



**2nd EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE PRIORITIES
OF THE
NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

January 24, 2011

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3011030

Address: 2510 NE Blakeley Street

Applicant: B.Z. Zenczak

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

Board members absent: Peter Krech (excused)

DPD staff present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

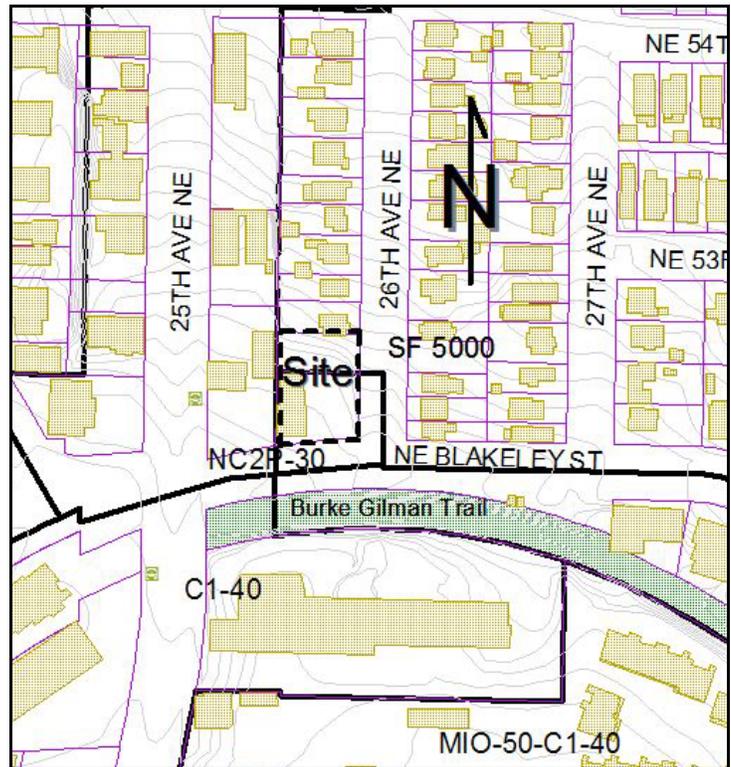
SITE & VICINITY

The approximately 13,426 square foot corner site is located on the northwest corner of NE Blakeley St and 26th Ave NE. The site is occupied by a one-story vacant 2,300 square foot restaurant building constructed in 1976 and 20 surface parking stalls. There is one curb cut located near the southeast corner of the property, accessing NE Blakeley St.

The site slopes from the north down to the south and is split zoned Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a 30' height limit and a Pedestrian designation (NC2P-30), and Single Family Residential (SF 5000). The NC2P-30 zoning continues to the northwest and west. The SF 5000 zoning continues to the

north and east. More intensive Commercial 1 zoning with a 40' height limit is located to the south, across NE Blakeley St.

Surrounding uses include a mix of commercial and residential. Commercial areas flank 25th Ave NE and NE Blakeley St near the site. University Village shopping mall is located to the south. Multifamily residential development is located along NE Blakeley St and 25th Ave NE. Nearby single family residential development is located along 26th Ave NE and the blocks east of the site. Most of the nearby single family and older retail structures are 1-2 stories tall. Newer multi-family residential, hotel, and mixed-use structures are around 4 stories tall.



Bus stops are located on 25th Ave NE. Burke Gilman Trail is a heavily used path for cyclists and pedestrians, and is located across NE Blakeley St from the site. Off-street parking is predominantly in private surface parking lots, with some below grade and structured parking. There are no alleys adjacent to the site.

The site is located adjacent to the east border of the University Design Guidelines area, but is not located inside the University Design Guidelines area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing structure and parking and construct a new 35' tall building with 6,400 square feet of commercial space and 12 surface parking stalls.

Columbia Bank would occupy the structure with bank lobby areas on the ground floor and loan offices above.

The proposal includes two curb cuts, one with access from 26th Ave NE and the other with access to NE Blakeley St. Landscaped open space would be located on the Single Family zoned portion of the site.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Six schemes were presented at the 2nd Early Design Guidance meeting. All of the options included proposed curb cut locations, various building locations, general amounts of building bulk/scale and parking location, and various areas of landscaped/open space. All six options included a pedestrian entry's from the street and parking area. A landscaped open space area would be located on the northern Single Family zoned portion of the site, providing a buffer for the residences.

