



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3011479

Address: 500 Fairview Ave. N.

Applicant: Dick Robinson

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 20, 2010

Board Members Present: John Rose (Chair)
Mark Garrell
Jill Kurfirst
David Delfs
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Board Members Absent: Lipika Mukerji
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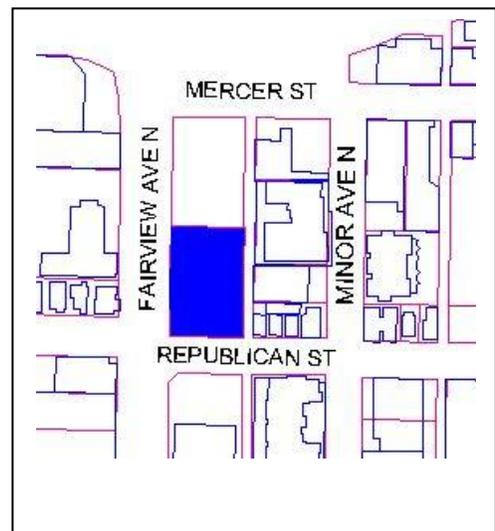
DPD Staff Present: Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Contract Rezone to SM 85

Nearby Zones: (North) IC 65
(South) IC 65
(East) SM/R 55/75
(West) IC 65

Lot Area: 19,895 sq. ft.



Current Development: Comercial builidngs

Access: Vehicular access is proposed through existing building parking garage to west.

Surrounding Development: Transitioning from older commercial and multifamily to new, larger commercial and multifamily buildings.

ECAs: none

Neighborhood Character: Grade rises to the east along Republican St. and drops to the north along Westlake Ave. The South Lake Union area has a mix of new commercial and multifamily residential buildings with older, less tall versions of the same. Immediately north of the proposal site is a recently constructed research and development laboratory building two stories lower than the proposal here. Across the alley to the east is the Pete Gross house a six story residential owned and operated by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a seven story, 108,000 gross square foot research and development laboratory building adjacent to a similar building at 530 Fairview Ave developed by the same owner. Included in the eventual MUP application will be a component to rezone the site to SM 85 feet as a contract rezone limited to construction of the building developed through Design Review and SEPA review in the MUP. In addition, the applicant intends to make use of a code provision allowing an additional 20 feet of height for the ventilation equipment without adding any stories of habitable height.

The proposed building would have a three level underground garage for approximately 130 vehicles accessed through the garage entry of the adjacent building with a driveway on Mercer Street.

Each floor of the laboratory building would be approximately 15,000 sq. ft. and be constructed of cast in place concrete with a metal and glass curtain wall. The building is to be kept narrow in order to maximize daylight entry and allow for natural ventilation.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING:

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three design alternatives were presented; each with a plaza on the west side of the building which would rise above the sidewalk towards the west as the street elevation drops. The

preferred alternative added an exterior stairway element at the northern edge of the proposal site providing pedestrian entry to both the new and existing R and D buildings. It also incorporates a lower, two story building mass at the southwest corner of the site intended to provide building presence at the street corner a restaurant or retail space on the first level and meeting space for the building occupants on the second level.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Three members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- A café owner in one of the small, former houses east of the proposal site on E. Republican St. indicated that the existing structures there are likely to remain for some years, that light and air access to them is a priority, and that when site is redeveloped it is likely to have a residential component which should be given consideration in the design and siting of the subject building.
- John Phearson indicated this design is much better than the ones for UW Medicine South Lake Union, that “considering” green elements did not provide solid assurance, and that the plaza area should be open to all members of the public. He also asked how much setback there is from the Fairview right of way (answer 25 feet), and determined that the penthouses are proposed to be set back 10 feet from any building edge.
- A representative of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center spoke concerning their facility, the Pete Gross House, across the alley from the proposal site. He expressed a hopeful expectation that the developer would be as cooperative as when the other R and D building was developed across the alley. He also indicated concern about impact on the Pete Gross House and its residents from loss of light and air, placement of loading docks, and exhaust and noise from emergency generators.

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 provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

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

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.**

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Encourage provision of “outlooks and overlooks” for the public to view the lake and cityscapes. Examples include provision of public plazas and/or other public open spaces and changing the form or facade setbacks of the building to enhance opportunities for views.
- Minimize shadow impacts to Cascade Park.
- New development is encouraged to take advantage of site configuration to accomplish sustainability goals. The Board is generally willing to recommend departures from development standards if they are needed to achieve sustainable design. Refer to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) manual which provides additional information. Examples include:
 - Solar orientation
 - Storm water run-off, detention and filtration systems
 - Sustainable landscaping
 - Versatile building design for entire building life cycle

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

The vision for street level uses in South Lake Union is a completed network of sidewalks that successfully accommodate pedestrians. Streetscape compatibility is a high priority of the neighborhood with redevelopment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming and open to the general public.

- Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, such as: tree grates; benches; lighting.
- Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Where appropriate, consider a reduction in the required amount of commercial and retail space at the ground level, such as in transition zones between commercial and residential areas. Place retail in areas that are conducive to the use and will be successful.
- Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.
- Keep neighborhood connections open, and discourage closed campuses.
- Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.
- Reinforce pedestrian connections both within the neighborhood and to other adjacent neighborhoods. Transportation infrastructure should be designed with adjacent sidewalks, as development occurs to enhance pedestrian connectivity.
- Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.
- Create businesses and community activity clusters through co-location of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.
- Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity 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.

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.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer,

Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.

- Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.
- Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as: landscaping; trellis; complementary materials; detailing; accent trim.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- 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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

- 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.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as: curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow; pedestrian-oriented street lighting; street furniture.

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-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.

D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.

E. Landscaping

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Consider integrating artwork into publicly accessible areas of a building and landscape that evokes a sense of place related to the previous uses of the area. Neighborhood

themes may include service industries such as laundries, auto row, floral businesses, photography district, arts district, maritime, etc.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Landscaping should be designed to take advantage of views to waterfront and downtown Seattle.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

The Board indicated they are not in support of the current design at the massing level. They do not think it relates well to the residential and commercial area to the east on either the ground level or in the location of the massing on the site. Pedestrian activity in the area is expected to flow east and west along Republican St. and not north and south on Fairview or in the alley.

The setback provided for a plaza along Fairview should, in the Board's view, be shared with pedestrian users along Republican St. and with residents to the east by increasing the massing setback from the alley.

Too much of the bulk of the building is massed along the alley. The Board would like to see massing examples which open up to let light and air in to the Pete Gross House across the alley and which create a pedestrian amenity along Republican St. A setback from the north would be more important than a setback from Fairview Ave. N. The shift of Republican St. to the north on the west side of Fairview Ave. N. is an important element of the context to relate to.

Materials and modulation will be important elements of the design.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

- 1. Building Entry Grade (SMC 23.48.014):** The Code requires building entries to be within three feet of sidewalk grade. The applicant proposes the building entry at approximately five feet

above the sidewalk grade at a point mid block on Fairview Ave. N. with a stairway shared with the building to the north.

The Board indicated neither support for nor resistance to the requested departure, at this time.

- 2. Street-level Setback (23.48.014):** The Code limits street-level building setbacks on Class 1 Pedestrian streets to 12 feet except that up to 30% of a façade can set back more provided the area is more than 20 feet from any street corner. The applicant proposes a 25 foot setback for most of the Fairview Ave. N. façade.

The Board indicated neither support for nor resistance to the departure. The members indicated that too much of the building setback area had been placed along Fairview Ave. N. as opposed to along the alley and along Republican St.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting.