



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012485

Address: 14002 Linden Avenue N.)

Applicant: Jean Morgan, Morgan Design Group LLC, for Interurban Senior Living Associates Limited Partnership (SHAG)

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 28, 2011

Board Members Present: Ted Panton (Chair)
Mike DeLilla
David Nieman
Jerry Coburn

Board Member Recusant: Jean Morgan

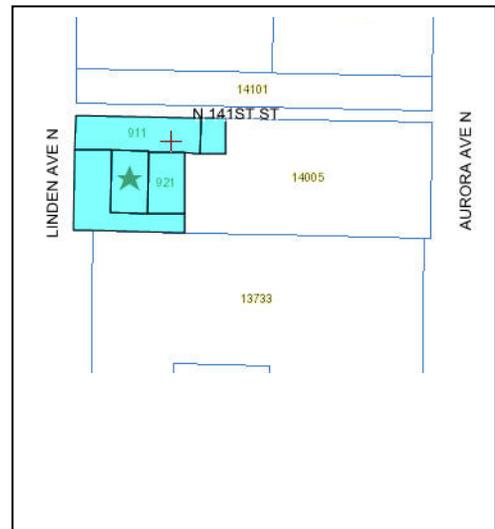
DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: C2-65'

Nearby Zones: (North) C2-65'
(South) C2-65'
(East) C2-65'
(West) SF 7200

Lot Area: The site is irregular in shape , relatively flat and totals 34,970 square feet in size.



Current Development: The site is currently occupied by a commercial demolition and excavation company. There are two storage sheds, a larger shop building, and two former single family residences now used as commercial buildings on site.

Access: Current access is from both 141st Street NW and from Linden Avenue N.

Surrounding Development: Directly to the west across Linden Avenue N. is the Bitter Lake Reservoir. There are multifamily apartments and condominium buildings north and south of the reservoir. To the east, between the subject site and Aurora Avenue N. is a retail car dealership with abundant car storage space. Directly to the south is a car storage lot for another auto dealership. Further to the south along Linden Avenue N. are located other multifamily apartment developments. To the north, across N. 141st Street are some smaller commercial buildings and further to the north a large mixed-use building with residential units above commercial spaces at street level. The entire area is located within the Bitter Lake Hub Urban Village.

ECAs: There are no identified environmentally critical areas on or abutting the site. The site is general level along Linden Avenue N, but rises approximately 14 feet to the east across the entire site.

Neighborhood Character: The site lies on block to the west of Aurora Avenue N., also known as Washington State highway 99 and as Pacific Highway 99, a busy arterial that connects with the Canadian border to the north and to state highways 99 in Oregon and California that eventually crosses into Mexico. Development along Aurora Avenue N. in Seattle is that of “strip” commercial development, situated to serve customers arriving in vehicles. The pattern of development is characterized by discontinuous, low-slung lodging and commercial buildings perched as islands on seas of asphalt-paved parking lots easily accessed by vehicles from the arterial. A series of improvements along Linden Avenue N. are attempting to maintain and establish its character as a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. Efforts are being made to include it as part of the development of a multi-jurisdictional “Interurban Trail,” with improvements already made and underway north of Seattle north in Shoreline, Edmonds and Everett, within and near the Interurban Railroad right-of-way that had connected Seattle with Bellingham to the north.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a seven-story residential building containing approximately 178 one and two-bedroom apartments for low-income seniors above a ground floor containing residential amenity spaces and administrative office space. Parking for approximately 104 vehicles will be supplied within the structure. The single-use residential development will require Conditional

Use approval by the Department of Planning and Development. An Early Design Guidance Meeting was held on September 11, 2011

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DESIGN PRESENTATION

John Parsaie again made the presentation on behalf of the developer. The design team presentation outlined the design development the proposal had undergone in response to the Board's Early Design Guidance. The principal changes were in several areas. First, community rooms had been placed at the two corners facing onto Linden Avenue N., extending along the street-facing façade. This was described as allowing for greater transparency at these points since fenestration into these spaces was now provided on the north-facing and south-facing facades where only solid walls had been before. The effect was not only to enhance the feeling of a tower element at each corner but to increasing the experience of "eyes on the street."

The electrical transformer room, at the Board's suggestion, had been moved from the northwest corner to an interior portion of the building along the south façade. . The corner elements of the façade were strengthened and unified, with the raised parapet and single color wrapping the corner.

The result, the Board would agree, was a significant enhancement in the prominence of the Northwest and Southwest corners.

Activation of the N.141st Street corner meant moving the trash holding and loading space further east on the N. 141st Street façade.

