicant requested no departures from Land Use Code development standards.

| <i>Requirement</i>  | <i>Proposed</i> | <i>Comments</i> | <i>Board Recommendation</i> |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| The applicant requested no departures, though the Design Review Board suggest a minor reorientation of a curb cut along NW 56 <sup>th</sup> St. |                 | •               |                             |
|   |                 | •               |                             |
|   |                 | •               |                             |

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **MUP Application**

1. Submit application for Master Use Permit (MUP) application. Please contact the assigned planner when you have scheduled your MUP intake appointment.
2. DPD will refer the project to the Department of Neighborhoods at or prior to the MUP application to determine if the existing onsite building is eligible for historic designation. The applicant should submit the required materials to the assigned planner as early as possible. A list of the necessary submittal items is shown below in the attachment "Appendix A."
3. Please include a written response to the guidance provided in this report.
4. Plan on embedding four 11x17 colored and shadowed elevations, landscape and right-of-way improvement plans into the front of the MUP plan set (4 per sheet). Label sheets "DR."
5. Provide graphic demonstrations, including colored perspectives and any other methods, to demonstrate the response to design guidance.

### **Recommendation Meeting**

1. Please provide building sections and elevations that show the proposed development in context with adjacent structures. The Board has requested color drawings of the north, south, and west façades.
2. Please provide a detailed site plan that includes proposed building entrances.
3. Please provide a larger scale site plan that demonstrates the relationship between the proposed development and surrounding development within a one and a half block radius.
4. Please provide perspective drawings showing how the proposed uses and design relate to the sidewalk level on adjacent streets. Among these drawings, the Board specifically requests sidewalk-level views from the northeast and northwest, across the parking lot.
5. Please graphically demonstrate the pedestrian experience of moving through the entire walkway.
6. Please submit a color and materials board.
7. Please submit a conceptual lighting plan and proposed signage.

## *APPENDIX A*

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER A STRUCTURE APPEARS TO MEET ANY OF THE CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION (2- TO 3-PAGE RESPONSE ANTICIPATED):**

---

**Physical Description:** Provide a physical description of both the interior and exterior of the structure(s).

**Architect or Builder:** Provide information about the architect/builder; i.e., regarding education, career, other works in Seattle. If other structures were built in Seattle, indicate whether they remain and their location.

**Statement of Significance:** Current and past uses and owners of the structure(s). The role these uses and/or owners played in the community, city, state or nation.

**Photographs:** Clear exterior photos of all elevations of the building; interior photos of major or significant spaces; available historic photos; neighborhood context photos.

**Bibliography of sources**