



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3011405

Address: 324 NE 45th St

Applicant: John Adams, Stuart Silk Architects

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 24, 2014

Board Members Present: Martine Zettle (Chair)
Ivana Begley
Salone Habibuddin
Joe Hurley
Christina Zettle

Board Members Absent: None

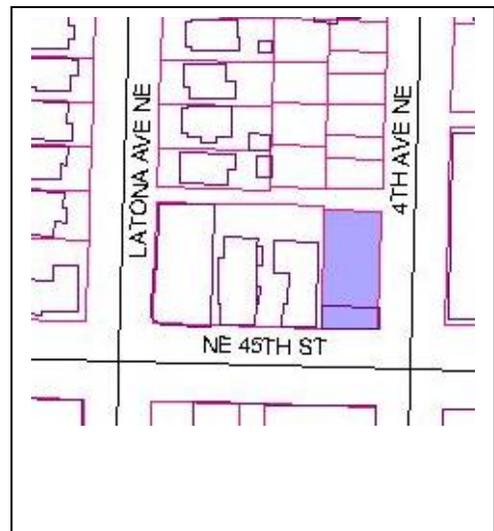
DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3P-40, Wallingford Residential Urban Village.

Nearby Zones: North: LR1 RC
South: NC3P-40
East: NC3P-40
West: NC3P-40

Lot Area: 5,555 sf



Access: Streets bound the site on two sides. NE 45th St to the south is classified as a Principal Arterial. 4th Ave NE bounds the property to the east. A paved alley connection 4th Ave NE and Latona Ave NE limits the site to the north.

Surrounding Development: See Neighborhood Context below.

ECAs: Limited Steep Slopes (ECA 1) on north and east edges of property

Neighborhood Character: NE 45th St is very diverse in terms of uses ranging from sidewalk cafes, supermarket stores, restaurants, bars, cinemas, eclectic shops as well as multi-family and single-family residential uses. The majority of this use diversification is concentrated along the main arterials in the neighborhood, NE 45th St and Stone Way, as well as the areas in proximity to the water to the south.

Neighborhood Context: Architecture

The architecture of the single residential uses remains relatively consistent through the years. However the architectural character of the commercial and multi-family uses along the main arterials is highly varied due in part to the different types of businesses. Newer buildings used to auto-repairs, fast foods and supermarket stores bring their own “corporate identity” to the neighborhood, diversifying the architecture. Some older buildings still carry the neighborhood’s original architecture by preserving a few architectural features, details and storefront configuration.

Landmarks in the neighborhood include the Good Shepherd Center and Gas Works Park. Additionally the original Dick’s Drive-In founded in 1954, the Guild 45th Theatre, and Murphy’s Bar are all located along NE 45th St.

The site offers the potential to serve as a gateway to the entire Wallingford neighborhood even though the structures in the immediate vicinity of the site are not of particular architectural value or historic interest.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story plus basement mixed use building. The basement and first two floors are intended to be the new location for Bedrooms & More, a household furniture store. The third floor will be designated as a separate office use. The fourth floor is intended to be a single residential unit. The commercial square footage will total approximately 16,000 square feet and the residence will occupy approximately 3,500 square feet. On-site parking will provide 5-6 stalls.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three development options were presented: **Alternative 1: Street Level.** Places the retail space to the south and east of the property, covering most of the NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE sides. All the required parking is located behind the retail area, with access from the alley. Departure required for façade depth and parking quantity mix. The main entrance to the retail space is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. Lobby entrance for the upper floors is located along 4th Ave NE. **Building Massing.** This corner configured building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. This alternative locates the parking behind the retail space and the main building entrance, and creates an opportunity to bring retail and transparent façades along most of 4th Ave NE. The residential unit at the top of the building has one terrace to the north, one terrace to the south, and a terrace and planters on the east side, creating a recess in the massing and lowering the perception of the building's height. The corner massing of the building will be differentiated as an architectural feature and principal entry.

