



## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012601

Address: 3400 Stone Way

Applicant: LMN Architects for Lisa Picard, Skanska

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 19, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: None

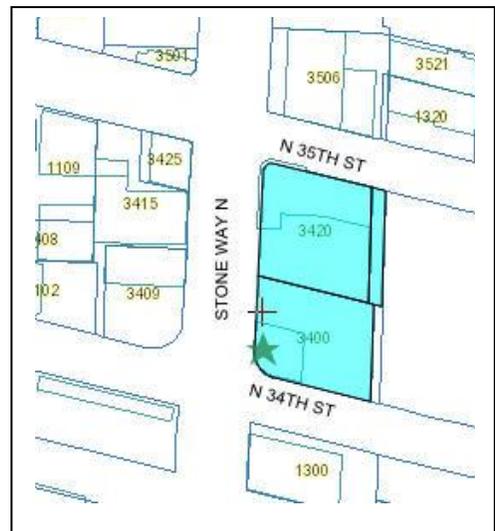
DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Industrial Commercial-45 (IC-45)

Nearby Zones: North: IC-45  
South: IC-45  
East: IC-45  
West: IC-45

Lot Area: 39,600 sq. ft.



Current Development: One-story brick building and a one-story wood frame building and surface parking lot.

Access: Existing access is from Stone Way. Proposed vehicle access would be from North 35th Street. Service truck access would be a right-turn only from North 34th Street to a driveway along the east side of the lot.

Surrounding Development: The site is surrounded on three sides by arterial streets: North 34th Street to the south, North 35th Street to the north and Stone Way to the west. The North Transfer Station occupies the site to the east. The transfer station is proposed for redevelopment; an application for a Master Use Permit has not yet been submitted to the Department of Planning and Development.

ECAs: None.

Neighborhood Character: The building environment is a mix of retail, commercial and industrial uses on all sides. To the south is a primarily residential portion of the Wallingford neighborhood. The site is technically within the Fremont Village Urban Hub overlay which extends to the west across Stone Way. The topography of this site within this context is analogous to the bottom of a bowl which rises gradually in all directions. The Burke Gilman Trail “daylights” at this intersection. The trail is a significant bike and recreation route through a section of the City with the highest percentage of bike commuters.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is for the design and construction of a five-story, approximately 113,850 sq. ft. office building with 20,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and below grade parking for 216 vehicles. Project is participating in the Living Building Challenge Demonstration Program.

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**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The first half of the presentation focused on explaining the Living Building Challenge program and how the proposed development is anticipating meeting the goals of the Living Building Challenge and associated Living Building Ordinance (C.B. 116740) passed by City Council as a pilot program. The Living Building Challenge requires meeting 20 “*Imperatives*” with seven organizing “*Petals*”. The seven Petals are: responsible site selection, net zero water, net zero energy, health, materials, equity and beauty.

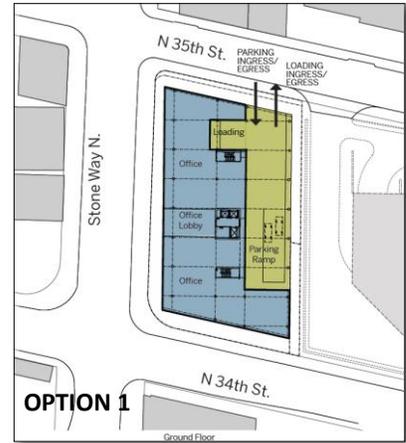
The second half of the presentation included an analysis of the neighborhood context, site, design considerations and conceptual design massing diagrams. The applicants presented three options for developing the property. All of the alternatives show vehicular access from North 35<sup>th</sup> Street and service access from a right-turn only movement from North 34<sup>th</sup> Street onto a driveway that runs along the east side of the lot.

The first alternative (Concept 1) showed a code-compliant 45-foot tall building form situated directly at the property lines without setbacks provided (none are required in the IC zone) filling in the parallelogram shaped site. The applicant noted that the proposed design would have more difficulty in potentially meeting the imperatives of the Living Building Challenge due to the resultant floor to floor height that minimizes daylight penetration. This alternative also does not include a retail use at ground level; the entire building is office use.

The second and third options assume the passage of a proposed code amendment to the Living Building Pilot Ordinance that would allow a height departure for up to 20 feet (for a total base building height of 65 feet) and the ability to not count the retail use towards the Floor Area Ratio calculation. Both of these options include four floors of office use above one floor of retail use.

