



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

Project Number: 3011606

Address: 420 Pontius Ave. N.

Applicant: Vulcan Real Estate Inc.

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 06, 2010

Board Members Present: Jon Rose (Chair)
David Delfs
Lipika Mukerji
Jill Kurfirst

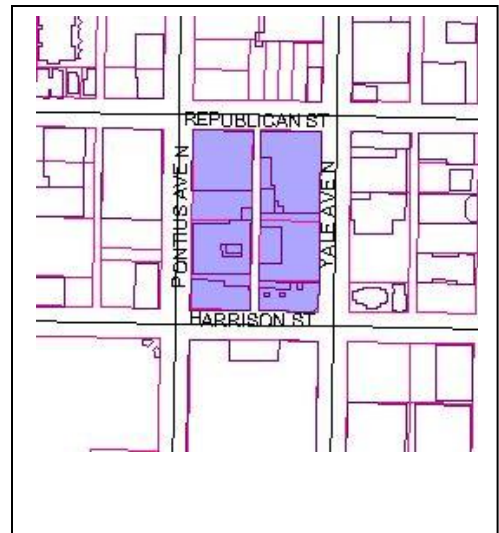
Board Members Absent: Mark Garrell

DPD Staff Present: Scott Kemp, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed Residential (SM/R 55'/75')

Nearby Zones: (North) SM/R 55'/75'
(South) SM75'
(East) SM 75'
(West) SM/R 55'/75'



Current Development: Turn of the 20th Century brick and heavy timber commercial and industrial buildings.

Access: Access can be had from the alley through the full block and from each of the four surrounding streets.

Surrounding Development: In addition to the historic landmark Russian Orthodox Church across Yale Ave. there is a mix of older warehouse type commercial buildings and newer multi-family and office buildings.

ECAs: None.

Neighborhood Character: Prominent elements of the neighborhood character include the landmark Russian Orthodox Church across Yale Ave., the landmark Supply Laundry Building and smoke stack on the site, the Cascade Park to the southwest and the narrow Yale Ave. roadway width.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a full block retail and residential development with two new buildings, preservation of the Historic Landmark Supply Laundry Building and accessory parking (Application to be reviewed with 3011607 and 3011522). The two new buildings are designed to appear as several building expressions.



DESIGN PRESENTATION

The applicant’s presentation included three variants of a mixed use structure with commercial at grade and multifamily development on the approximately three quarters of the block remaining along with preservation of the Supply Laundry Building and Tower. Two of the schemes were more typically orthogonal than the preferred alternative (Concept K) which has a more sophisticated approach to organizing the site. Concept K is shown below in a drawing presented at the Board meeting.

Concept K is organized around a central core on either side of the alley with the historic smoke stack as an element of a plaza space. The designated historic landmark Supply Laundry Building and smoke stack are to be preserved and reused. The proposed new buildings are organized in three part relationship. While there are two new building proposed, one on each side of the alley, these are divided into multiple building expressions giving the look of multiple, attached building. Three of the building expressions would form an urban fabric; rectangular and functional. Two of the building expressions would be “objects; focal points of architectural

interest. The main object building expression would occupy the southwest corner of the site and would be in visual relation with the Cascade Park to the southwest.



Commercial reuse, either retail and/or office, is likely in the historic Supply Laundry building. Commercial uses are also planned for street frontage along Harrison St. Residential uses would face sidewalks and a Seattle Public Utilities water quality treatment swail along both Yale Ave. and Pontius Ave.

Energy efficiency is a design objective as is provision of some elements of urban food production.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Noted that pedestrians walk past the block and their continued transit should be accommodated during construction.
- Stated that a challenge in full block development is to avoid a monotonous experience at the pedestrian level.
- Encouraged ground level residential with a carefully devised scheme of setbacks.

