



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012712

Address: 4741 11th Ave NE

Applicant: Gordon Fleener Architects - GF

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 19, 2012

Board Members Present: Peter Krech (Chair) – PK
Joe Hurley – JH
Salome Habibuddin – SH
Christina Paizana – CP
Martine Zettle – MZ

DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Planner - CV

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-65

Nearby Zones: (North) LR-1, LR-3, LR-3
(South) MR, NC3-85
(East) NC3-65
(West) LR-2

Lot Area: 55,430 square feet



Current Development: On project site property: New car showroom & on-grade parking for car service write-up customers; surface lots for new & used car display; parking for cars before & after servicing; 12-hoist car service building; single car wash machine; loading bay; dumpster area.

Access: Alley access from NE 50th St and NE 47th St; site access from 11th Ave NE.

Surrounding Development: Adjacent property west of alley (under same ownership): Surface lot for new & used car display; car showroom, car service building; parking for cars before & after servicing.
 Adjacent property west of alley (under other ownership): Vacated building formerly housing Tubs.
 Along 11th Ave NE east of project site: Three 5-story mixed-use apartment buildings, one 2-story apartment building, & 3 residences.
 Along NE 50th St north of project site & divided by alley: Fire Station No. 17 & 1-story retail building.
 Along NE 47th St south of project site & divided by alley: University Mazda car service building (no relation to University VW or University Audi) & parking lot used by University Audi for car storage.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: Mixed collection of building types (concrete, wood frame, structural steel), uses (offices, residences, retail, public service), & styles (International, Art Deco, Spanish Colonial, Bungalow, & “nondescript”).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to build a 50 foot, 3-story structure — for the service, storage and display of 300 new vehicles — to meet their current and future needs, while accommodating all the exiting uses currently on site. The proposal will be sited on the northern 470 linear feet of the site. This will require approximately 86,000 square feet and a ramp of approximately 6,300 square feet. In addition, a car display area is proposed at ground level for approximately 60 cars, requiring about 18,000 square feet. Also at ground level, a service area is proposed for 30 car hoists, tool storage, a locker room, etc. and associated parking for cars being serviced. This will require approximately 21,000 square feet. Accessory spaces will be provided for a car washing machine, facilities for recycling, trash compaction and trash pick-up. The entire facility will be approximately 130,000 square feet. The eastern portion of the roof will be a flat, green roof; the western portion will be sloped & will drain onto the green roof. Extensive landscaping will be installed along the 11th Ave NE and NE 50th St sides, in addition to required street trees & accompanying plantings.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

At Early Design Guidance (January 9, 2012)

Three alternative design schemes were presented. Similarities among all three options included building mass & footprint, identical storefront windows along NE 50th St and 11th Ave NE and a green roof. The alternative designs involved the street side facades of Levels 2 & 3.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a flat facade with punched windows similar to older apartment buildings.

The second scheme (Option B – the preferred option) showed a facade modulated by angled bay windows into which car fronts would extend.

The third scheme (Option C) showed a flat curtain wall facade similar to office buildings.

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting (October 15, 2012)

The second scheme (Option B – the preferred option) was shown with a facade modulated by angled bay windows into which car fronts would extend.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting (November 19, 2012)

The second scheme (Option B – the preferred option) overview was re-shown. Then the presentation focused on the Ramp Tower and Lantern, and the Modulation of the Bays on floors 2 and 3.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At Early Design Guidance

Approximately 3 members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Only one of three public attendees spoke. He noted he was familiar with this architect's work & that the building would be of high design quality & detailing.
- Stated that he & his wife often walked along 11th Ave NE and this building would be an asset to the neighborhood, citing better lighting & security cameras (presumably) would improve security. Was pleased with proposed building height (3 stories), appearance, & green roof.

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting

No members of the public attended.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting

No members of the public attended.

BOARD CLARIFYING QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, prior to discussion of specific Priorities & Board Recommendation, the Board made the following general comments (*applicant response in italics*):

JH: Please explain the design of the bays. *Several bay configurations were considered—the one car bay, the two car bay, the three cars bay, and a mix of bays. The final design was influenced by the first floor architectural design and the upper floor vehicle storage requirements.*

MZ: At the initial recommendation meeting it was suggested the northwest stair tower be relocation to the northeast corner. *This was considered, however it did not work the service areas needs.*

CP: What about service access? *In most cases transport trucks will car deliveries cars from the alley.*

PK: At the initial recommendation meeting the upper floors were shown with a vertical pattern with an exposed edge. *That has not been shown in this presentation. Depending on the material used this may or may not be used.*

SH: The design appears to show alley parking, what about people coming to look at vehicles to buy? *The alley and street will provide access.*

CP: Is the lantern occupied? *No, it is access to the roof.* What about exterior lighting? *Canned lighting will be used along the 11th Ave NE right of way and shielding exterior lighting will be used along the alley.*

PK: Will the shear walls to be planted? *Yes, with ivy. The planting area has a depth of about 17 inches.*

SH: What about the use of the alley? *This will be used for access to the service areas and for trucks making vehicle deliveries.*

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 & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. 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.*

See A-3 below.

