



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD July 11 & August 1, 2011

Project Number: 3012186

Address: 5043 Brooklyn Av NE

Applicant: Yuri Manchik, for 52nd & Brooklyn LLC

Dates of Meetings: Monday, July 11, 2011

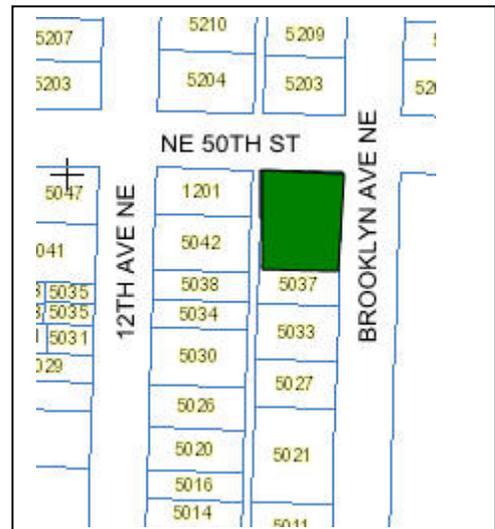
Board Members Present: Joe Hurley (Chair)
Salone Habibuddin
Martine Pizana
Peter Krech
Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: LR3

Nearby Zones: (North) LR2
(South) LR3
(East) LR3 RC
(West) LR3



Rectangular site, 8408 Sq. ft., slopes east to west. Site faces onto NE 52nd Street on north and Brooklyn Avenue NE on east and alley on west. Northeast corner of lot has been scooped out to accommodate small commercial building at sidewalk level.

Lot Area:

Two lots are being combined for proposed project. The corner lot (5049) is occupied by a two-unit residential building and a small, single-story commercial building. The lot to the south (5047) is occupied with a multifamily residential structure.

Surrounding Development: There has been very little new development in the area in recent times. Directly across Brooklyn Avenue NE is the University Heights Neighborhood Center (the former University Heights Elementary School) which houses a variety of educational and cultural functions and offices. The weekly University Farmers Market is held in the open area south of the structure. The dominant uses along both sides of Brooklyn Avenue NE, however, are residential, with a variety of single family and multifamily structures.

Neighborhood Character: Architectural styles in the area are mixed vernacular and revival styles and none stand out particularly other than the wood framed and wooden clad two and a half community center, which is one of the oldest surviving elementary school buildings in the state.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal is to construct a residential building with a basement level and three above grade floors. The building would include 50-60 studio units. The only parking proposed is that for bicycles. No commercial space is proposed.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 11, 2011

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include structures located at the center of the site.

The first scheme ("Alternative 1") showed a "U" or a "C" shaped building with the open center of the "C" being a courtyard facing onto Brooklyn Avenue NE. facing onto

The second scheme ("Alternative 2") showed "Alternative 1" reversed, with the open courtyard facing the alley to the west.

The third scheme ("Alternative 3") showed an "H" shaped scheme, with the two legs of the "H" parallel to NE 52nd Street and a thinner wing of the crossbar allowing for two smaller courtyards, one facing the alley and the other facing Brooklyn Avenue NE.

The applicants noted that none of the schemes would require departures from development standards.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Noted that there were existing safety issues associated with the alley, including drug users occupying the space and question the desirability of the residential courtyard facing onto the alley....
- Stated that the proposed structure, no matter the orientation of the scheme chosen, would be out of scale with the rest of the block....
- Objected to the way the proposed structure would cast significant shadows on properties across the alley.
- Opposed the building due to its “lack of fit” within the block.
- Encouraged a high gated enclosure should the courtyard face the alley.
 - Concerned with the livability of the studio units, intended for student: “it would be worse than a jail.”

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 comments relating to the proposal.

- Referring to comments from the public about the “fit” of the proposed structure within the neighborhood, members of the Board noted that the applicants had provided insufficient analysis of the nine block surrounding area and immediate context for the Board to evaluate the siting and massing schemes proposed.
- The proposal needs to show more information regarding entrances and the quality of the outdoor spaces being proposed.
- Needs to provide sections to reveal the relationship of the proposed structure to existing and finished grades.
- Show the existing vegetation on site and indicate plans to remove or to enhance the existing grades and vegetation. There was discussion of a chestnut tree on site. Was there an intention or plan to maintain that tree?
- Since the lowest floor contains units below grade, supply more details and information regarding light and windows, window wells as they deal with issues of egress, safety and security.
- Provide more street-level renderings of proposed structure.

Commenting on the proposed schemes, the Board agreed that the “H” scheme would probably work best, given the program of providing a number of smaller units.

The NE 52nd Street façade would be prominent and benefit from modulation and refinement because of that fact.

Although the Board appreciated the attempt, in each of the proposed schemes, to create a symmetrical expression, the configuration and location of the site called out for a special, even counterpunctal treatment of the northeast section and corner of the proposed structure.