The second alternative (Concept 2) “Offset Planes” includes a rectangular building form where the floor plates would shift in and out slightly to capture views, respond to the context and provide a more dynamic appearance. All floor plates, including the ground level are rectangular in shape. The entry lobby is situated off of North 34<sup>th</sup> Street. The situating of the rectangular building form on the parallelogram shaped site results in triangular ground-level open space plaza areas at the southeast and northwest corners of the site.

The third and preferred alternative (Concept 3) “Stepped Façade” includes massing that steps back from Stone Way to create ground level open spaces at the corner where the principal intersection is located and across from where the Burke Gilman Trail becomes visible. The upper level floor plate extends beyond the ground level floor plate to create a more regular rectangle shape with a singular notch inward south of the stairwell feature. The mass is articulated by an outboard stair well that defines and grounds itself in the main entry



lobby space. A triangular open space at the northwest corner is proposed similar to the second option.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Approximately 30 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting and three comments letters were received prior to the meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Stated that this site cannot accommodate the proposed building mass and height.
- Objected to view impacts caused by the proposed building.
- Encouraged green design, energy efficiency, sustainability and the living building concept.
- Concerned with the proposed building height and that it will be out of proportion to the surrounding context.
- Believes proposed project will block connection to the lake from the neighborhood. Proposed height is too tall and will dwarf community.
- Support connectivity concept to the Burke Gilman Trail, as well as interaction with the community.
- Supports the preferred alternative because it opens up views to the tails, lake and downtown.
- Would like to see added bike lanes.
- Supportive of setting back the upper floor and ground level and raised plaza area, but not supportive of the overall scale and mass.
- Concerned that rooftop equipment will add even more height to the overall bulk and scale. Would like to know more information at this early stage about the rooftop features that will add height and how these will be screened and located.
- Opposed to the modern architectural concept at this location; should consider use of brick.
- Supportive of development for the economic activity and vibrancy it will bring to the neighborhood.
- Would like to see whimsical art incorporated into the site and/or building.
- Would like to see view analysis to understand true height and massing impacts.
- Future meeting should be held in Fremont.
- Considerable time and effort has been spent working on the design of the transfer station and this process has not engaged the neighborhood to the same extent.
- Concerned with parking and traffic impacts. (The DPD Planner indicated that this is not within the purview of design review, but parking will be reviewed by DPD. These comments should be directed to Lisa Rutzick rather than the Design Review Board).

## **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 of highest priority for this project. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

## **A. Site Planning**

- 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board reinforced the unique site characteristics presented in the analysis that include a prominent and busy intersection, a highly visible corner, adjacency to the “daylighting” of the Burke Gilman Trail, location at the intersection of two vibrant and distinct neighborhoods of Wallingford and Fremont, proximity to Lake Union and the transfer station, as well as topographical changes within the site that extend far beyond the site to a broader topographic system. In order to better hone in on the specific site constraints, at the next meeting, the Board would like to see contour lines for the subject site, as well as sections through the entire site and transfer station site, as well as view studies of the existing site and proposed development.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board strongly supported the concept of the entry stairwell both as an architectural element of the building massing, as well as an identifier of the main entry at the ground level. The Board encouraged a hierarchy of uses and entries that include the stair feature, retail, bike entry, office lobby, etc. The Board expressed enthusiasm for the predominant entrance point of the office lobby at the base of the stairwell and would like to see the stair feature well-integrated into the architectural design.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the urban design analysis was very well done, but asserted that that same level of examination needs to occur at the site level as well. The ground level design of the building and open spaces are critical considerations and additional information is needed to fully understand the different conditions that occur around the site perimeter. Defining the street edge is appropriate at some locations, whereas setting back the building is preferred at other locations. The Board supported the ground level concept presented in the preferred alternative that begins to address these conditions and considerations. The Board pointed out that the three side street sides of the site have unique qualities and levels of activity and engagement and the design should strive to enhance each. At the next meeting, the Board would like to review “plaza studies” - concepts of how and where the sidewalk will interact with the plaza and where it will be separated, as well as how the office and retail

entries will interact with these ground level spaces. Mapping out existing and future pedestrian circulation would also be helpful.

The Board also encouraged operable windows at the retail level and throughout the building to add activity and a sense of dynamic quality to the building. The Board referenced another project presentation that did a good job providing character sketches and sidewalk views that may be of assistance in preparing graphics that respond to this guidance.

**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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board was supportive of the proposed vehicular access from North 35<sup>th</sup> Street and the truck access via right-turn only from North 34<sup>th</sup> Street. At the next meeting, the Board would like to see details about this proposed service access along the east edge of the site. The Board would also like to better understand the bicycle circulation to the site, as well as how bikes will be accommodated on site.