The primary differences between the six options included building siting, articulation and roof forms.

The applicant identified two departures that would be required for the proposed design. The first departure would be to reduce the amount of transparency required at the street level at 26th Ave NE and NE Blakeley St, with the rationale that it would be necessary for security measures. The applicant noted a second potential departure to reduce the depth of overhead weather protection due to overhead power line locations.

For illustrative purposes only

Design intent for the proposed development is based on Columbia Bank's desire to be consistent with the corporate materials, color, and identification.

BOARD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Board thanked the applicant for the six options. They look forward to the applicant showing how the corporate identification needs are balanced with the neighborhood character of this area.

- In addition to the corporate materials of brick wainscoting, stucco second story, and blue roof, the applicant could incorporate wood siding, parapets, possibly use all brick, and use the roof forms to modulate the building.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(Includes comments from the first EDG meeting)

Six members of the public signed in at the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- There are many residents on 26th Ave NE and few off-street parking spaces; so on-street parking is a challenge.
- Vehicle access from 26th Ave NE would increase traffic onto an already overcrowded small street.
- The proposed 35' tall building is out of scale for the small single family residences adjacent to the north and east.
- The proposed material selection and blue roof aren't consistent with the neighborhood context. There are other examples of Columbia Bank branches (downtown, etc) where they have used other materials. Consider a palette more in context with the area.
- Potential light and glare from the building is a concern to adjacent residences.
- The proposed design references commercial development on 25th Ave NE, but the proposed building siting is oriented to residential development on 26th Ave NE. The building should instead be set back from the sidewalk at 26th Ave NE and oriented more to the commercial areas to the west and south.
- The proposed east driveway slope could be a problem and the applicant should carefully calculate the resulting driveway length.
- The proposed flat roof with potential for mechanical equipment is a concern to nearby residences. Rooftop screening should be anticipated and proposed with the primary building design.
- Many cyclists and pedestrians use 26th Ave NE to access the Burke Gilman Trail. A proposed curb cut with a steep slope at that street could cause a lot of safety problems.
- The retaining wall at the north property line is already sliding. Additional grading in this area could create a problem for the adjacent neighboring structure.
- The proposed bank use is appreciated by neighbors, as long as it's designed in a way to meet concerns of scale, context, and grading.

DESIGN GUIDELINE PRIORITIES

(Includes priorities from the first EDG meeting)

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*. All guidelines apply to the project, and the following list is those the Board identified as having the highest priority to this project.

"Hot Button Issues" are items initially discussed by the Board and include items of top importance for the design. For this project, the Board determined the hot button issue was:

1. **Proposed vehicular access to the site.** The applicant has proposed two vehicular access points to the site, one at 26th Ave NE, and one exit-only to NE Blakeley St.
 - The heavier traffic and nearby adjacent gas station curb cut at NE Blakeley make a curb cut at that location challenging. DPD has also noted that the pedestrian designation in this zone conflicts with a proposed curb cut at NE Blakeley St.
 - The residential uses and zoning on 26th Ave NE make a curb cut at that location a challenge. Additionally, the proposed driveway would be steep and could create safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - The Board noted that there doesn't appear to be one clear solution for vehicular access at this point, but the applicant should demonstrate how they analyzed the vehicular access alternatives, and show development alternatives with one curb cut location.

2. **Scale and context.** The applicant has proposed a building built to the maximum zoning height of 35' plus roof forms. Commercial development to the south is consistent with this type of development, but the zone transition to SF 5000 at this site brings the scale into question.
 - The applicant should provide additional urban design context analysis for the proposed development. Consider and show examples of existing neighborhood commercial development in the area that is clearly commercial in design, but provides a good transition to adjacent single family development.

- The applicant should also provide context analysis of adjacent development. Graphics including sections, elevations, and sketches of proposed development and adjacent structures should be provided.
- Include analysis of the proposed development in relation to the context on 26th Ave NE, as well as the context on NE Blakeley St and 25th Ave NE.

The applicant should address all priority guidelines and Board guidance below during the next stages of design review.

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-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. *Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.*

Option 2 has been recommended by the majority of the Board (3 to 1). This option eliminates vehicle access from 26th Ave NE, thus minimizing the impact of automobiles on parking, bicycle/vehicle circulation. Additionally, the adjacent properties and pedestrian users are provided a safer pedestrian environment.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. *The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.*

Option 2 sites the building against the eastern and southern property lines, with surface parking west of the structure. A single 22 foot wide two way vehicle point would be from NE Blakely St.

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

The proposed departure to reduce transparency at the NE Blakeley St is not supported by the Board. The Board cited numerous examples of 'Banks' where security concerns are addressed with proper glazing.

The Board noted that the 'commercial frontage' along NE Blakeley St must be programmed to encourage human interaction/activity between the building users and pedestrians.

The 26th Ave NE façade is no less important, the interior program should be respectful to the eastern residences. This façade should not turn its back to the street. Form and function should encourage human interaction along and across 26th Ave NE. Horizontal/vertical modulation should be more typical of residential development.

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.*

Option 2's interior programming along 26th Ave NE should be designed to be interactive yet respectful to the adjacent eastern properties. Active building uses are encouraged for this façade.

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.*

Option 2's 26th Ave NE façade should receive a great deal of consideration to this criterion; this façade should reflect a more residential character than a commercial character.

Modulation width and depth should be more aligned with the residential development to the east. At a minimum an increase depth of modulation should be added to option 2.

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.*

Option 2's, with the exception of the eastern façade, commercial architectural character of the building should set a well-defined and desirable pattern for existing and future buildings.

The 26th Ave NE façade should be defined as more 'residential in character'. It should be a 'living edge' that is compatible with or complementary with the architectural character of the eastern 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 facade walls.*

Option 2, There are two facades that require additional analysis and consideration at the next Design Review meeting.

The NE Blakeley St façade should exhibit forms and features indentifying the functions with the building —'keep it commercial'.

The 26th Ave NE façade should have design elements, detailing and massing that is proportional and of a building form that is more residential than commercial.

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.*

Option 2. Additional to these criterions, the applicant should demonstrate how the proposed landscaping near the eastern and southern property lines and proposed building mass at the property lines would meet these guidelines.

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.*

Option 2, Additional analysis is needed and should be demonstrated at the next Design Review meeting for this project. More detail drawings are needed for the entry point and façade along NE Blakeley St. The southern portion of 26th Ave NE should be detailed as well.

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.*

Option 2, Additional detailed information for the 26th Ave N façade is needed from the applicant in order for the Board to provide guidance related to the criterion.

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.*

Additional information is needed from the applicant in order for the Board to provide guidance related to this item. The applicant should demonstrate how the proposed design (vehicular entry at Blakely St and surface parking grading) could meet this guideline.

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

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.*

The applicant should demonstrate how the proposal meets these guidelines at the next Design Review meeting for this project. The lighting plan should minimize glare to nearby residences.

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.*

Comments reflect those found in Guideline A-4.

E. Landscaping

No one specific guideline is of highest priority. The Board noted that the landscape plan appears to have a positive direction for providing landscaped buffer areas near the north property line and screening for surface parking areas.

The applicant should address landscape and hardscape design on NE Blakeley St, and provide more landscape plan information at the next stage of design review.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board is inclined to recommend approval of the departure for overhead weather protection along NE Blakeley St. However is will not recommend approval of the departure on the transparency along NE Blakely.

SUMMARY

The Board recommended that the applicant return for a 3rd Design Guidance meeting, for additional analysis on the above priorities.

NEXT STEPS

Third Design Guidance Meeting Required:

1. Please contact Colin Vasquez (at colin.vasquez@seattle.gov or 206-684-5639) to discuss Early Design Guidance packets and to schedule a 3rd EDG meeting.
2. Provide more detail on the Option 2 massing, relative to the east property line.

3. Provide alternatives for the 'corporate colors.' This will require colored elevations, especially along 26th Ave NE and NE Blakely St.
4. Provide elevations and sections demonstrating proposed massing in context with existing structures adjacent and across the street.
5. Provide sections demonstrating the proposed elevation of surface parking and existing elevations at adjacent streets.
6. Provide a neighborhood urban design analysis demonstrating existing neighborhood context and scale.
 - a. Provide examples of nearby commercial structures that are in scale with adjacent residential development
 - b. Identify the design cues this proposal is using (scale, materials, forms, etc), beyond those of existing Columbia Banks.
7. Provide pedestrian level sketches demonstrating the Option 2 massing in context with existing development.
8. Provide floor plans for the program.
9. Provide material/color examples being considered.