Alternative 2: Street Level. Places the retail space to the south and east of the property, covering most of the NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE sides. All the required parking is located behind the retail area, with access from the alley. Departure required for façade depth and parking quantity mix. The main entrance to the retail space is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. Lobby entrance for the upper floors is located along 4th Ave NE. Street level is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. **Building Massing.** This corner configured building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. This alternative locates the parking behind the retail space and the main building entrance, and creates an opportunity to bring retail and transparent façade along most of 4th Ave NE. The residential unit at the top of the building has one terrace to the north and one bigger terrace to the south, creating a recess in the massing and lowering the perception of the building's height. The corner massing of the building will be an architectural feature for the full height of the structure.

Alternative 3: Street Level. This alternative meets all the Land Use Code development standards and has no departures. It places the retail space to the south of the property, covering the full width of the NE 45th St and portion of 4th Ave NE. All the required parking occupies the north end of the 4th Ave NE façade and would be screened by a wall. The site is too narrow to accommodate a complying landscaping buffer. The main entrance to the retail space at street level is located at the corner of NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE. The lobby entrance for the upper floors is at the southwest corner of the site along NE 45th St. **Building Massing.** This corner configured building has its longest side along 4th Ave NE. Saving the tree located just east of the property line by the main building entrance will create a fourteen by thirty foot notch into the building along the full height of the structure, assuming a 15 foot tree buffer. This alternative creates a full height blank wall along the eastern property line in order to hide the parking away. The residential unit at the top the building has one terrace to the south.

The corner massing of the building will be differentiated as an architectural feature and retail entry.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The Early Design Guidance (EDG) Design Proposal booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp. or by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Several members of the public attended the Early Design Guidance meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Would like consideration of widening the tree pits to extend into the roadway to accommodate large trees. Stated road had been widened some time ago for the first part of 4th Ave running north from 45th and that if tree pits were extended into the parking lane only a few parking spaces would be lost. Requested consideration is given to north facade of the proposed building as it overlooks the townhouses across the alley. Also asked some consideration be given to the “friendliness” of the 4th Ave facade.
- Stated that several car vs. pedestrian accidents have occurred at the intersection of 4th and 45th and wondered what pedestrian safety and crosswalk improvements could be made.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: February 24, 2014
--

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The Recommendation Design Proposal booklet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp. or by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Address: Public Resource Center
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public attended the Recommendation meeting.

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 (the Board) provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the following **Citywide Design Guidelines** of **highest priority** for this project.

The guidelines are summarized below. For the full text of all guidelines please visit the [Design Review website](#).

Page references below refer to the respective EDG or Recommendation Design Proposal booklet.

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.*

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

A-10 ***Corner Lots*** *Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board believes that it was a positive feature that the project was to be owner occupied. They noted that this demonstrates a long term interest in the neighborhood.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design response presented (see C section below).

B. *Height, Bulk and Scale*

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 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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board suggested that some sort of acknowledgement of the more residential character to the north might be desirable along the 4th Ave facade. The applicant stated that they desire to hold the corner with the building and responded to that intention positively.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design response presented (see the C section below).

C. **Architectural Elements and Materials**

C-1 Architectural Context *New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with 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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that that page 12 of the EDG package was very effective in demonstrating intent of facade design. They noted that the blank façade on the third scheme was not desirable. They are pleased to see the residential entry located along 4th Ave. The Board is interested in a reinterpretation of local form but not necessarily a 19th century copy.

The Board suggested that retail spaces that have good visual transparency don't have to "yell at people" with signage. It was suggested that the applicant look at some of the Wallingford signage. The Board felt it was important we were considering signage at this point of the project.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design response presented on plan pages 1, 11-14, 34-37, 53 and 55, including 'layered canopies' on the south and east facades. They also noted that fenestration and interior floor plans treatments are a good illustrated how departures can result in a better design.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM THE SOUTHEAST

D. **Pedestrian Environment**

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-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 evening hours.*

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.*

D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions *For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board asked the Owner how people typically arrived at their store, by car on foot etc. The Applicant responded that historical people came from all over to buy their products but recently there has been an increasing trend of people from the neighborhood walking into the store.

The Board noted that the new site is somewhat further away from the more pedestrian oriented core of the urban village and closer toward the highway. The Board suggested that their “hot button” issue with pedestrian access was in part addressed by the desire to maximize transparency at the street level facade and that wrapping the transparent aspects of the building around the corner for the full length of the 4th Ave facade was “highly desirable”.

