



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012694

Address: 3635 Woodland Park Avenue North

Applicant: Steve Yoon

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 05, 2012

Board Members Present: Salone Habibuddin  
Joe Hurley  
Peter Krech  
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana

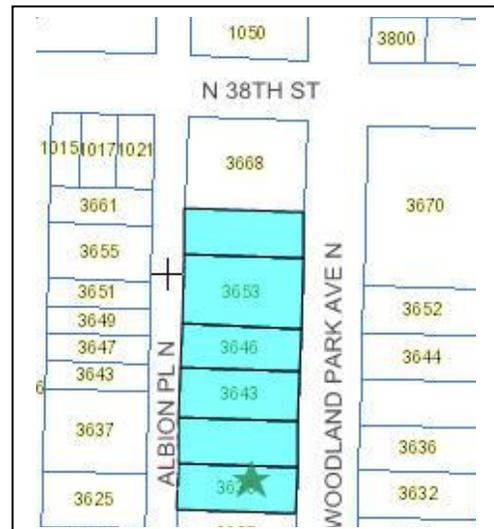
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Commercial One with a 40 foot height limit (C1 40).

Nearby Zones:

- North: C1 40 extends north to Bridge Way North.
- South: C1 40 continues to the Burke Gilman Trail. An Industrial Commercial zone with a 45' height limit occupies an area between N.36 St and the Burke Gilman Trail on the east side of Woodland Park Ave.
- East: C1 40 and then C2 40 fronting Stone Way North.
- West: Multifamily Lowrise Three (LR 3) west of Albion Place North.



Lot Area: The development site totals 42,380 sq. ft. consisting of six parcels. The site descends from the northwest corner to the southeast corner by approximately 22 feet.

Current Development: The site includes surface parking, an industrial facility, an apartment building, an office building with parking and a single family residence.

Access: Woodland Park Ave. N. and Albion Pl. N.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: The farrago of building styles and uses that characterize this neighborhood provides one of its most interesting qualities. The narrow avenues also lend an intimacy to this portion of Fremont. Woodland Park Ave N. possesses a mix of commercial structures, both office and industrial, smaller brick apartment buildings and older single family houses. An interesting office building (1960) with a folded plate roof and a concrete screen anchors the southeast corner of Woodland Park and N. 38<sup>th</sup> St. On the southern portion of the west side of Woodland Park, an apartment building has recently been completed. MUP application (3013012) with 60 rooms within four attached congregate residences and no parking is currently being reviewed. Another project with 51 units on the east side of Woodland Park near N. 36<sup>th</sup> St. is under construction.

Along Albion Pl., apartment buildings, newer townhouses and a contemporary single family residence line the west side of this unimproved street. The ages of the buildings in the neighborhood range from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to a recently constructed 17 unit apartment building two parcels south of the site. The topography ascends east to west. The buildings on the west side of Albion sit higher on the slope than the buildings to the east. The area lies within close proximity to the Stone Way N. commercial corridor and the center of the Fremont neighborhood.

ECAs: The site has no mapped Environmentally Critical Areas.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to design and build a four-story structure containing approximately 160 residential units, six to seven live/work units, and 130 parking spaces in a below grade garage.

## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

The applicant provided three unembellished massing concepts. Commonalities included introducing six to seven live/work units (to capture the higher floor area ratio) at the base, a

single garage entrance off Woodland Park Ave. N, residential units at grade and on three floors above grade. Each scheme steps the mass along the descending slope. Scheme A carves a linear courtyard into the center of the building mass the length of the development site creating two long rectilinear bars flanking the open space. On the Woodland Park Ave side, the volume contains units extended along a double loaded corridor---one side facing the courtyard and the other the street. This scheme steps down once at the mid-point of the long axis. The floors of each of the live/work units and the flanking apartment units appear to meet the grade along Woodland Park Ave. The narrower volume facing Albion Place is single loaded. On this side of the complex, the units closest to grade floor do not appear to always meet grade.