**A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that there are two retail corners each with a different character. The southwest corner is highly visible and enjoys significant activity associated with the intersection and trail, whereas the northwest corner is quieter. Therefore how and where the retail meets these corners and open spaces should be designed accordingly. See also A-4.

<b>B. Height, Bulk and Scale</b>
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**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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board acknowledged and discussed the height, bulk and scale issues associated with the proposed development. In order to better understand the context and specific impacts of the proposed building, at the next meeting, the Board would like to see a physical model. The Board would also like to see more of a contextual view analysis showing existing conditions compared with various

proposed building forms. The Board is also interested in see other strategies for dealing with the overhanging portions of the building. The push/pull concept of the floor plates should be more fully developed and considered in response to the context. The Board is interested in where and by how much would these plates shift and suggested that erosion of the upper levels would be appropriate. The Board agreed that Option 2 felt less massive and perhaps the floors could be treated differently to achieve the objective of minimizing the bulk and scale. The Board encouraged the design to be creative in how the building nestles into the topographical bowl of the site.

## 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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board indicated support for a contemporary, modern architectural design and looks forward to reviewing additional details at future meetings as the project design evolves. The Board warned, however, that the early concept appears more like an office building and doesn't clearly express the retail character yet. The Board did not feel that the use of brick is necessary at this location given the variety of building materials used in the surrounding context. At the next meeting, the Board would like to see the ground level expression further developed.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board gave guidance as noted in response to Guideline A-4.

- 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 Board noted that they will be interested in reviewing these details at the Recommendation phase.

## D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. 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 space should be considered.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board stressed the importance of the design of the proposed corner open spaces for integration into the community, as well as creating new gathering spaces and encouraging new levels of activity at this intersection. Several sections through the right-of-way were presented and the Board reinforced that the area between the building façade and the curb line should include integration of landscaping, hardscaping, defensible space, seating, grade changes, and other amenities.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that this intersection currently includes multiple modes of travel that will increase with the proposed development. Maintaining and enhancing the safety of all modes of transport is paramount: pedestrian, running, bicycling and driving.

**D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

The Board noted that they will be interested in reviewing these details at the Recommendation phase.

**D-10 Commercial Lighting. Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.**

The Board noted that they will be interested in reviewing these details at the Recommendation phase.

**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 noted that they will be interested in reviewing these details at the Recommendation phase.

<b>E. Landscaping</b>
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**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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted that the design of the corner open spaces will be a critical consideration of how the site integrates and orients the site plan with the Burke Gilman Trail, and the confluence of movement and activity that occurs at this intersection.

**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.**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board appreciated the analysis of the site within the larger topographic context, as well as the grade changes on the site itself. The Board looks forward to seeing how the proposed massing responds to the site's topography.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the following departures were requested:

### **Living Building Departures:**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departures is based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet the Living Building Challenge objectives, these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

- 1. Structure Height (SMC 23.50.026):** A height departure is sought for up to 20 additional feet above the base height of the IC zone (45'). The additional floor-to-floor height is desired to meet the requirements for the Living Building Challenge.

This early departure request is pending a code amendment under consideration by City Council. The Board indicated that additional studies and examination of the bulk and scale considerations outlined above, as well as more information regarding the Living Building imperatives as related to height are warranted before they can provide direction regarding such a departure request.

- 2. Floor Area Ratio (SMC 23.50.028):** The Code requires that retail use be counted towards FAR calculations. The applicant proposes to not count the retail use towards the FAR calculation and to increase the FAR.

This early departure request is pending a code amendment under consideration by City Council. The Board indicated strong support for retail at the ground floor at this location, however departure considerations are premature given the issues raised by the first departure request and the pending legislation.

### **Commercial Code Departures:**

The Board's recommendation on the requested departures 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 departures. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

- 3. Loading Berth (SMC 23.54.035):** The Code requires two loading berths. The applicant proposes to provide loading accommodation along a private driveway.

The Board indicated they would be favorable towards such a departure provided that circulation can occur safely and that the site and building design strive to minimize the appearance of the driveways and loading areas.

- 4. Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030):** The Code requires an easement if a driveway is located within ten feet of adjoining property. The applicant proposes to provide a sight triangle instead of an easement.

The Board indicated that they may be favorable towards such a departure provided that consultation occurs with the future transfer station design to ensure that circulation will allow service trucks to exit safely from the site.

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting.**