Responding to another request made by the Board at the Early Design Guidance meeting, a sidewalk had been added along the south side of 141st Street, promising an enhancement , inchoately at least, of the pedestrian connection between Linden Avenue N. and Aurora Avenue N.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Three members of the public affixed their names to the sign-in sheet. Concerns were voiced, as at the Early Design Guidance meeting, regarding pedestrian and vehicular safety along N. 141st Street and the limited parking provided for guests of the residents, but the response to the design changes in the proposal were generally favorable.

DESIGN DEPARTURES

The applicant identified and requested the following departures from development standards.

DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	APPLICANT'S JUSTIFICATION	BOARD RECCOMENDATION
Street level development standards (SMC 23.47A.008 A 2.b) No More than 40% of the street facing façade can have blank walls and the length cannot exceed 20'	Request waiver from this standard along N 141 st Street	Due to the slope and proximity of the sidewalk to the building, there are two lengths of the wall that are longer than 20 in length. The total amount of blank wall is less than 40%.	The Board agreed unanimously to grant this request with the condition that additional planting of vines were added along the blank wall.
Street level development standards (SMC 23.47A.008 D) Residential uses are limited to 20% of the street level facing façade.	Residential use exceeds 20% of the street level façade at Linen Ave N & N 141 st Street.	Commercial businesses at the street level in this area have not been successful, rather than have empty store fronts, community rooms will be placed along the street frontage.	The board agreed unanimously to grant this request.
Street level development standards (SMC 23.47A.032 B.1.b) Within a structure, street level parking shall be separated from the street bay another permitted use.	Request waiver from this development standard.	Due to the location of the garage entrance and the slope of the street, parking is located from 1' to 6' below the level of the street.	The board agreed unanimously to grant this request.
Transparency (SMC 23.54.008 B.2) 60% Transparency is required on street facing facades from 2' to 8' above the sidewalk level.	Request reduction in the standard along N 141 st Street.	Due to the slope of the street only a small part of the first floor is at grade and can have the required transparency between 2' and 8' above the sidewalk level.	The board agreed unanimously to grant this request.
Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030 G) For a 2 – way, 22 foot driveway, a sight triangle shall be kept clear of any obstruction for a distance of 10' from the back of the sidewalk.	Request waiver from this development standard.	Due to the location of the garage entrance, slope of the street and proximity of the sidewalk, there is not the 10' required distance from the back of the sidewalk, a parabolic mirror will be used.	The board agreed unanimously to grant this request.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

The Board began deliberations by expressing their approval of the added transparency to the two prominent corners of the building and other changes that strengthened the corner elements. There remained some concern with the location of the trash staging area near the northwest corner and the Board asked the applicant to explore the possibility of moving the location to the east side of the garage entrance on N. 141st Street. (See the discussion of ***Board's Conditions*** below).

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board had discussed the possibility of eroding a portion of the south façade in order to allow more sunlight onto the central courtyard which would invite a greater use of the area by the building's tenants. The applicant and owner explained to the Board how in fact in similar structures the courtyard area most utilized was that adjacent to the social room which faces to the south in the current design of this proposal and would receive sufficient sunlight with the proposed design. The Board was satisfied that given the predictable patterns of use likely by the target population the amount and distribution of sunshine would be sufficient without any erosion of the top of the south wing of the building.

The Board was pleased with architectural consistency of the design, with the choice in materials and colors. There was concern expressed, however, regarding the blank walls along the N. 141st Street façade and the Board requested some minor modifications to decrease the perception of blank areas along that façade. (See the discussion of ***Board's Conditions*** below).

The Board expressed their general approval of the sidewalk and landscaping that was proposed along N. 141st Street. They did, however, express their desire that SDOT be less prescriptive and show more flexibility in locating the sidewalk and planting strip so as to allow some space for additional landscaping adjacent the building.

The Board was pleased with the amount of lighting provided on the building and with the lighting that would be provided by street lights to increase safety and feelings of security along N. 141st Street.

The Board expressed general approval of the amount of landscaping and the quality of the amenity spaces in the courtyard, but were concerned with a lack of direct sightlines from the elevated courtyard to the street below. They strongly favored modifications to the western edge of the courtyard which would allow closer access to that edge. (See the discussion of ***Board's Conditions*** below).

The Board recommended **approval** of each of the requested departures and of the design presented, with the following Conditions.

Board's Conditions

Condition #1: *Explore with the Department's Land Use Planner an alternative design for the location of the trash staging area on the east side of the garage entrance.*

Condition #2: *Provide additional planting of vines along the north façade of the building to decrease perception of blank walls.*

Condition #3: Detail the storefront windows and the walls below the windows such that in the future additional doors could be installed if needed.

Condition #4: Explore the possibility of adding additional bike parking outside the building along Linden Avenue N.

Condition #5: Reduce the length of the two western planters on the courtyard level and remove the solid parapet between the two planters, providing an open railing where the parapet was proposed.

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