



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development  
Diane Sugimura, Director

## DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

OF

## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 1

July 13, 2009

---

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Project Number:** 3010265

**Address:** 100 N.W. 85<sup>th</sup> St.

**Applicant:** GGLO Architects for Fred Meyer (Kroger) Inc.

**Board members present:** Guy Peckham  
Mark Brands  
Joe Gimapietro  
Bill Singer  
Jean Morgan

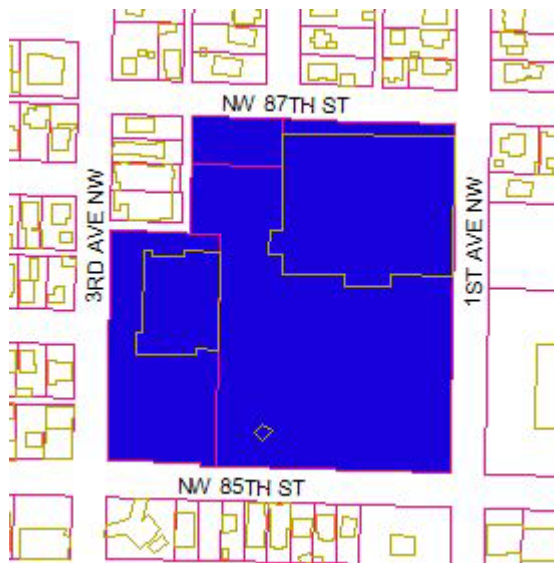
**Board members absent:** none

**Land Use Planner present:** Scott Kemp

---

This early design guidance meeting was conducted for a proposed re-development of the existing Fred Meyer and Greenwood Market sites in the Greenwood neighborhood of Seattle. The site consists of most of the block between N.W. 85<sup>th</sup> St., N.W. 87<sup>th</sup> St., 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W. and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.W., with an area in the northwest corner of the block excluded.

A public alley borders four parcels in the northwest corner of the block which are not a part of the proposal site. The large site contains approximately 12 feet of topography drop from the southwest to the northeast.



Existing development on the site consists of an existing, two story Fred Meyer building in the northeast corner, a grocery store (Greenwood Market) in the western area and a small retail structure (lock and key shop) on a large paved parking lot located in the south portion of the site.

The entire site is designated a Peat Settlement area, and environmentally critical area with associated development regulations to limit disturbance dewatering of peat layers. The peat layers are beneath fill material approximately 10 feet thick.

The proponents of the project seek to develop the site with an approximately 160,000 sf Fred Meyer store with groceries and other goods. The store

would be set on one level just above that of the highest area of peat soils. Other uses, at sidewalk level would face N.W. 85<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W. and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.W. A parking garage, above the peat layer and rising five stories above grade in the northeast portion of the site would provide the great majority of parking for the development. Multifamily housing would be constructed on the concrete lid of the Fred Meyer store, along with associated parking and landscape areas.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Extensive public comment was received at the meeting.

A nearby resident expressed concern about the height of the proposed buildings stating six stories too “heavy,” and would cause light blockage nearby homes. This person acknowledged that it is a good idea to get people walking and to some extent a local Fred Meyer will do this. She also state she will buy groceries where there are no local products like local cheeses.

Concern was expressed that the project not be started unless it is economically viable to finish it. Greenwood should not be left with an empty site or a whole in the ground for any period of time.

Another area resident stated the project should still be viewed at the macro view at this point in time. The DRB should see more options as two of the three show are no longer being considered, being steps along the way to the preferred design. A piece of paper representing a football field at the scale of the presentation materials was offered to demonstrate the large size of the proposal site. A more compact, two store was stated to be a viable alternative that should be explored. It was stated that dividing off garden and hardware would help to lower the store footprint. It was stated that the development should “blend with the scale of Greenwood.” It was further stated that it is the term “buffer retail” was an unknown term. It was cautioned that the development should not “turn it’s back” on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., that there should be gateways into site and there should be a design for what the the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. side would look like. A loading dock on third was state to be unacceptable. A hierarchy of streets and alleys on the site was called for. There should be interesting storefronts. Universal access principals should be followed. Bog ground water cannot be diverted. The proposal must not dehydrate the soils. A “sinking store” would

seem to be inconsistent with the hydrology of the site. NW 87<sup>th</sup> has a 20 foot setback established as a condition of a historic rezone on the site in which there are mature Doug Firs. There should be an assessment of the trees. There should be publically accessible open space on the site. An area where there are farmers markets or flea markets could be incorporated. It was suggested that the design process should start with the open spaces and then “do the boxes.”