Specifically, the Board asked that the applicants return for a second Early Design Guidance Meeting. The applicants should return prepared to supply greater information relating to the issues related above.

Staff Comments

After the first Early Design Guidance meeting it was requested that at the Second EDG meeting the design team should:

provide some three dimensional views of the broader built environment, indicating graphically how the proposed structure would fit into the existing built context .

provide at least some preliminary sun and shadow studies to indicate how the new structure would impact adjacent built structures.

At the Second EDG meeting the applicants should also be prepared to present examples of their previous work, especially such works that would relate to the type and scale of the structure proposed for the subject site.

At the Second EDG meeting the applicants should be prepared to have some initial discussion of materials proposed for their building.

It was noted that after the presentation at the second Early Design Guidance meeting the Board would identify those Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) that would be of the highest priority for a successful project.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

It was noted after the first Early Design Guidance meeting that 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) and that the Board's recommendation would be reserved until the subsequent final Board meeting.

At the time of the First Early Design Guidance meeting, the design team indicated that no departures from development standards were being requested.

Second Early Design Guidance Meeting, August 1, 2011

A second Early Design Guidance meeting was held on Monday, August 1, 2011, at which time the applicants presented their three potential schemes for the site.

An expanded presentation packet and power-point presentation specifically addressed concerns the Board had expressed at the first Early Design Guidance meeting. Sections and site perspectives clarified the ways each of the schemes fitted into the topography of the site. Drawings portrayed a broader and more detailed sense of the neighborhood context. The design team shared with the Board a portfolio of its previous design solutions and finished work. Sun and shadow studies were shown that focused primarily on the impacts the proposed development on site would have on properties across the alley to the west.

Public Comment

As at their earlier meeting comments from members of the public touched upon concerns regarding security and safety, the “fit” of the proposal within the existing built environment , and the adequacy of provisions for parking, since it was maintained that both residents and visitors would inevitably travel there by private automobiles. Some members of the public remained troubled by the “livability” and desirability of such small residential units. Additional comments focused on the need for gating the plaza areas for security reasons, on the need for an on-site live-in manager, and a persistent concern that the size of the proposed units and terms of tenancy proposed would promote a transient population that would have no vested interest in the rest of the block or the community. Trash and recycling functions and loading and unloading had not yet been addressed conceptually or graphically.

Board Deliberations

The Board commended the applicants on the improved quality of the presentation and the specific responses that had been made to their requests for more detailed information. Among major issues the Board suggested still needing addressing or needing more detailed development were the following:

- Safety was an issue and how a sense of security and safety was to be provided was still not clear, in particular for the plaza area off the alley –which would benefit from providing sight lines and physical transparency through the building--, for the basement units, and for a seeming lack of eyes on a variety of nooks and crannies; security as an issue needs to be taken seriously and addressed as an essential design component;
- There was no clear hierarchy nor pathways established from sidewalk to entries; a sense of primary and secondary entry needed to be established and made apparent;
- The building was a corner building and not an in-fill or slot building within the block; addressing this fact should lead to an integrated resolution of hierarchy of entries and the functionalities of spaces within the plaza area; the plaza area definitely needed to be carried around the corner of the structure along NE 52nd Street;
- Design of the Plaza terraces and the street/sidewalk clearly was in need of integration; it appeared awkward and in need of further thought and design.

- In general, the edge conditions all around the site were in need of refinement.
- Questions were raised about the constructability of the structure, given the lack of ganging the infrastructure of plumbing, etc.; a concern was voiced whether the design of the units, given their small size, was as refined as it needed to be to obtain truly livable units.

Given the general comments from the Board members, the following Design Guidelines from the University Community Guidelines Checklist were identified as being of highest priority for developing a successful MUP application and well-designed building: A-1, A-3, A-6, A-7, A-10, C-2, C-4, D-7, and E-2 and E-3.

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.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street

Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

- 1. On mixed-use corridors orient primary business and residential entrances to the commercial street;*
- 2. In multifamily developments (excluding townhouses) it is generally preferable to have one walkway from the street;*
- 3. Units facing a courtyard should have a porch, stoop, deck or seating area associated with the dwelling unit and;*
- 4. In residential developments, front yard fences over four feet in height that reduce visual access and security should be avoided.*

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.

A-7 Residential Open Space

Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

The ground-level open space should reinforce positive streetscape qualities, provides for the comfort, health and recreation of residents, and increases privacy and reduces visual impacts to all neighboring properties.

A courtyard in townhouse or cluster developments may, in some cases, be better than individual open space for each unit.

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.

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.

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-7 Personal Safety and Security

Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.

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.

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.

Retain existing large trees wherever possible.

The above guidelines should be related directly to comments made by the Board in their deliberations.

Having determined those guidelines of highest priority for the proposal at 5043 Brooklyn Avenue NE, the Board recommended that the application #3012186 proceed to design development in light of the guidelines and to MUP application.