The Board asked the Owner what their retail experience has been with signage. The applicant discussed how signage at their current building has not been successful and people don’t seem to notice it.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated they were satisfied with the design response to pedestrian access, the maximized transparency at the street level and upper façade levels, and the proposed signage. Overall the building creates a well-proportioned and unified building that will complement the scale of anticipated development by the applicable Land Use Policies and codes.

E. Landscaping

E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions *The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stated that the EDG package was very strong and felt the logic of removing the tree was clearly demonstrated and felt the project was not reasonable achievable with the tree in place.

The Board noted that the presence of the tree does not add to the value of the project as a whole.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board indicated that the proposal took advantage of the rights-of-way conditions for landscaping. They did suggest working with Seattle’s Department of Transportation on the street tree selected and the tree pit design. If possible

they suggested the use of 'evergreens' on 4th Ave NE. The landscaping strip or tree pits need to be design to protect the materials installed.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the **FINAL** Recommendation the following departures were requested:

1. (SMC 23.54.030 B.2.a. REQUIRED PARKING):

When ten or fewer parking spaces are provided, a maximum of 25 percent of the parking spaces may be striped for small vehicles. A minimum of 75 percent shall be striped for large vehicles.

The applicant proposes five parking spaces for medium vehicles and one van accessible space.

JUSTIFICATION Due to the narrowness of the site and the desire to use the retail frontage of the building to screen the parking area, it is not possible to accommodate large stall parking. The project is also requesting a reduced façade depth along 4th Ave NE to accommodate both parking and retail space.

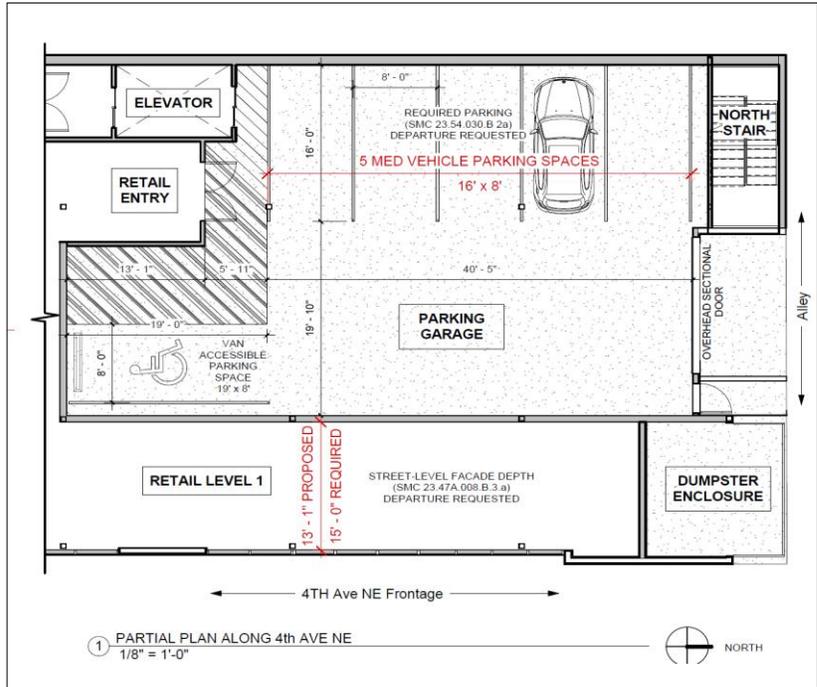
The Board indicated they were favorable towards the departure given the number customers who drive to this business and the availability of parking on 4th Ave NE.

2. (SMC 23.47A.008 B.3. STREET-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS): The Code requires nonresidential uses shall extend an average depth of at least 30 feet and a minimum depth of 15 feet from the street-level street-facing façade. The applicant proposes 13 feet along 4th Ave NE.

JUSTIFICATION Due to the narrowness of the site and the desire to use the retail frontage of the building to screen the parking area it is not possible to make the façade along 4th Ave NE the full 15 foot depth, unless the parking area behind is modified. The current design is requesting relief from the large stall requirements to make the façade as deep as possible.

The Board indicated they were favorable towards the departure — see item 1 above and item 3 below.

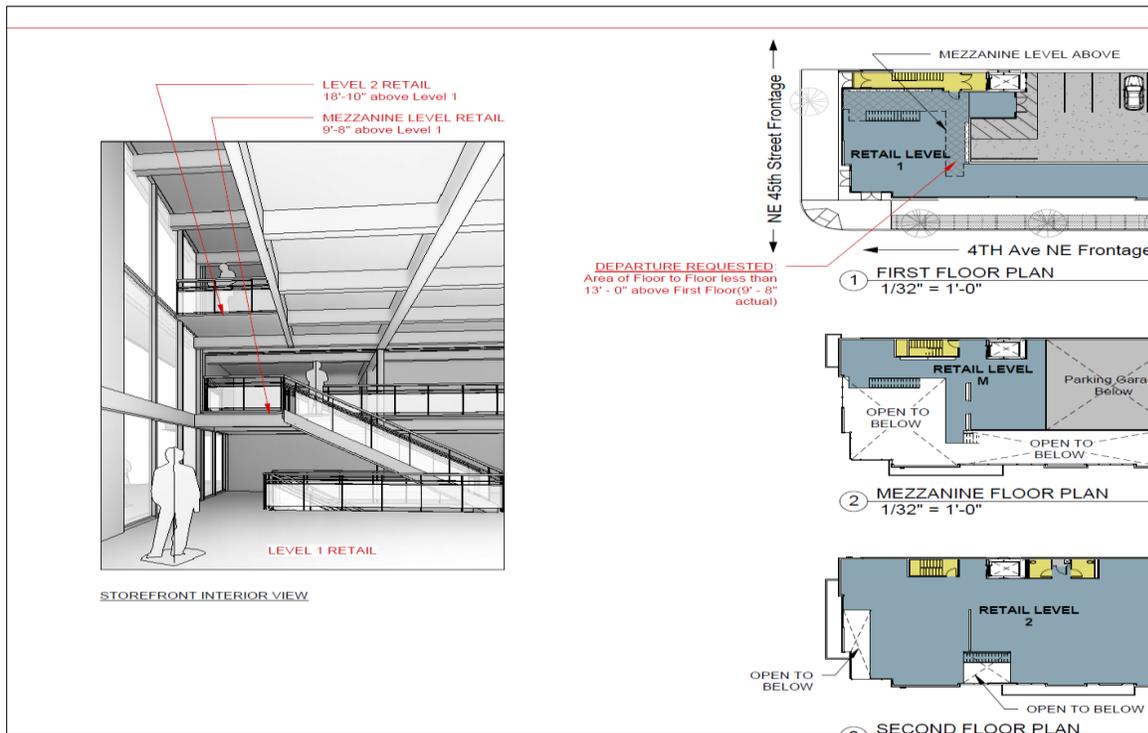
3. (SMC 23.47A.008 B.3.b. STREET-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS): The Code requires Nonresidential uses at street level shall have a floor-to-floor height of at least 13 feet. The



applicant proposes a departure from 13 foot floor-to-floor height was requested for the portion of the ground floor with a mezzanine is pursuant to SMC 23.41.012 B.2.

JUSTIFICATION The mezzanine functions as a catwalk feature that activates the street frontage and provides a spatially interesting visual pedestrian pathway from the street level retail displays to the upper floor retail display. It maintains the visibility of the retail use and promotes ‘eyes on the street’ encouraging pedestrian activity on NE 45th St while inviting shoppers to visit the retail establishment. As both the mezzanine and the main floor (which contains the mezzanine) are both used for the same sales and retail display function — the entire volume would be perceived a one space. The applicant proposes that this arrangement meets the intent of the code to provide a tall, activated retail space facing the street.

The Board indicated they were favorable towards the departure — the interior floor plan and the exterior design elements maintain a visible retail use that encourages pedestrian activity on NE 45th St and 4th Ave NE.



BOARD DIRECTION

The recommendation summarized above was based on the design review packet dated Monday, February 24, 2014, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the Monday, February 24, 2014 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and departures with no conditions.