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting, the Board requested additional information about the pedestrian experience along 11th Ave NE and NE 50th St.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the architect presented new drawings of the NE corner of the building — into the service area — and the revised SE corner of the building showing the wide entrance to the showroom, plus the view of the façade along 11th Ave NE. These drawings more clearly depict the pedestrian experience.

DRB General Consensus: The Board better understood the pedestrian experience we will create and were pleased with the outcome.

Conclusion: The Board agreed that the Pedestrian Experience guideline has been met and the fenestration, as originally designed, was accepted.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this as important and should be addressed, no specific comments were provided.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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 noted that cars enter/exit the site from the alley. Although the access points from NE 47th St and 11th Ave NE are clearly identifiable, pedestrians seldom access the site from 11th Ave NE.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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 did not note this as a high priority, but asked that the applicant consider how the building meets the street with respect to scale, how it address its impact on human activity, and how vehicles and people will interact.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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 noted that vehicle entrances/exits to the site are from the alley.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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 commented that the corner should be a strong element and was a design opportunity. If the right materials for the north and east facades are chosen, the corner will take care of itself. The materials could be different, depending on the final design. Perhaps the materials should be different because of the need to make the corner important.

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting, the Board found neither original corner design satisfied the Design Guideline that corners be important elements of a building on a corner lot. In addition they felt the pylon sign competed with the SE corner. They suggested the corners be stronger and perhaps incorporate materials different from the adjacent facades. Directional guidance for the NE corner was much less specific.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the architect presented a new design for both corners. SE Corner has been vertically expanded and glazed, providing display space for one car on each floor. The NE Corner roof was raised above the parapet railing, the glazing was altered to be more compatible with other similar glazing, spandrels were changed from concrete to metal siding and each level was stepped out.

DRB General Consensus:

SE Corner – The new design was well received with no further critique.

NE Corner – Almost the entire Board saw the new design as too complex, should be more like the SE corner, should be more vertical, shouldn't step out. One member liked the asymmetry of the corners.

Conclusion: The Board agreed the SE corner now meets the Design Guidelines including elimination of competition from the pylon sign and was accepted.

The Board, rather than requiring an additional meeting to address this corner, directed DPD to work with the applicant to resolve the design.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted this guideline as important. One Board member noted that the early design proposed alternates barely meet the 3-scheme notion, but the typology of the building (needing to house many cars with adequate circulation space) limits the options and did not suggest designing more schemes. That Board member also noted the building is “huge” & seems to show Bauhaus factory precedents, this being a good characteristic, and suggested this as an architectural direction.

Others Board members noted the building should make a bold statement with its size, the almost industrial “muscle” of it, and with the ramp. It was suggested that the parapet be “pushed” out to further enhance the structures scale.

A majority of the Board members agreed with the Bauhaus comment and liked the bold scale of the ramp.

Two of the Board members suggested that the applicant explore combining the bays widths to improve the modulation/scale of the building.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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, this guideline generated the most comments. Comments included two very different ideas: 1. On the facade, visually distinguishing the car display from the car service portions of the building. 2. Maintaining visual consistency across the façade. This view seemed to prevail, as did emphasizing the early Bauhaus (industrial building) precedent.

One Board member liked making the ramp visible, as did the others, noting the opportunity for a strong design statement. That Board member noted the feeling of bigness was appropriate to the use. “...it was one move away from “great.” Attention needs to be paid to the west façade – it will be visible from above the roofs of the nearby buildings. A Board member asked if the bays are needed. The applicant replied: Yes, to

make more aisle width for moving cars in & out of their stalls feasible. Another Board member then noted the façade should have its own language – opportunity to speak “muscle”. This area allows for iconic expression – to be its own thing.

DPD staff asked for ramp comments. One Board member asked about the challenge of holding the street edge w/ the open ramp. If unenclosed, wants it to be really visible. The applicant replied: Enclosure at base has been removed in further design refinements. Others want the ramp to be open.

Ramp Tower & Lantern:

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting, the Board requested that the ramp lantern lid be lightened & made more consistent with the shape of the ramp tower. No further requests were made.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the architect presented an altered and lightened the lantern by lowering the window sills to create taller windows that we extended across the back of the N lantern wall in place of the original concrete wall.