Another articulate commenter provided a further series of suggestions and observations. There is a real opportunity for a development which is “crawling with pedestrians.” The current preferred scheme is a good start. It needs to go all the way to great. There should be an implementation of the Greenwood Town Center Guidelines calling for pedestrian crossings of the site. The commenter indicated there does not seem to be a function use for the open space area at the 85<sup>th</sup> St. bus stop plaza. Designers should think about open spaces align N.W. 85<sup>th</sup> as two smaller pockets of open space that are full depth, urban rooms. Spill out from uses could then happen along 85<sup>th</sup>. Pedestrian could “filter” up onto the lid through those rooms. Massing the apartment buildings on the lid and garage should be integrated to appear as one structure. Eroding the corner doesn’t help. Main Plaza at “Morrow Lane” needs retail to animate; a coffee shop perhaps. When Fred Meyer is closed the plaza could still be a place to have drinks with friends at night. Upper parking lot is area that will make or break the project. Create a really good urban plaza; a place where everyone goes. The perimeter retail should have some back door activation onto the parking on the lid. If there is a parking area on the lid it should be an urban room usable for multiple purposes. The mid-block pedestrian connections across the site need pedestrian “meaning” and purpose. Contemporary 2009 look is appropriate. Morrow lane has token pedestrian interest, needs activity. For the planted landscape think canopy trees. Grand stairways, especially the one down to Morrow need to have functional purposes and become successful environments of their own.

Many auto entry points should be incorporated in order to disburse traffic and improve pedestrian safety. Most vehicles will be arriving from N.W.85<sup>th</sup> St. and measures to spread them among multiple driveways should be incorporated. Corner entry points for pedestrians need to be present. ADA access should work well from 85<sup>th</sup>.

Another commenter indicated the proposal would be bad for single family homes on N.W. 87<sup>th</sup> St. where shadows and traffic would impact residents.

Evan Brouquard presented a letter from the Greenwood Community Council with specific comments and made some more general ones orally. A subcommittee of the Council has been meeting with the applicants for six or eight months. Discussion started around Options A and B. The process has gone very well to date and has arrived at Option C. A concern now is that details based upon Option C are being disclosed and debated. At this point it would be good to look at more basic alternatives beyond Option

Trevor Stanley, also of Greenwood Community Council, stated support for the comments already made and added that he thinks there should be other options presented. “We have come a long way to arrive at Option 3. It would be a shame not to see some iterations of it,” he said.

The manager of the Karate studio adjacent across the alley from the proposal site expressed concerns about the loading dock proposed in that area. The studio draws many people, including

children to the area. The parking area for the business is along the alley. The new loading dock should not monopolize use of the alley. Access to the dock should not be designed in such a way as to encourage trucks to park in the alley, either waiting to load or otherwise. Third Ave., he stated, is narrow, serves residential uses and should not be used by large trucks serving the new multipurpose store.

General support for the redevelopment was expressed with the caveat that the massing should be moved away from the residential areas to the north and northwest and towards the south.

Jason Morrow also expressed support for comments already made and added that circulation of people and cars should be explored in the design, as should the soils conditions in the area. Both should be reflected in design alternatives.

A resident living on NW 84<sup>th</sup> near 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.W. indicated that traffic into and out of the site is not focused enough on N.W. 85<sup>th</sup> St. She also indicated that the site should be highly wheelchair accessible.

The idea of making the site accessible to pedestrians and “people on wheels” was stated several times.

The proposal should be connected to the neighborhood around it. There should be porosity. It was observed that the development needs to be context sensitive, not too modern. We do not need a “Taj Meyer” here, it was stated.

A lot of people, it was observed, walk in the area now. The site should be reconnected to the street grid. The integration of storm water into design should “drive the project.”

It was observed that parking on the site takes away from the charm of the area and the way it is incorporated should be re-thought.

Less parking on the “lid” was called for.

Appreciation was expressed for the progress made so far with things like a lidded loading dock, attempts to break down the scale of the buildings, and incorporation of townhouses on N.W. 87<sup>th</sup>. Modern architecture was thought to be appropriate for the development.

