City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE
QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3011479

Address: 500 Fairview Ave. N.

Applicant: Mithun Architecture for BioMed Realty Trust, Inc.

Date of Meeting: June 15, 2011

Board Members Present: David Delfs (Chair)
Mindy Black
Jill Kurfirst

Board Members Absent: Jacob Connell
Lipika Mukerji

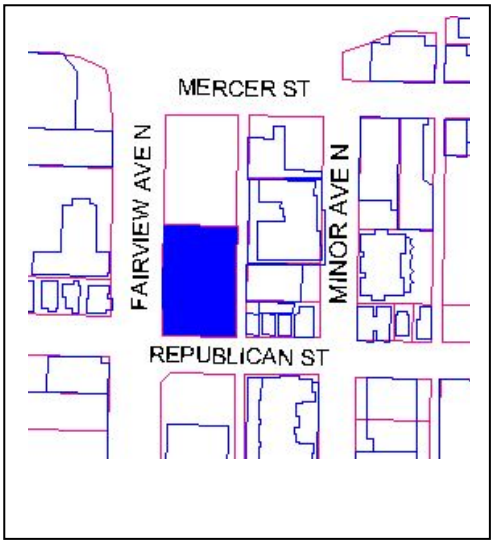
DPD Staff Present: Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Contract Rezone to SM 85 from IC 65”

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

Lot Area: 19,895 sq. ft.



Current Development:	Commercial building and surface parking lot.
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 and older commercial and multifamily residential buildings. Immediately north of the proposal site is a recently constructed research and development laboratory building two stories lower than the proposed development. Across the alley to the east is the Pete Gross house, a six story residential structure owned and operated by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

PROJECT PRESENTATION

The project proposal shown was modified in response to early design guidance provided by the Board. The changes focused on three comment areas from the Second Early Design Guidance Meeting.

In response to the Board's request to study the crossing at Fairview and Republican the design presented reflected the SDOT plan to widen Fairview along the proposal site. As a result of the widening of the roadway space for street trees is lost. A row of trees on the site just inside of the property line remains. At the Board's request the applicants contacted SDOT to see if a modified pedestrian ramping and crossing configuration would be appropriate or be allowed. SDOT responded that non-standard crossing arrangements would not be allowed here.

The presentation materials included two proposed layouts of laboratory spaces in response to the Board's request and desire to see what the relationship of uses within would likely be to those across the alley to the east. In both layouts the plan directly across from the Pete Gross House was shown as conference rooms. In addition, that façade element was redesigned to reduce the amount of vision glass. Adjustable, interior, window blinds would be provided in those spaces as well.

The facades, materials, exterior lighting and planting were further refined and shown in the graphics and at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A few public comments were made at this Recommendation Meeting meeting. It was asked how the ventilation system would be designed, where exhausting air would take place and pointed and what impacts this could this have on residential areas to the east. In response to this question the applicants stated that exhaust vents would be on the roof, behind screening walls and would vent upwards notable velocity. Another commenter stated that some residents of the Pete Gross House have compromised immune systems and might be susceptible to emissions from the lab spaces. Another comment inquired as to how security in open spaces accessible by the public would be maintained, to which the applicant stated that building security would be adequate to respond to needs which might arise.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board revisited the priorities identified as most important at their first EDG meeting and reached the conclusions described below.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

The Board stated the building proposed exhibited very good design. The proposed design responds well, it said, to the "mean block" of Fairview Ave. N. and it also does a good job of responding to the Republican streetscape. It found the southern elevation to be most interesting with its green elements, and pedestrian environment transitioning from the residential context to the east to the commercial character on Fairview. The café space was found to be clearly delineated and enough separate from the rest of the building to be a successful space of its own.

The Board discussed the relationship of the proposed building to the Pete Gross House across the alley, considering further changes to the façade in that area in an attempt to increase privacy of residents to the east, and in the end decided that the proposed treatments to the façade as shown were sufficient in combination to the likely uses shown in the tenant build out examples shown.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board unanimously recommended approval of the one requested Development Standard Departure.

SMC 23.48.014 General Façade Requirement

Requested Departure: to allow a primary building entrance to be five feet above sidewalk grade rather than three or less as required.

The Board found that the design for the entry responded better to the unusual site conditions including a sloping topography and an existing building entrance immediately to the north than a code complying scheme would.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Board recommended approval of the building and site design as presented at the meeting and recommended approval of the requested development standard departure.