

**Department of Planning and Development**

Diane Sugimura, Director

**Early Design Guidance  
North West Design Review Board**

August 9, 2010

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<b>Project Number:</b>	<b>3011440</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>5711 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W.</b>
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Mindy Black, Webber Thompson Architecture</b>
<b>Board Members:</b>	<b>Mark Brands, Chair Bill Singer Mike DeLilla</b>
<b>DPD Staff:</b>	<b>Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner</b>

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**Proposal Description:**

The proposal is a six story mixed use building with commercial use facing 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W., live-work units facing the two side streets and multi-family units on the upper stories with parking within the structure, behind along the street front.



The proposal site is on the west side of 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W., bound by N.W. 58<sup>th</sup> to the north and N.W. 57<sup>th</sup> St. to the south. It has 200 feet of frontage on 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W. and 100 feet of frontage on the other two streets. On the site is a former Seattle Public Library branch building built in 1963. Twenty-fourth Ave. N.W. is a predominantly commercial street in this location while

the two avenues are characterized by multi-family development. The site descends at about 4% from the north to the south, creating an elevation change of 8 to 9 feet. Two-story multi-family structures are found immediately to the west of the proposal site.

### **Public Comments**

Public comment was received at the meeting. Concern was raised about the height, bulk and scale of the proposal in contrast to existing development of two-story, multi-family residential structures to the west, where light and air may be affected with gardens and landscape becoming less viable. A potential reduction in privacy for residents to the west was also raised as an issue. Support was expressed for the design alternatives with additional setback from 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W. providing a plaza area off the sidewalk in the center area of the building. Existing mature trees, on the site and in the right-of-way, were identified to be of high aesthetic and environmental value and were requested to be preserved, by transplanting if necessary.

### **Priorities Identified:**

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 on this project. The guidance made were agreed to by all the Board members present, unless otherwise noted. While the notes below indicate the area the Board found most important, all of the Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings apply.

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

The site is a block long along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W. A single building along this frontage needs to be articulated so as to limit the appearance of length. A tripartite massing would be appropriate. This street is also characterized by commercial activity along broad sidewalks with mature street trees. The proposed building should be consistent with and add to the commercial character of the urban village in Ballard.

The two streets bordering the proposal are more multi-family residential in character and the new building should respond to this character in those areas.

**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.**

To the west of the proposal site are two existing, two-story multifamily buildings with side setbacks facing the proposal site. These existing uses should be considered in the placement of windows and open space in the proposed building and in the form of the building itself.

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

The building would present two multi-story corners along N.W. 24<sup>th</sup> St. These corners are not gateways nor otherwise unusually prominent. They should be architecturally addressed but not over emphasized.

**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.**

Massing of the build would best be concentrated to the east, along N.W. 24<sup>th</sup> St. and away from the west property line. The use of crenellation-like elements on the west façade, as shown in the preferred massing Option C, appears to be an effective treatment of the west side of the building.

Breaking the building into three distinct massing along N.W. 24<sup>th</sup> would effectively moderate height, bulk, and scale.

**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.**

The new QFC building across 24<sup>th</sup> Ave N.W. provides a strong context for this new building. Along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.W. a strong pedestrian oriented commercial character should be fostered. On the two side streets a transition from the commercial realm to a multi-family one should be established. On the west the building should provide a high degree of compatibility with the multi-family areas adjacent.

**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.**

The building forms should express the commercial, live-work base and the residential upper stories while also incorporating much movement of elements and other modulation, emphasizing a series of vertical elements or masses, to lessen the appearance of a long, narrow building.

**C-3 Human Scale - The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.**

Entry gates to a pathway around the west side of the building would add human, pedestrian level interest to that side of the proposal.

Where live work units are provided, the transition from the sidewalk realm should be carefully designed to provide the appropriate amount of connectedness between them and the public realm.

Some additional setback of the ground floor of the building at the two street corners should be done in a way which increases the sense of pedestrian comfort and accommodation there.

Techniques such as planting deciduous trees and creation of a rain garden (on the west side), which are “low impact design measures”, should be considered.

**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.**

Material and color boards should be shown at the Recommendation Meeting. Materials should be durable and at sidewalk level should provide an appealing texture and sense of durability.

### **Departure Request**

No departures were discussed.