**PRIORITIES:**

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 found in the City of Seattle’s “*Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings*” of highest priority to this project. The site is within the area covered by the Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Design Guidelines which provide further guidance to be used in conjunction with the City-wide guidelines. The recommendations made were agreed to by all five of the Board members present, unless otherwise noted. The italicized portions of

guideline language quoted below constitute additional guidelines which are specific to the Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

**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 features.**

**A-2 Streetscape Compatibility**

**a. Reinforcement of Commercial and Residential Development Patterns**

*Commercial development in the Greenwood/Phinney corridor has historically been oriented toward the street, with buildings up against the sidewalks. Most residential developments have modest landscaped setbacks and first floors are built slightly above grade to allow for privacy and a sense of transition from the street. Continuing this pattern will reinforce the character of both the business districts and residential areas.*

*Consider:*

*1. Build commercial development up to the sidewalk where possible. Along North/ Northwest 85th Street, new commercial buildings should be set back sufficiently to provide 12-foot minimum sidewalks (including street trees and other plantings). Commercial buildings may be setback off the street if pedestrian-oriented space is provided that is enhanced with humanizing components such as trees and other plants, site furnishings and high-quality, well-detailed pavements between the sidewalk and the building.*

*2. Residential buildings (on Greenwood Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street) should be setback where possible five to 15 feet from the sidewalk to provide extensive landscaping in the front yard. When possible, first floor residential units facing Greenwood Avenue North or North/Northwest 85th Street should be located at least three feet above the sidewalk level to provide a sense of privacy and surveillance over the street.*

**b. Treatment of Side Streets**

*Some treatment of side-streets off of Greenwood Avenue North and 85th Street is important to create an effective transition to residential neighborhoods. Some options to consider include:*

*setbacks with view-framing landscaping (see A-1);*

*arbors with hanging plants; and*

*small outdoor spaces with trees and landscaping.*

The development site is very large. It is large enough to be four “normal” sized blocks and sits within a pattern of streets such that 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N.W. and N.W. 86<sup>th</sup> St. would bisect it if they continued uninterrupted across it. Recognition of the surrounding street grid should be incorporated into the site plan. Measures for pedestrian travel through the site block along these routes should be incorporated. Also the architecture of the site should include connections to these two streets and there should be landscaped, inviting and interesting Public, pedestrian routes across the site, north/south and east/west, in a manner which connects two the street grids in a reasonable manner.

The Board observed that it is desirable to have as many ways in and out of the site as possible. They endorsed the multiple driveway approach and also called for multiple pedestrian entry points in locations that make sense in relation to surrounding streets, sites, sidewalks and traffic control measures.

The project should create a cohesive “center” to the project; possibly by carving out a portion along 85<sup>th</sup> as a central space. Another possible location would be along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W. as an extension of the Morrow Lane feature in the Greenwood Shopping Center project to the east.

A Board member indicated he would be interested to see how the Fred Meyer would function with two points of access; thereby increasing connectivity between the store and the interior of the site.

**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 the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

***B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility***

***a. Impact of New Buildings on the Street***

***Consider the setback of upper stories of new mixed-use development on Greenwood Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street to reduce the dominance of new buildings on the street. Also, new commercial development should respect the small-scale historical pattern of storefronts on Greenwood Avenue North. Typically, the older storefronts are about 50 feet in width and feature brick, stone or other masonry units. Some also feature architectural details that provide interest and a human scale to the buildings.***

***b. Zone Edges***

***Careful siting, building design and massing are important to achieve a sensitive transition between more intensive and less intensive zones. Consider design techniques including:***

- increasing the building setback from the zone edge at the ground level;***
- reducing the bulk of the building’s upper floors nearest to the less intensive zone;***
- reducing the overall height of the structure; and***
- using of extensive landscaping or decorative screening.***

***Design departures***

***If alternative techniques are used to successfully achieve a sensitive transition between these zones, the following departures are suggested for consideration by applicants and board members to offset the loss of any development opportunity within the Greenwood/Phinney neighborhood:***

- relax the minimum size limit for nonresidential uses—allow up to a 15 percent
  - reduction in the required commercial area; and******
- relax the residential amenity or setback requirements.***

***This provision is not meant to preclude the granting of departures as allowed in section 23.41 of the Seattle Land Use Code.***

***An additional zone edge design option may be desirable in areas where an alley does not exist:***

- Allow for a building’s ground floor to be built to the property line of the less intensive zone as long as the building wall is less than a single story, contains no windows and upper floors are stepped back appropriately.***

The Board stated that additional height for residential structures would best be located away from N.W. 87<sup>th</sup> St. and the single family areas to the north. It expressed considerable concern about the size of the proposal site and the long structure facades along street frontages that are likely to result. Architectural measures should be employed to create a scale compatible with surrounding uses. The massing of the structure(s) on the site as a whole needs to be carefully designed to be contextually sensitive.

