

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
OF
NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD AREA #2

July 12, 2010

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Number: 3010429

Address: 13035 Lake City Way NE

Applicant: Arielle Valli for Dan Massert

Board members present: Craig Parsons, Chair
Joe Hurley
Salone Habibuddin

Board members absent: Tricia Reisenauer

DPD staff present: Malli Anderson



SITE AND VICINITY DESCRIPTION

The 29,040 square foot site is zoned Commercial 1 40' (C1 40') and is located on the west side of Lake City Way NE midblock between NE 130th and NE 133rd Streets. A small, commercial building currently occupies the parcel. The west property line adjoins a large Single Family 5000 zone to the west. The site is relatively flat. There is a dog day care and boarding business on the adjoining lot to the north and a Jack in the Box north of that. The lot to the south is a Jiffy Lube and a Chevron service station is south of that. The adjoining lot to the west fronts on 31st Avenue NE is zoned Single Family 5000, and is developed with a multifamily structure. Single family residences occupy the other lots fronting on 31st Avenue NE with the exception of the Lake City Mini Storage building which is located on the northeast corner of 31st Ave. and NE 130th Street. A Fred Meyer store and surface parking occupy most of the block on the east side of Lake City Way NE. An auto body shop is located north of the Fred Meyer store. Lake City Way NE is a heavily travelled north/south arterial and is a Washington State Highway Route 522.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to construct a three-story mixed-use structure containing 49,750 square feet of self-storage area, ground floor office space at the rear of the building, and a street level leasing office at the front of the building. Surface parking for 27 vehicles will

be provided. The existing structure will be demolished. The self storage building will have approximately 300 storage units. Parking studies show approximately 3 visits per day to storage facilities of this size, and the demand for parking is approximately 1 space per 10,000 square feet of gross floor area. There will be no perimeter gates. Security will include a keypad to enter the elevators. The corridors will be around the perimeter of each floor with windows. Hallways will serve storage units on both sides.

The applicant's preferred Scheme A places the building mass on the northern edge of the site with the length of the structure extending from Lake City Way to the west property line. A portion of the second floor would extend over the surface parking on the south half of the lot. The project's siting would accomplish the following: minimize the mass of the street façade, provide a setback from the Jiffy Lube to the south, screen the parking area from street view, minimize the mass in the north/south direction, comply with code in height and setbacks, encroach into the slope bank to the west, tightly abut the veterinary hospital to the north, and elongate the building mass in the east/west direction.

Scheme B shifts the building mass to the south half of the parcel and place parking on the northern section. The project's siting would: minimize the mass on the street façade, provide a setback from the veterinary hospital to the north, minimize the mass in the north/south direction, minimize the extent of encroachment into the slope bank to the west, facilitate drainage from the slope bank to the west, comply with the code in height and setbacks, tightly abut the Jiffy Lube and self storage to the south, elongate the building mass in the east/west direction, and not screen the surface parking.

Scheme C places the building mass on the western most portion of the property. Project siting would provide a substantial setback of the building mass from the street, minimize the overall mass of the building, not tightly abut the veterinary hospital to the south, minimize the mass in the east/west direction, comply with the code in height and setbacks, encroach into the slope bank to the west, tightly abut the Jiffy Lube and self storage to the south, not screen the surface parking facing the street, elongate the building mass in the north/south direction, and block drainage from the slope bank to the west.

In Scheme D the building mass covers the majority of the parcel. Parking would occur underneath a large portion of the structure. The proposal would comply with the setback from the toe of the slope to the west, screen the parking area from view, comply with the code in height and setbacks, tightly abut both the Jiffy Lube site to the south and the veterinarian hospital to the north, elongate the building mass in the east/west direction, and maximize the mass and proximity of the street façade to the street.

PUBLIC COMMENT

One member of the public attended the meeting who represented a masonry company and expressed support for the project.

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 following siting and design guidance 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. In addition, specific supplemental guidance is provided to address the Design Guidelines for the North District /Lake City neighborhood.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility

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

North District Neighborhoods specific supplemental guidance: Auto dealerships are encouraged to provide low vegetated landscaped edges or borders, with an appropriate width from the street to property along the front of their properties to provide pedestrian safety and defined pathways. Pathways can be curbed with plantings to provide additional interest and seating is encouraged to be provided near bus stops.

The only street level use proposed is the self storage operating office. The Board requested a setback between the sidewalk and the front façade of the building to allow trees and landscaping to soften the façade.

A-4 Human Activity

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

The Board said that human activity on the sidewalk should be protected from Lake City Way traffic. The Board looks forward to seeing how the architect resolves how the proposal abuts the right of way.

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.

North District Neighborhoods specific supplemental guidance: Provide thick vegetative buffers of sufficient height to screen on-site lighting from contiguous and nearby residential areas or residential areas sharing the same collector streets. Glare-free lighting should be provided and directed downward to be sensitive to nearby residential areas.

The Board would like to see sections of the adjacent residences in order to evaluate the impact of the new. The east/west cross section is the most essential for a comparison of heights. The Board would also like to see the impact on the dog daycare building by dotting in the profile on the cross sections.

