

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE
OF
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (Area 3)**

Date of Meeting: December 7, 2011

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Number: 3012504
Address: 3036 16th Avenue West
Applicant: John Goebel, Studio Meng Strazzara,
for Goodman Real Estate

Board members present: Jill Kurfirst
David Delfs
Mindy Black
Jacob Connell

Board members absent: Lipika Mukerji

Land Use Planner present: Colin Vasquez

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Seattle Mixed/Dravus 40-85 (SM/D 40-85)

Nearby Zones: North: SM/D 40-85
South: SM/D 40-85
East: NC3-40
West: SM/D 40-85/C2-40

Lot Area: 24,000 square feet

Current Development: The project site is currently vacant.

Access: 16th Avenue West

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: The site is located on the eastern side of 16th Avenue West. It bounds 15th Avenue West, a high speed major arterial, on the east, and 16th Avenue on the west. It is directly south of the Interbay Veterinary Care Center, and is directly north of Friedman & Bruya, environmental chemists. Interbay Athletic Fields, the site of Seattle Pacific University's soccer stadium, is located south of the

site. The site is currently vacant and slopes down from the northeast to the southwest by 16 feet, with a sharp drop off down a berm from 15th Avenue West. Barrett Street ends at a 'T' on 16th Avenue West along the frontage of the southern half of the project site. Zoning is Seattle Mixed/Dravus, with a 40 foot base height, and a maximum height of 85 feet.

ECAs

Liquefaction, Abandoned Landfill

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a four-story building with three live-work units at the sidewalk level and 114 residential units, with partially below-grade parking for 92 vehicles. Vehicular access is proposed from 16th Avenue West at the southern (low) end of the project site.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The presentation team consisted of John Goebel and Aiden Bird of Studio Meng Strazzara (architect), and Tom Rengstorf of Thomas Rengstorf and Associates (landscape architect).

Mr. Goebel presented the project to the Board, beginning with the context of the project site. The project site is located directly adjacent to 15th Avenue West, which is a very busy principal arterial. The property line directly abuts property owned by the Seattle Department of Transportation that was previously an alley before it was vacated to reconfigure the 15th Avenue West on-ramp. 15th Avenue West currently is well-served by the 15 and 18 bus lines, and will be served in the future by the Rapid Ride line, with a stop at 15th and Dravus.

Mr. Goebel oriented the Board to surrounding uses and existing structures. At the corner of 16th and Dravus is a 76 gas station and associated car wash. To the south of the gas station along 16th is a single family residence, to the south of the residence a Veterinary Clinic, and to the south of that the project site. Across 15th Avenue West from the project site is a public storage facility, which is within a 40' zone. To the south of the project site is a commercial building (Freidman & Bruya) and to the south of that at the end of 16th Avenue West a dead-end gravel drive. Across from the project site is the Interbay Soccer Stadium, the end of W. Barrett Street, and several single family residences that will be demolished to make way for a future mixed use project in 2012.

Mr. Goebel presented three different massing concepts to the Board. The first concept is the "Big-Foot" concept, which reflects the permitted building envelope per the SM/D 40 zoning, which requires no modulation or articulation. Live/work units would be provided at the northwest corner of the building at grade, with a residential lobby located adjacent to the live/work units. The garage entry would be at the southern portion of the 16th

Avenue West façade. No modulation would be provided along the 15th Avenue façade. The building would be minimally stepped in to create light wells for units at the north and south building facades.

The second concept is the “Front Step” concept. This concept modulates the building façade along 16th Avenue by stepping portions of the north and south areas of the façade back, with a prominent center portion stepping out to accentuate the building’s horizontal plane. The placement of live/work, lobby entrance, and garage entrance would remain the same in this concept. The light wells at the north and south faces are made larger to increase the modulation and fenestration provided on the north and south facades and to reduce blank walls. This design concept has a preeminently industrial/ warehouse feel.

The third concept is the “More Mod” concept, the preferred concept. This concept modulates the 16th Avenue façade of the building in the reverse of the “Front Step” concept, where the middle portion of the project is stepped back, while the north and south ends meet the street. The light wells along the north and south facades are maintained to provide fenestration and modulation. Modulation also occurs along the 15th Avenue West façade. This concept includes more architectural expression, including a mix of colors and a large plinth above the partially sub-grade parking level, that would provide outdoor living space for the first floor residents up off of the sidewalk.