A good measure to employ would be to break up and “perforate” the retail so that there is not a “wall” along 85<sup>th</sup> N.W. Pockets of open space could be interspersed with retail. Also, the entry at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N.W. connection should be enlarged to create more of a gateway.

The Board state they would prefer that truck access not use 87<sup>th</sup> N.W., a residential street.

### **C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency**

#### ***a. Architectural Styles***

***The Greenwood Avenue North/Phinney Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street corridors are characterized by their utilitarian, non-flamboyant, traditional architectural styles (except for churches). Some important points to consider in making new development consistent and compatible with existing development include:***

- ***small-scale architectural details at the ground level, including color, texture/patterns,***
  - ***materials, window treatment, sculptural elements, etc;***
- ***landscaping is an important component of the overall character, particularly for***
  - ***residential development; and***
- ***personalization of individual businesses is a key feature of both corridors.***

#### ***b. Building Entrances***

***Almost all of the existing buildings located at corners along the Greenwood Avenue North/Phinney Avenue North and North/Northwest 85th Street corridors have entrances at the corner. Even when the principal off-street parking areas are located on the side of the building, a primary building entrance should be located at the corner.***

***This concept is consistent with traditional neighborhood commercial designs and important in facilitating pedestrian activity at the street corners.***

The corner of N.W. 85<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W. in particular would be a good place for a corner entry to a commercial space.

**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 facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.

***D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances***

***a. Pedestrian Open Spaces***

*Small, usable open spaces are an important design objective. Open spaces incorporating the following features are encouraged with new commercial and mixed-use development:*

- *Good sun exposure during most of the year*
- *Located in areas with significant pedestrian traffic*
- *Storefront and/or residential windows face onto open space, at or above the
  - *ground level**
- *There are a variety of places to sit*
- *Pedestrians have something to look at, whether it is a view of the street, landscaping,
  - *a mural, etc.**

***b. North/Northwest 85th Street Corridor and Greenwood Avenue North Corridor, North of North 87th Street***

*New development should enhance the pedestrian environment and encourage pedestrian activity along the North/Northwest 85th Street corridor and the Greenwood Avenue North corridor, north of North 87th Street. The following measures should be encouraged:*

- *Building entries facing the street*
- *Pedestrian-oriented facades*
- *Weather protection*
- *Below-grade parking, when possible*

***c. Pedestrian Amenities***

*When possible, new development should integrate pedestrian amenities including but not limited to street trees, pedestrian lighting, benches, newspaper racks, public art and bike racks to maintain and strengthen pedestrian activity.*

***D-2 Blank Walls***

*Storefronts are encouraged to be located at the sidewalk edge, particularly in neighborhood commercial districts, and should be continuous, minimizing blank walls.*

*Where unavoidable consider treating blank walls with one or more of the methods suggested in the Citywide Design Guidelines, including:*

- *installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant material;*
- *employing small setbacks;*
- *employing different texture, colors, or materials;*
- *providing art or murals.*

*Note: Successful murals typically require a clear vision, a strong theme (historical, cultural, etc.), some flair or whimsy, and exemplary execution.*

Blank walls along the Fred Meyer store and the parking garage should be avoided.



**Compatibility**

*Consider using the human-scale historical pattern of storefronts on Greenwood Avenue North as a guide in developing new structures abutting Town Center streets. New development should respond to Greenwood's existing context by matching window and opening proportions, entryway patterns, scale and location of building cornices, proportion and degree of trim work and other decorative details, and employing a variety of appropriate finish materials.*

**Mid-Block Connections**

*Where relevant, consider incorporating and enhancing the mid-block connection concept.*

*Mid-block connections should be visually open and activated by pedestrian lighting, landscaping and human scaled, pedestrian-oriented architectural features and details.*

*Inclusion of public art and neighborhood signage is encouraged. These connections should align with the mid-block crosswalk and may vary in width.*

A section of the Greenwood/Phinney Neighborhood Design Guidelines is titled "Town Center Specific Guidelines" and contains specific measures based upon an earlier plan for the area, the 2002 Greenwood Town Center Plan. Each of the ten items presented in the section have application to the subject proposal. They are included below.

