



City of Seattle

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



INITIAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD April 2, 2012

Project Number: 3012186

Address: 5043 Brooklyn Av NE

Applicant: Yuri Manchik, for 52nd & Brooklyn LLC

Dates of Meetings: Monday, April 02, 2012

Board Members Present: Joe Hurley (Chair)
Salone Habibuddin
Martine Zettle
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 story community center directly across Brooklyn Av NE, 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 partial 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 had been presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting held on July 11, 2011. All of the options included structures located at the center of the site. Scheme ("Alternative ") number 3 had shown 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. [This was the preferred scheme . The applicants noted that none of the schemes would require departures from development standards.](#)

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 counter-punctal 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, prepared to supply greater information relating to some of the issues related below:

- The “fit” of the proposed structure within the neighborhood.
- More information regarding entrances and the quality of the outdoor spaces being proposed.
- Clarifying the relationship of the proposed structure to existing and finished grades.
- Supplying more details and information regarding light and window wells as they deal with issues of egress, safety and security, as well as general issues of security.

A second Early Design Guidance meeting was held on August 1, 2011, **at which time the applicants presented an expanded presentation packet and power-point presentation specifically addressing 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.**

Recommendation Meeting, April 2, 2012

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately twenty members of the public attended this Recommendation Meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Security issues, especially those associated with the alley, had not been addressed; specifically, the residential courtyard facing onto the alley needed to limit access.
- Project was too unusual, the window treatment in particular;
- Lack of parking remained an issue.
- Concerns remained regarding the livability of the units.
- **On a corner lot but still not treated as a corner building.**

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

- The approach to security remained too passive.
- An improved site plan, but still did not address security issues.
- The artwork/structure at the corner does not feel integrated with the open space or the building And doesn't address the corner situation.
- The ground plane needs softening.

- The Board did not feel that there had been a clear sense of real development since the last presentation.
- The railings seemed an afterthought. What considerations influenced their design?
- The landscaping and treatment of entries lacked a sense of hierarchy from private, semi-private, semi-public and public spaces.
- Needs to convey a greater sense of details and materiality.
- The placement and treatment of the windows needs to be more purposeful and choices made more convincing.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated April 2, 2012, and the materials presented and verbally described by the applicant at the April 2, 2012 Design Recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended that the applicants return for another presentation of the subject design.

The Board asked that the applicants return with further refinements and be prepared to address the issues related above. Specifically, the ground plane at each of the building's edges stands in need refinement to convey a clear sense of pathways, a hierarchy of spaces, and an abiding concern for safety and security. The relationship between the public realm and the semi-private outdoor space at the corner of Brooklyn Av NE and NE 52nd needs special attention, as does the relationship of the private courtyard that faces the alley.. The Board recommended that the newly completed "Duncan Place" development, although of a different scale and architectural vocabulary, might be worth studying for the way s the ground plane had been addressed and how elements of fencing, railings, walls, steps and landscaping had provided a satisfactory solution to some similar grade plane and domain challenges.

It was the Board's expectation that at the next Recommendation meeting the applicants should be prepared to show details of proposed building finishes, landscaping materials, as well as proposed railings and fences and gates.