B-1 Height, Bulk and Scale

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 nearby, 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.

North District Neighborhoods-specific supplemental guidance: Buildings along Lake City Way from Northeast 95th Street to Northeast 123rd Street and Northeast 130th Street to Northeast 145th Street should reduce potential “canyon effects”. For example, this can be accomplished by setting back upper level floors at least 5 feet above the 30 foot height; and additional 10 feet above the 50 foot height in NC 65’ zones; and an additional 5 feet above the 65 foot height in 85 foot zones. These stepped-back buildings can add design features to reduce the appearance of height, such as bay windows, overhangs, decks, solar screens and other appendages at different heights along the building façade.

The Board said the design of the self storage building should not mirror the Fred Meyer store across the street which appears ominous and oppressive due to the blank facades on such a large structure. The proposal, combined with the Fred Meyer should avoid creating a tunnel of blank walls along Lake City Way.

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.

North District Neighborhoods specific supplemental guidance: Monument-style signage, with vegetated beds around them, is encouraged-particularly as a gateway feature. Mid-century modern, or 50s style, and neon is encouraged for signage in the auto row to recall the area’s history. Such signs, however, are encouraged to be placed on buildings closer to the street, rather than mounted on poles in large parking lots. Flashing or continuous changing images that may be distracting to motorists on Lake City Way or to nearby residences are discouraged.

The Board requested a materials board including the color palette and signage at the Recommendation meeting. In addition, the Board asked for the following: easy to understand elevations that show the architect thought through the design solutions in a responsible way; a connection between the sidewalk and building defining the pedestrian entry; see cross sections (east/west from the apartments to the Fred Meyer store and north/south through the dog boarding building); separate plans of the site, landscaping,

lighting, and signage; exterior elevations of all four sides of the building, the streetscape of the front elevation, and the green compliance checklist. Particular attention should be paid to producing the following: a quality pedestrian transition from the public sidewalk to the entry of the building and transparency of the street façade (60 percent between 2 and 12 feet above grade); a landscape buffer between the apartments and the project, and a landscape screen between the parking lot and Lake City Way NE. The proposed design should have little or no reliance on vertical landscape elements like green walls or blank facades. Presentation drawings should allow the Board to compare the building scale of the proposed structure with the neighboring Fred Meyer and self-storage 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.

North District Neighborhoods-specific supplemental guidance: New structures built for auto sales are encouraged to depart from the conventional “box retail” approach to building design in order to create the look of multiple storefronts that would provide the design character desired or break up storefronts with architectural features such as a varied roof line.

The Board liked the proposed use of burnished sandblasted block masonry with reveals painted to articulate the wall. The use of windows at the storefront and at the upper levels could be used to make a pedestrian friendly environment. The Board also agreed with the proposed green roof with a one-way pitch from north to south with deeper than normal insulation. A metal roof is the least absorbent roof type.

C-3 Human Scale

The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.

A clearly identified entry with a trellis or a canopy will accentuate the sense of the human scale from the sidewalk to the entry.

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 lot signs and equipment.

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.

The Board said a vertical trellis would be in character with the new building. The Board would like to see landscaping buffering the surface parking from the loading area. The Board would like to see landscaping mitigate the impacts of the hardscape of the parking area. The Board advised the applicant to use a variety of heights in the landscaping rather than only low vegetation. The landscape should reflect well on the project and mature nicely.

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 Board said transparency must be provided along the street façade for the front office of the self storage operation. The storefront glazing for the front office and entrances should allow passersby to see beyond the first pane of glass into the office space. The Board encouraged the architect to incorporate transom windows.

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.

North District Neighborhoods-specific supplemental guidance: As auto dealerships relocate to other areas, and new mixed use developments occur within this area, consider incorporating front yard setbacks in the commercial area for a “green gateway” design feature. This setback and landscaping should coordinate and combine street plantings in the public right-of-way with landscaping elements on private front yard setbacks to increase the gateway affect. For example, one row of large street trees may occur on the public right-of-way and two rows of smaller trees and/or flowering shrubs may occur in the private front yard setback, creating a deep visual gateway and a pedestrian promenade effect.

The Board stated that a green screen is not the best way to address the facades of the self-storage building. The Board supports the architect’s suggestion to plant columnar trees within the jogs of the sawtooth façade to soften and enhance the streetscape appearance of the building. The depth of the planting area should allow for a robust planting area for trees. The Board would also like to see a dense landscape on the northwest corner slope and along the parking and loading area. The Board requested to see more detail on the landscape lighting.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No development standard departures have been requested as part of this design proposal.

Staff Comments:

Embed at least 4 colored/shadowed 11 x 17 inch elevation drawings on full sheets in the front of the plan sets for the MUP submittal. These drawings should show your initial design response to the priority guidelines identified at the EDG meeting. Embed/add other colored drawings such as a site/landscape plan or 3 dimensional sketches of the streetscape/ground level character.

Call Malli Anderson at 233-3858 when you have determined your Master Use Permit Application intake date and time.