**Town Center Specific Guidelines**

*The following Town Center Specific Design Guidelines were developed from the urban design recommendations contained in the 2002 Greenwood Town Center Plan. The Town Center Plan provides significant additional detail regarding each of the urban design concepts discussed below. The plan also contains recommendations that address other redevelopment concepts including the potential use of contract rezones, traffic improvements and streetscape improvements.*

**Open Space**

*Encourage a publicly accessible urban plaza, potentially incorporated into one of the north-south streets and any proposed mid-block connection. This adjoining street could be temporarily closed to traffic for special public gatherings. The plaza could include seasonal landscaping and year-round green, seating walls, benches or other street furniture, and public art.*

**Street Pattern**

*New development should respond to the existing street pattern to create pedestrian and visual continuity.*

**Landscaping**

*Use of plants that are native to the Pacific Northwest is encouraged. In parking areas consider using architectural raised planters, earth berms, terraced planters and trellises. New development should include streetscape improvements to the public street and private internal drives where possible. Coordinate landscaping and tree location to maintain visibility of business signage.*

**Pedestrian Lighting**

*Provide lighting that enhances pedestrian safety and comfort. Pedestrian street lights should conform to the existing Greenwood lighting design plan (Lumec Z-14 Green finish GN8TX). New buildings are encouraged to incorporate custom lighting fixtures along sidewalks and public pathways. Special care should be made to not over-illuminate.*

**Street Elements**

*Integrate public art into buildings and landscaping. Small signs—especially blade signs that hang over sidewalks—should be incorporated. Signage for way-finding, especially parking, is encouraged. Coordinate signage plans with the Greenwood/ Phinney Main Street Plan.*

#### **Structure Orientation**

*Buildings should generally be built to the edge of sidewalks without setbacks so that ground floor uses are visible and accessible from the pedestrian circulation system. The impacts of new structures on solar exposure should be considered. Buildings located on corners should be oriented to the corner and include entries, windows, canopies or other special architectural treatment. Automobile access, circulation or parking should not be located at the intersections of public streets. Blank walls should be avoided where possible and mitigated with architectural treatment where they are unavoidable. Mitigation might include small setbacks with planters and other landscaping, wall-hung trellises, indentations and modulation, and integration of art pieces.*

#### **Parking and Vehicular Circulation**

*Where it is necessary to include parking adjacent to a public street, consider mitigating the visual impacts with street trees, landscaping or other design features.*

- *Curb cuts along North/Northwest 85th Street should be consolidated where feasible.*
- *Entrances to parking could include special paving and other sidewalk treatments
  - *and amenities, such as additional landscaping, signage or art.**
- *Access to off-street parking around Palatine Avenue North, First Avenue North
  - *and Third Avenue North should be consolidated where feasible.**
- *Access at Second Avenue Northwest's alignment is also acceptable to reinforce the grid pattern.*

#### **Mass and Scale**

*Consider reducing the impact or perceived mass and scale of large structures by modulating upper floors; varying roof forms and cornice lines; varying materials, colors and textures; and providing vertical articulation of building facades in proportions that are similar to surrounding plat patterns.*

#### **Next Steps**

The Board asks that the applicants return for a further early design guidance meeting to show additional design iterations based upon the advice given at the first meeting. At this second meeting they would like to see a two-story store option. It is also important that further refinement of the publicly accessible spaces be made. The site should be designed with pedestrian permeability across it in an approximation of a grid dividing four quadrants.

#### **Development Standard Departures**

The applicant disclosed three potential departures from development standards desired in order to achieve a better designed project. Requested was:

1. To allow more less than 60% non-residential uses along an arterial street (3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.W.).
2. To allow access to parking from surrounding streets in addition to the existing alley.
3. To allow the parking garage along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.W. without an intervening use.

The Board indicated some receptivity to these proposed departures.

H:kemp/doc/prio3010265.doc