Concept B shifts the live/work units to Albion Place and carves three deep courtyards fronting Woodland Park which steps up from grade as they approach the center of the site. These establish four wings extending from the central longitudinal axis and provide light into these clusters of units. On the Albion side, the massing has slight vertical setbacks or insets (housing balconies?) for the entire length of the development site. Similar to Concept A, the building steps down near the site's mid-point. The final concept diagram places the open space in the form of two courtyards on the Albion Pl. side. At the residential levels, three, four-story wings extend from the larger north/south rectangular mass that houses units along a double loaded corridor. Above the live/work units facing Woodland Park, the architect implies a series of linear terraces or balconies that steadily step up the grade as the mass approaches the north. These sliding bars (at least in mass) emphasize the horizontality or linearity of the site. The step in the building mass for this scenario occurs once as well.

The applicant's submitted scheme for the 2<sup>nd</sup> EDG resembled in massing the earlier Concept C in which three flanking four-story residential wings embrace two courtyards facing Albion Place. The larger bulk of the building mass fronts onto Woodland Park Ave. with a series of repeating bays. Two live/work units astride a slightly recessed residential entrance at mid-block. Vehicular entry and exit would occur close to the south property line where the site's declivity is lowest. Drawings illustrate a series of stoops lining much of Woodland Park Ave.

By the Recommendation meeting, the applicant had made considerable refinements to the design to comply with city staff and Board guidance. The architect presented these changes at the meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Seven people affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. The speaker praised the sophistication of the Albion Place N. façade, the closed courtyards, the minimization of headlight glare from the garage, and how the roof deck's design mitigates sound. However, the massive Woodland Park Ave façade with its lack of affinity to the original fabric of this part of Fremont warrants reworking. Colors should be judiciously used to break-up the façade's massing but the bright red and yellow accent colors are a poor choice as they lack timeless qualities. The speaker endorsed the departure requests.

## PRIORITIES & BOARD 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 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-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**

At the previous EDG meeting, the Board requested more precise drawings illustrating the rights of way conditions. The applicant provided these. The Board's ensuing deliberation did not focus on this issue.

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

Unconvinced by the prosaic character of the metal canopy and its relationship to the larger three-story glulam frame surrounding the primary residential entrance, the Board urged the architect to reconsider the design by adopting one or more strategies by raising the canopy, increasing the amount of transparency, and revising its scale and shape. The canopy does not sit well with the larger glulam frame. Eliminating the canopy may also suffice.

**A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.**

Responding to earlier guidance, the landscape architect redesigned the roof deck to minimize sound by distancing the roof deck from both Albion Place and Woodland Ave, proposing a series of hedges and other vegetation to provide sound barriers, and forming a series of three small gathering spaces rather than one larger area. The Board accepted these changes.

**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.**

Insertion of an amenity area above the vehicular entrance within the glulam frame that defines the larger mass of the garage serves to reduce the appearance of the garage opening.

### 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 Woodland Park façade reads as one very long building. It possesses a clear rhythm (A,B,C,B,A) with the smaller repeating “B” segment connecting the larger masses. Yet, the façade’s frenetic changes in materials, multiplicity of colors, and unresolved use of glulams produce an unsettled quality. Intended to reduce the overall mass, this design strategy results in a heightened sense of visual agitation. The Board members offered several ways of thinking about the elevation including reducing the number of colors and consolidating colors. Certainly, the selection of colors does not have to mimic the rhythm or cadence of the major façade elements. Elements A and C, for example, may have similar color combinations and the second “A” volume could have a complementary color variation. The bright red and yellow doors and canopies lacked sophistication. The Board urged elimination of the colors more hues complementary to the overall earth tones.

In the transition from EDG to Recommendation meetings, the use of the glulam lost its structural and visual raison d’être. Less prominent, the glulams became relegated in places on the façade to the appearance of trim or even eliminated. The architect should reassert this element of the design (see pp. 12, 13 and 15 of the Recommendation booklet appendix) which anchors the design to the historic maritime and industrial buildings of Fremont. In essence, give the glulams purpose by allowing them to express their architectonic character.

The Board applauded the Albion elevation’s possession of restraint and sophistication.

## **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 praised the design of the Albion Place façade complimenting both its color palette and the manner in which the courtyards help organize it.

The Woodland Park Ave. elevation has too many changes at the same rate across the façade. Pare the Woodland Park elevation down to its essence. Reassert the façade’s strong organization by consolidating (and eliminating colors), revising the metal canopy at the primary residential entrance, and strengthening the visual presence of the glulams. See guidance for B-1.

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

The Board did not expand upon earlier comments from the EDG meetings.

- 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 placement of the glulams should have the same or similar architectonic presence as the architect introduced at the second EDG meeting. See B-1 guidance.

- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

See Guidance A-8.

## **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.**

See Guidance A-7 for discussion of the roof deck.

The Board accepted the private character of the two courtyards on Albion Place N. and did not recommend modifications.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

Earlier guidance asked the architect to reduce the scale of the garage opening. The designer accomplished this by inserting an amenity area above the garage to reduce the opening's height by nearly a floor.

- 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.**

Solid waste storage occurs in the garage. On pick-up days, the dumpsters will be conveyed to the garage entry area.

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

The Board did not comment upon the concept lighting plan.

**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 observed that the fenestration for the live/work units resembled the residential windows. The Board recommended revising the fenestration pattern, citing a preference for the drawings shown at the previous EDG meeting. The windows should signify that the live/work spaces are commercial in nature.

**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. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.**

The design has a primary residential entry centered along the Woodland Park façade. A canted, three story glulam frame signifies this entrance. A series of residential units have discrete entrances setback modestly from the front property line to provide a small porch or stoop. Some of these units lie a few feet below sidewalk grade. Four live/work astride the larger primary residential entry. These units sit proud of the residential units and the entry lobby.

<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.**

The Board liked the overall landscape design. Due to the landscape architect's vagueness about the type of planters, the Board recommended that the planner review and approve the type of containers on the roof garden. In keeping with the project's high quality of design, the containers should not use the large metal planters that resemble horse troughs.

**Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the November 5, 2012 meeting. Design, siting or architectural details not specifically identified or altered in these recommendations are expected to remain as presented in the plans and other drawings available at the November 5, 2012 public meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously

identified design priorities, and reviewing the plans and renderings, the Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design and the requested development standard departures from the requirements of the Land Use Code (listed below). The Board recommends the following CONDITIONS for the project. (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

- 1) Revise the metal canopy that sits above the primary residential entry. The land use planner has the responsibility to review and approve changes to the design in keeping with Board guidance. (A-3)
- 2) Pare the Woodland Park elevation down to its essence. Reassert the façade’s strong organization by consolidating (and eliminating colors), revising the metal canopy at the primary residential entrance, and strengthening the visual presence of the glulams. The land use planner has the responsibility to review and approve changes to the design in keeping with Board guidance. (B-1, C-2, C-4)
- 3) Revise the fenestration for the live/work units in order to visually emphasize the commercial nature of these units. The glazing should not resemble the residential units. Refer to the appendix of the Recommendation packet (p. 13) for the previous design. The land use planner has the responsibility to review and approve changes to the design in keeping with Board guidance. (D-11)
- 4) In keeping with the project’s high quality of design, the landscape containers on the roof garden should be of a high quality. Do not use the large metal planters that resemble horse troughs. The land use planner will review and approve the selection of planters. (E-2)

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) are 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).

STANDARD	REQUIREMENT	REQUEST	JUSTIFICATION	RECOMMENDATION
1 Street Level Facade SMC 23.47A.008A.3	Street level street facing facades shall be located within 10’ of the street lot line, unless wider sidewalks, plazas, or other approved landscape or open spaces are provided. .	Entry is set back 20’ from property line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allows a centrally located pedestrian oriented plaza at the primary entrance.</li> <li>▪ Provides significant modulation along the length of a long elevation to reduce the building mass.</li> </ul>	Recommended Approval
2. Non-residential street level requirements SMC 23.47A.008B.3.b	Non-residential uses shall have a floor to floor height of at least 13’	Insertion of a mezzanine at a height of 10’ to define the residential area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 20’ overall height of live/work exceeds the 13’ and defines the commercial area.</li> </ul>	Recommended Approval