Mr. Bird presented the renderings of how the project would appear from a pedestrian standpoint. The project would be accessible from the street in two ways—first from an accessible walkway and ramp starting at grade at the northwest corner of the building and leading in front of the live/work units to the lobby, and second from a set of stairs from the sidewalk to the residential lobby. The plinth fronting the project would provide gathering space for residents. The garage entry would occur at the southern end of the project along the 16th Avenue frontage.

Mr. Rengstorf presented the landscaping plan. The main area for outdoor recreation would occur on the roof, which is presented with a mix of smaller “room-like” areas, potential green roof element, hardscape, and potential festival lighting to activate the space. The landscape feel at grade would be modern, with an emphasis placed on screening the project from 15th Avenue with dense landscaping.

The project did not anticipate any departure requests at this time, but may seek departures depending on the zoning review following master use permit application.

BOARD CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

The Board posed the following questions to the project team.

Q: How far does the preferred scheme modulate from the property line?

A: 3-4 feet on the east and west facades, and 15 feet on the north and south facades.

Q: Did you examine a courtyard scheme?

A: Yes, the problem with a courtyard is a unit-privacy issue, and the prospect that the courtyard becomes dark and mossy.

A: What is 16th Avenue's right-of-way width?

Q: 66 feet.

A: How many units are you proposing:

Q: 117.

Q: How deep are the units, what are their widths, and what is the unit mix?

A: They typically range from 48 feet deep to 24 feet deep. The widths range from 15'5" feet wide to 14'8" wide. Units will be a mix of open single bedrooms, single bedrooms, and studio apartments.

Q: What is the property to the south?

A: Freidman & Bruya, but we abut their parking lot.

Q: What is the FAR limit, and are you at your max?

A: The Seattle Mixed/Dravus zone does not include FAR limits.

Q: How does one enter the proposed live/work units?

A: From the accessible walkway above the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered:

- 1) Bryan Fish, Fish Mackay Architects. Mr. Fish designed the Unico project to be built across 16th Avenue from the project. Mr. Fish stated it was exciting to see an actual rendering of the project. He noted that the 16th Avenue streetscape was important to maintain based on Unico's design including street scape amenities and right of way plantings. He commented that the building's articulation may need to be further defined—the Unico project steps back at upper levels by 20' from the sidewalk to bring a human scale to 16th Avenue. The projects should not be the same, but should be complementary.
- 2) Don Mackay, Fish Mackay Architects. Mr. Mackay also designed the Unico Prperties development to be built across 16th Avenue from the project. He wondered whether the project fronted an alley along 15th Avenue? It was determined that there is no alley, but that this property is owned by SDOT and was previously an alley, now vacated.
- 3) Julie Currier, of Unico. Ms. Currier worked on the project to be developed across the street. She worked with the Interbay Neighborhood Association in the development of design of their project and made sure the streetscape amenities met INA standards. The same should be done here. She is hoping that the developer's team can work with Unico on creating a friendly pedestrian environment on 16th Avenue, and that they can create a great neighborhood together. She is concerned that the location of the parking entrance will impact

- Barrett Street which is slated to become a more pedestrian-friendly street. She also thinks the roofline of the project looks really flat, as does the building plane. She asked the project team not to value engineer the Juliet balconies out of the project, as they really add to the building. She also wanted to ensure that the festival lighting on the roof did not create glare impacts to the Unico property residents.
- 4) John Mallon, adjacent property owner. He wondered if there is any retail requirement along the streetscape here? There is none.
 - 5) John is the owner of Benla, which is located at the end of 16th Avenue. His service vehicles use 16th and he is very concerned about the construction impacts/access. He will follow up with the City planner regarding this matter.
 - 6) Jonas Sylvester, Unico Properties. He is supportive of the project. He is concerned about the north façade being blank—suggested they could step the project back so there are more windows there. He is also concerned about the materials used on the building; at this point the design appears as if it will be one hardy panel from the top to the bottom, which does not add interest. He likes the addition of live/work in the area, but there should be more attention paid to the cladding on the first level. The articulation and roofline of the building looks very boxy. The project should consider additional setbacks; because the project includes such long units it could be set back to provide a better scale to the streetscape without sacrificing valuable rentable square footage.
 - 7) A woman who is a neighbor asked if the building was going to provide a path to the bus stop? The project team stated that it had explored this, but would need a use permit from SDOT and is unsure if it will provide this. She also wanted to know if there are patios on 16th at the ground level and the project team responded affirmatively.