- Concerned that the proposal might “overpower” the existing Russian Orthodox Church across Yale Ave.
- Endorsed the proposed level open space as attractive, broad and inviting and called for implementing uses and design which will draw people into them
- Asked that units be incorporated into the project which are attractive to families; such as three bedroom units.
- Endorsed placement of the driveway on Republican St. next to the alley entrance as a way to lessen the ground level impact of the driveway entry by reducing the amount of building floor area lost to ramping.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how work lofts (not necessarily live-work lofts) across from the Cascade Park would be well located and the retail spaces should be visible from the street. Entrances to key elements of building programming should be located where they will animate outdoor plaza spaces on the interior of the site.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of pedestrian place making, active corners, and of other quiet, calm areas. They also endorsed an effort to get SDOT approval of a raised street at mid-block pedestrian crossings as a traffic calming device.

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-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape through the use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board members discussed the importance of the transition from the residence to the street. They were interested in how the incorporation of the swale, the streets, elements of layering and separation would all work. The Board asked the applicants to bring details of these concepts to the next meeting at which they would consider the proposal.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the importance of separating the pedestrians and vehicles on and surrounding the proposal site. Along the alley /plaza interface differences in materials, bollards, etc. can be used for this purpose.

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.

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-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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Support the existing fine-grained character of the neighborhood with a mix of building styles.
- Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.
- Expose historic signs and vintage advertising on buildings where possible.
- Respond to the history and character in the adjacent vicinity in terms of patterns, style, and scale. Encourage historic character to be revealed and reclaimed, for example through use of community artifacts, and historic materials, forms and textures.

- Respond to the working class, maritime, commercial and industrial character of the Waterfront and Westlake areas. Examples of elements to consider include: window detail patterns; open bay doors; sloped roofs.
- Respond to the unique, grass roots, sustainable character of the Cascade neighborhood. Examples of elements to consider include: community artwork; edible gardens; water filtration systems that serve as pedestrian amenities; gutters that support greenery.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the roofs of the proposed building comprise a fifth elevation and need to be well designed and use high quality finishes.

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.

C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Enhance public safety throughout the neighborhood to foster 18-hour public activity. Methods to consider are: enhanced pedestrian and street lighting; well- designed public spaces that are defensively designed with clear sight lines and opportunities for eyes on the street; police horse tie-up locations for routine patrols and larger event assistance.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated that the proposed location of the loading dock has potential negative impacts on nearby interior plazas and uses. They asked for some effort to be made to devise screening elements for this adjacency and that these be shown at the next meeting where they consider the proposal.

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.

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 and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

E. Landscaping

E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites. Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Support the creation of a hierarchy of passive and active open space within South Lake Union. This may include pooling open space requirements on-site to create larger spaces.
- Encourage landscaping that meets LEED criteria. This is a priority in the Cascade neighborhood.
- Where appropriate, install indigenous trees and plants to improve aesthetics, capture water and create habitat.
- Retain existing, non-intrusive mature trees or replace with large caliper trees.
- Water features are encouraged including natural marsh-like installations.
- Reference the City of Seattle Right Tree Book and the City Light Streetscape Light Standards Manual for appropriate landscaping and lighting options for the area.

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.
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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.

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. Upper Level Setbacks (SMC 23.48.012):** The Code requires upper level setbacks required along the alley above 25 feet and along Harrison St. above 45 feet. The applicant proposes various amounts of setback as shown in graphics on pages 32-39 of the DRB Meeting Packs.

Three board members indicated preliminary support for these departures and one expressed some reservation. As with each departure, the applicant will need to show how the departure better meets the guidelines.

- 2. Vehicle Access (SMC 23.48.034):** The Code requires alley access to parking and loading. The applicant proposes alley access to loading but street access to below grade parking from Republican. This approach lessens conflicts with the loading dock area, causes less conflict with pedestrians crossing the alley mid block, and requires the sacrifice of less commercial floor area in the building due to head height for ramping.

The Board indicated initial support for this departure.

- 3. Residential Amenity (SMC 23.48.020):** The Code requires residential amenity area of at least 5% of gross building area in residential use on each site. The applicant proposes to calculate residential amenity area as an overall project, lumping both sides of the alley into a single calculation (excluding the alley area itself) and to meet the 5% requirement on the two sites together.

The Board indicated initial support for this departure.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.

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