



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
 NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: **3012445**

Address: **4251 Aurora Avenue North**

Applicant: **N 3 Architects, LLC**

Date of Meeting: **Monday, January 30, 2012**

Board Members Present: **Ted Panton(Chair)
 Jean Morgan
 David Neiman
 Mike DeLilla
 Jerry Coburn**

DPD Staff Present: **Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner**

Site Zone: **C1-40**

Nearby Zones: (North) **C1-40**
 (South) **C1-40**
 (East) **C1-40**
 (West) **LR2**

Lot Area: **13,319 SF**



Current
Development: **Thunderbird Motel (vacant)**

Access: **N. 43rd St. N. Motor Pl.**

Surrounding
Development: **Single family, small size apartments, commercial, mixed-use residential**

ECAs: **None**

Neighborhood
Character: **Development to the North, South, and East is a mixture of large mixed-use residential and small to medium size commercial buildings. Development to the West is a mixture of single family houses and small apartment buildings.**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS TO BUILD A FOUR STORY 71 UNIT AFFORDABLE APARTMENT BUILDING WITH GROUND FLOOR WITH GROUND FLOOR SPACES TO HOUSE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR THE RESIDENTS.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: JANUARY 30, 2012
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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include four above-grade floors with a roof deck for the residents.

Scheme 1: Showed four floors above grade with a roof deck The first floor occupies the entire lot area. The residential units are setback 15 feet from the West property line. Parking is below grade.

Scheme 2: Showed four full above-grade floors with a roof deck. The first floor occupies the entire lot area and contains residential units on the South end of the site. The residential units on floors two to four are setback 15 feet from the West property line. Parking is below grade.

Scheme 3: (Preferred) Showed four above-grade floors with a roof deck. The first floor occupies eastern half of the site. On grade parking lot occupies the western half of the site . The residential units on floors two to four are setback 15 feet from the West property line and cantilever over the parking area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 3 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Concern about size of the building to the south end of the site because of sloping site.
- Privacy for the cluster of houses to the west is a concern. Tenants can look into the backyards or into homes.
- Access to garbage and recycling pick up is a concern. They do not want bins left on the street.
- Asked the question if any of the units will be suitable for families.
- Appreciate the way the ground floor is designed for later reconfiguration. It's important to build for future commercial opportunities.
- The building crowds the block.

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.

A. Site Planning

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.*

The Board discussed privacy issues from the roof and west elevation. The discussion focused on the use of ground level vegetation, location of upper level windows and interior layout of units to increase privacy. The Board requested that at the next Board meeting — the site plan show topography, an East to West site section, and full building footprint in relation to other buildings.

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.*

The Board discussed vegetation and other methods for screening. Include modulation along the west facade to break down scale. Look at method to reduce the feel of the large cantilever.

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.*

The Board discussed the use of colors and materials. Consider the Thunderbird Motel icon elements as a “road town”. Show fence design, show color elevations on 4 sides.

C-3 *Human Scale.* *The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements and details to achieve a good human scale.*

The Board emphasized incorporating modulation to break down the scale of the building.

D. *Pedestrian Environment*

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.*

The Board discussed the use of fenestration or materials, where possible in this façade to mitigate the blank wall.

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.*

The Board requested applicant contact SPU for trash pick protocols and show location of trash room and access.

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

The Board discussed the need to address safety, surveillance and security at the parking area and roof garden. Provide a lighting plan to show adequate lighting.

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.*

The Board discussed the requirement for transparency on the street level façade along Aurora Ave, N. Motor Pl and N. 43rd St. At the next Board meeting — show interior layout to verify uses allow for transparency requirements.

E. Landscaping

E-3 *Landscaping 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.*

The Board discussed allowing a reduction in the commercial space depth requirement of 30' in order to maintain the 5' landscape buffer at west property line. The Board emphasized that parking/landscape area should be a designed space that acts as a buffer, but also creates a positive space.

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 suggested but yet formally requested:

1. The Code requires residential uses along street-level street-facing facade when facing an arterial not exceed 20%. The applicant proposes 100% residential uses at street-level street-facing facade and design the overall street level to meet commercial requirements including height and transparency.

The Board indicated an allowance in increasing residential uses at street-level with a design that meets other related commercial street-level standards.

2. The Code requires non-residential uses along street-level extend an average of 30' and a minimum of 15'.

The Board recommended the 30' requirement be reduced to allow for the 5' landscape buffer at the west property line and parking area.

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.