PRIORITIES AND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board 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-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

The Board accepted the preferred concept as the best presented. The Board discussed the depth of the units (it was stated that they were 55 feet deep) and suggested that the project could set back more near the lobby and near the front patio to create a small plaza/entry area without making the units unusable. This move would go a long way toward making the open space in the front more usable, and towards making a better transition to the street and to the Unico project beyond.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to Encourage human activity on the street.

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.

The Board discussed increasing the amount of activation at the lobby/entry level. The setback would also help with this—right now it is 4 feet; 6 feet is really the minimum width needed to allow a few chairs to be placed there for residents for activation. The live/work units should also be set back further from their entries to allow more separation from the pedestrian environment, and to increase privacy for businesses/residents. This will make the units more livable

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 the fact that the project is a long building. The project should consider what it looks like to neighbors looking down on it from Queen Anne and from the Unico project, as it will be very visible. The roofline should be varied to increase interest and to indicate the setback in the middle to help break the ridgeline.

The Board recommended some articulation and modulation on 15th; even though cars pass by quickly neighbors will view the 15th Avenue side from Queen Anne. This is a building that has no back side so all sides should be given equal consideration.

Finally, the Board liked the rooftop concept but wanted to know how it would look from neighbors on the hill. The project team should ensure that festival lighting on the roof is down-shielded.

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.

The Board supported the placement of the driveway at the southern end of the project and did not think that the traffic generated would interfere with Barrett Street. They determined this was likely the least impactful location in terms of impacting the Unico project, and the location made sense from a project planning standpoint. The Board requested that the project not skimp on site triangles to ensure pedestrian safety.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 **Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhood with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

The Board encouraged the team to look at ways to detail the facades more effectively. The Board likes the design direction of the sunshades on the south side of the building. The project could be broken into three distinct buildings/facades. The project should not match Unico but should play off of the materials used in an interesting way.

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.**

The Board thought the Urban Warehouse design concept was interesting and could be more successful than a very colorful building. The three different building masses could be designed to be similar, but read as three different warehouses. The Board liked the railings that read as balconies as a cost-effective way of creating interest in the building while maximizing the window frontage. The Board cautioned the design team to be careful of making the warehouse concept read as too boxy—they do not want to see a building that resembles a Motel 6.

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

Pedestrian scaled material changes are strongly encouraged. See the guidance regarding A-2 and A-6.

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.**

The materials were discussed by the Board. The Board encouraged the team to look at very durable materials (not Hard-planks and panels) at the pedestrian scale, so that they wouldn't be easily damaged. Pedestrian-scaled material changes are strongly encouraged. The project should not match Unico but should play off of the materials used there is a way creates interest.

D-1 **Pedestrian Open Space and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be encouraged. 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 spaces should be considered.

See A-2, A-6, D-12.

D-2 Blank Walls. Building 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 thought more should be done to minimize the blank “bookends” on the north and south ends. A green wall or similar design treatment should be considered on the blank walls to minimize them, particularly when viewed from afar. The Board did state that fenestration or additional setbacks were not necessarily warranted on the north and south facades, however, because the Board would prefer to see the building squeezed to create more modulation on the east and west facades, rather than on the north and south. The blank walls can be addressed with other design techniques.

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.

The live/work entrances need to have more private space to allow users to feel comfortable in the live/work space. The entry patios need to have space for potentially a table and chair; the project team should consider pulling the units back in a variety of ways.

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 streetscapes.

The Board requested a high quality of landscaping in continuity with the concept of the Unico Properties project across the street.

The Board unanimously recommended that the project move ahead to the Master Use Permit application and looked forward to seeing it for recommendation in the future.