



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012640

Address: 1519 Minor Avenue

Applicant: Brad Hinthorne, Perkins+Will Architects, for Gerding Edlen

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 28, 2011

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard (Chair)
Dawn Bushnaq
Lisa Picard
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

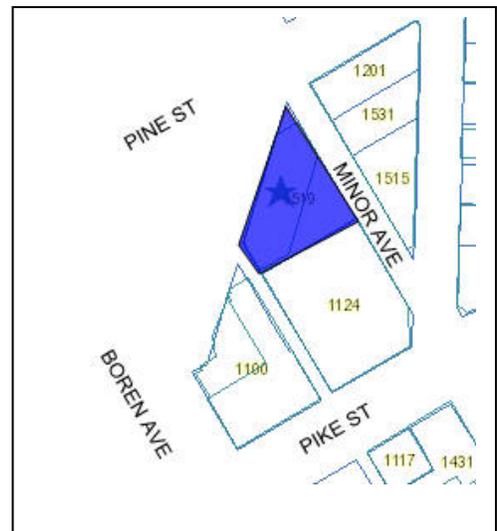
DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3P-85'

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-85'
(South) NC3P-85'
(East) NC3P-65'
(West) NC3P-85'

Lot Area: The site is trapezoidal in shape , slopes upwards from northeast to southwest, and totals 14,100 square feet in size.



Current Development: There is an unoccupied two-story commercial office building, the “Olivetti” building, located on the site.

Access: Current access is from both Minor Avenue and from the alley a half a block west of Minor Avenue.

Directly to the east across Minor Avenue, three commercial buildings nearly a century old occupy the triangular block that lies between Minor Avenue and Melrose Place. The southernmost of these structures, facing onto Pike Street, houses the recently opened Melrose Market development. To the site of the 1519 Minor Avenue site is a building that dates from 1920 that houses Ultrect Art Supplies. Across the alley, south and west of the subject site, is a building that dates from 1908 that houses Villa Apartments.”

Surrounding Development: Directly west of the subject site is a narrow strip of land that for the past five years has been utilized as a dog-run area. Called Plymouth Pillars Park after architectural artifacts, relics of the former Plymouth Church that are re-located there, the City of Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) site is maintained on land that is owned by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and is part of the larger I-5 corridor that separates the Capitol Hill neighborhood from downtown Seattle.

The proposal site is located within the Pike/Pine Urban Center Village and is within the Pike/Pine Neighborhood Overlay and Conservation District.

ECAs: There are no identified environmentally critical areas on or abutting the site. The site rises approximately 12-14 feet between its northeast and southwest points.

Neighborhood Character: The site lies on block that forms the western edge between Downtown Seattle and the Capitol Hill neighborhood, an edge that was less pronounced prior to the 1960s when Interstate 5 cut a broad swath primarily through older residential apartment buildings that gradually yielded to more substantial commercial buildings that came to mark the Downtown area. In particular, a priority of the Pike/Pine neighborhood is to promote development that maintains and preserves the physical and social character of an east/west corridor that was Seattle’s original auto row.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a seven-story mixed-use, primarily residential, building containing approximately 119 apartments above a ground floor containing a retail commercial space and some parking for approximately 30 vehicles within the structure.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Erik Mott of Perkins+Will Architects made the presentation to the Board and members of the public attending the meeting. He explained how the project had been designed in response to the Board's recommendation at the EDG meeting that the design provide for a flexible, more commercially design to accommodate live-work of retail spaces along Minor Avenue, by providing a two-story component along the south (uphill portion of the site), designed to be compatible in scale with neighboring buildings. By taking vehicular access off the alley, the project was able to provide essentially continuous glazing along Minor Avenue, allowing for a number and variety of entry points along that street.

While there had been some discussion of providing openings into the daylit garage along Pillars Park to the west, the proposal had settled upon a discrete, impermeable edge between building and Park, but with an architectural response that was "active, dignified, durable, green, artful and illuminating" (refer to the packet for the December 7, 2011 available at the DPD Design Review web site).

At the northernmost point of the site the proposed design presents a two-story space ideally suited to a retail/café use. Generous glazing provides for daylight and views and converts into a visible lantern after dark. A chamfered edge above the double-high ground floor would allow the residential cladding panels to visually float above the glass base and give accent to the edge that fronts onto Pine Street. The overall façade is overlaid with sets of sunshades and layers of colorful compositional grids, shifted floor to floor to create a sense of dynamic movement to the overall composition.

The presentation confirmed that SDOT had concurred with the desire to reduce Minor Avenue to a 20-foot roadway, allowing for a 5.5-foot planting strip and street trees along the west side of the street. The new structure would be set back 1.5 feet along the Minor Avenue property line, allowing for a 6-foot sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

After asking some clarifying questions of the applicant, the Board elicited comments from members of the public. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Applauded the change from residential to live/work on Minor Avenue.
- Liked the art panel treatment along the lower park-facing façade.
- Generally complimentary regarding massing, crisp detail, vivid color palate.
- Still thought the height of the structure too tall for the site.

- Other comments: touched again on the relative height and bulk of the building, given the actual build out of the area; still thought the height of the structure too tall for the site; still thought number of parking spaces being proposed inadequate.
- Commented on the narrowness of Minor Avenue and the impacts any proposed narrowing of the street would have on traffic in the area.

DEPARTURES

Although no departures from development standards had been identified at the EDG meeting, two departures were described and requested at the Recommendation Meeting:

1) a small portion of the garage area protruded above the ground on the Minor Avenue facing façade, without any intervening uses being provided between the street and the parking as required by Code (SMC 23.47A.032.B.1.b);

2) due to the northwards downward slope on Minor Avenue, two of the three live/work spaces did not meet the requirement for a non-residential use to have a floor to floor height of 13 feet (SMC 23.47A. 008.B.2.b).

Board Deliberations

1. The Board recommended approval of the requested departures.
2. The Board supported the canopy at the entry to ensure the creation of “distinct” entry.
3. The Board liked the overall vivid color palette and the modern, crisp detailing of design, but the longest portion of the deliberation was given to a discussion of the cladding material and the Board’s unwillingness to give their approval to cladding that was painted and was not “integrally colored.” They were troubled that the vividly colored “red” building would soon become a “pink” building. The solution they offered at the end of their deliberations was to give approval of the design as presented and of the departures requested, conditioned upon the applicants’ working with the land use planner to settle upon a cladding materials that was integrally colored. It was their collective judgment that this would help to ensure that the structure-as-built would not be a simulacrum with but a vague semblance to the “crisp,” “vibrant,” and “vividly colored” proposal that had been presented to them at the meeting via paper and power point.