A rounded cap was considered by the applicant to reflect the form of the ramp tower, but they concluded this created a disassociation of the ramp tower from the rest of the building. Instead, the square cap was retained; however the thinner edge was introduced.

DRB General Consensus: Most Board members were neutral on the redesigned lantern and cap, and understood that the design — a discussed during the presentation — is a legitimate expression of the applicants design approach for this project.

Conclusion: The redesigned ramp tower lantern was accepted primarily because it does not conflict with the Design Guidelines. Although they were not enthusiastic with the square cap, they agreed their role was not to dictate design. The redesign was accepted.

Modulation of the Bays on Floors 2 & 3:

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting, the Board requested alternates to the 2-car bay modulation and had issues with the inconsistency between the street level façade and the façade of the two upper levels. They also had issues with the ribbon windows. *Note that during the Board’s discussion of the second DR presentation, A-1 (Human Activity) was also discussed in relationship to these modulation issues.* The Applicant interpreted this to mean that the entire façade, as opposed to just the street level façade, was part and parcel of the pedestrian experience. Their response addresses both Design Guidelines.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the architect presented an alternate façade using a 2-car and 1-car bay modulation and a flat façade to illustrate that the preferred original 2-car bay modulation is, indeed, complex.

The flat façade alternate allowed the Board to more clearly see the syncopated rhythm of the 11th Ave NE façade and the contrast between the strong verticality of the street level supporting the strong horizontality of the upper two levels. This was the applicants design intent.

No alternates to ribbon windows were presented because ribbon windows are part of the preferred option we presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting. The Board directed the applicant to develop this option.

DRB General Consensus: The Board agreed that, while the 1-car/2-car bay modulation is interesting, it did not necessarily create a more complex and interesting façade, nor did it enhance the pedestrian experience. They agreed the original 2-car bay modulation is more compatible with the overall design intent.

Conclusion: The Board agreed that both the architectural concept and the pedestrian experience have satisfied their guidance. The 2-car bay modulation and the original street façade were accepted.

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, One Board member commented on the large scale of the storefront windows.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

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.*

At the Initial Recommendation Meeting, the Board asked for a materials and colors board. One Board member took issue w/ the “sea of asphalt” between the existing showroom and the new storage / display / service building public entrance at the base of the ramp tower.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the architect provided a materials & colors board. They also presented a straight pathway of concrete paving becoming circular & more complex below the ramp, leading to the public entrance at the base of the ramp tower.

DRB General Consensus: The Board agreed the new design eliminated the “sea of asphalt” and also worked to enhance the pedestrian on-site experience. One Board member worried that there might not be enough contrast between the paving & the asphalt to guide the users.

Conclusion: The Board accepted the new paving design.

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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board noted their interest in having the ramp very visible as opposed to being minimized.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

D. Pedestrian Environment

D-2 Blank Walls. *Buildings 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.*

D-4 Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks. *Parking lots near sidewalks should provide adequate security and lighting, avoid encroachment of vehicles onto the sidewalk, and minimize the visual clutter of parking lot signs and equipment.*

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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board said D-5 is important, but made no further comments, other than what has been noted in C-2, C-4, C-4, & C-5.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses these guidelines.

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 this might be addressed by site lighting.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

D-8 Treatment of Alleys. *The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board referenced taking into consideration the view from properties to the west when designing the west façade – see C-2, above.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that they design addresses this guideline.

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.

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.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board made no comments, possibly because the transparency of the facades at all levels is clear in the three design alternatives.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that they design addresses this guideline.

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| E. <u>Landscaping</u> |
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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 streetscape.

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 briefly discussed the required street trees and landscaping in the new 5' wide setback area, the new 5' wide sidewalk, and the proposed additional 30" wide area of landscaping, hardscape (planters, etc.) or other elements at the building edge along 11th Ave NE and NE 50th St designed to enhance the pedestrian experience, but cautioned that given the "racetrack" nature of NE 50th St, enhancing the pedestrian experience is a challenge.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted that the design addresses this guideline.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) 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 departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance, Initial Recommendation meeting, and Final Recommendation meeting the following departure were requested:

- 1. Structural Building Overhang (23.53.035):** The Code requires some substantial portion of the proposed bays be parallel to the face of the building. The applicant proposes angling the bays 30-60 degrees from the face of the building.

The Board indicated they were in favor of allowing this departure and asked the applicant to look at increasing width of the bays to vertically/horizontally modulate the eastern façade of the structure.

- 2. Vehicle Access. (23.47A.032):** The Code requires access to parking shall be from the alley if the lot abuts an alley improved to the standards of Section 23.53.030.C. The applicant proposes access from the alley and 11th Ave NE (a street).

The Board **recommended approval** of this departure.