



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012842

Address: 525 Northeast Northgate Way

Applicant: Kevin Cleary of Baylis Architects

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 19, 2012

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

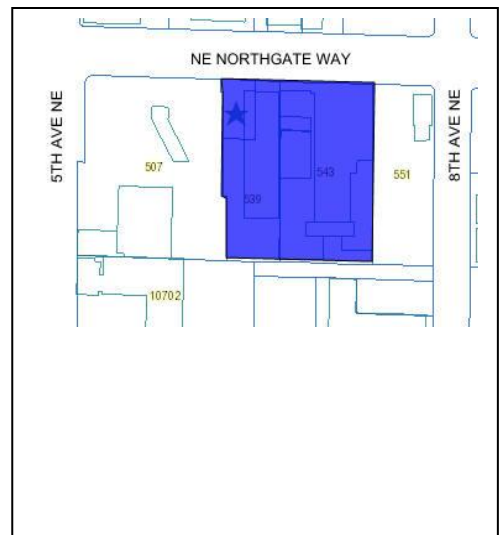
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Three with a 65' height limit. (NC3 65') Site lies within the Northgate Overlay

Nearby Zones: North: NC32 65'  
South: NC3 40'  
East: NC3 65' and 40'  
West: NC3 85'

Lot Area: 72,983 square feet. The site slopes approximately ten feet from the north to the south. Approximately 30,810 sq. ft. of commercial space occupies the three parcels.



Current Development: Commercial building and surface parking.

Access: Access is from N.E. Northgate Way and from a private easement to 5th Ave. N.E. and 8th Ave. N.E.

Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character: Adjacent to the west is a newer mixed use building. Both sides of N.E. Northgate Way are retail commercial in character with older developments in a strip mall configuration. To the south is an area of multifamily zoning several hundred feet deep, followed by single family zoning and uses further to the south. To the west, across 5th Ave. N.E. is the Northgate Shopping Mall.

ECAs: No mapped Environmentally Critical Areas.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal on this mid-block site is for 266 apartment units in a six story mixed-use building with approximately 24,600 sq. ft. of retail space and parking for 270 vehicles within the structure.

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant refined the drawings shown at the 2<sup>nd</sup> EDG meeting to meet the Board guidance. Visit DPD web site for prior design packets and meeting reports.

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp)

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Three members of the public affixed their names to the Recommendation meeting sign-in sheet. The public provided the following comments:

- Try to keep traffic off of 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE as it is not improved. There are no sidewalks.
- Left turns are not allowed from 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to Northgate Way. However, most visitors will want to return to the interstate.
- Supports continuous landscaping on Northgate Way. The departure request for such landscaping should be approved.
- The area needs a sense of place. The large commercial entrance will help provide this and encourage people to walk in the neighborhood.

- A large retail store will compromise the amount of transparency due to owner’s desire for signage and storage.
- How does the traffic circulation work? There is no light on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE. People need to turn onto Northgate Way from 8<sup>th</sup> Ave in order to return to the interstate.
- The proposed structure has minimal amounts of modulation for its size.
- Trees and other landscaping on the property to the east will be destroyed by the new project.
- There is not enough parking. Visitors will park in the adjacent lot.
- There is a 17’6” wall on the southeast corner. This blank wall will face the adjacent property.

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

The Board unanimously supported the departure allowing a planting strip between the sidewalk and Northgate Way. This will provide a buffer from the street for the pedestrian.

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

See D-12 guidance for the residential entry on Northgate Way.

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

Creation of a small plaza in front of the residential entry off Northgate Way will provide a brief respite for tenants and their visitors from the activity along this commercial corridor before entering or exiting the building. See guidance for D-12.

**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 base of the east elevation but did not recommend changes to the design of the wall or the series of green screens.

- 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.**

See recommendations (D-12) for the residential entrance at Northgate Way.

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

The Board did not comment on the upper level open space.

- 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 recommended adding a second traffic calming device along the driveway on the project's west side.

Acknowledging public concern about thru traffic along the driveway to the south of the building and traffic exiting onto Eighth Ave NE to join Northgate Way, the Board requested that the land use planner evaluate the transportation impact study.

DPD staff response: traffic impacts will be reviewed in the project's SEPA analysis.

## **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.**

See the discussion of blank walls and scale for guideline D-2.

## **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 expressed its overall satisfaction with the building's design.

## 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.**

The extensive blank walls along the lower, south elevation gave the Board pause. After much deliberation, the Board focused its recommendations on the eastern segment of the south façade. This architect should reduce the scale along this segment by adding a scaling device (for example, a brow or canopy over the loading area) to diminish the appearance of this sizeable wall.

Discussion also focused on the series of vertical towers housing circulation. These towers contribute blank walls at key locations. The Board did not place conditions on the design of the towers.

- 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.**

See guidance for D-2, Blank Walls.

- 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.**

The Board noted the need for a dedicated loading area. The portion of the garage designated for loading appeared minimal. The Board urged the creation of a better plan for the loading docks, but did not condition the project.

- 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 residential entrance appeared unprepossessing. Although intended to have a quieter presence on Northgate Way than the commercial entrance at the structure's other corner on Northgate, the residential entry feels diminished.

The Board requested a more gracious and expansive entrance, one that welcomes the visitor and creates a sense of place. The Board strongly recommended increasing the amount of space (a plaza) between the door and the sidewalk. In addition, the Board

recommended altering the door and fenestration of the residential entrance so that it does not resemble the commercial glazing. Increasing the amount of wood is encouraged.

The applicant will need to provide signage for the residential entrance.

## **E. Landscaping**

### **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 recommended approval of a departure to allow landscaping between the sidewalk and Northgate Way.

**Recommendations:** The recommendations summarized below were based on the plans and models submitted at the November 19th, 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 19th, 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) Add a second traffic calming device along the driveway at the project's west side. (A-8)
- 2) On the eastern segment of the south façade, the architect shall reduce the scale along this two-story base by adding a scaling device (for example a brow or canopy over the loading area) to diminish the appearance of this sizeable blank wall. (D-2)
- 3) Increase the amount of space to establish a small plaza between the residential door and the Northgate Way sidewalk. In addition, the Board recommended altering the door and fenestration of the residential entrance so that they do not resemble the commercial glazing. Increasing the amount of wood is encouraged. (D-12)
- 4) Provide signage at the residential entrance along Northgate Way. (D-12)

## **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. Setbacks SMC 23.47A.008A.3. & 23.71.008B.4	Street level, street facing facades shall be located within 10' of the street lot line unless wider sidewalks, plazas or other approved landscaped or open spaces are provided.	Northwest corner: 26' (16' increase).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creates safe, weather protected plaza for pedestrians. (A-4)</li> <li>▪ Promotes an active streetscape. (A-4)</li> </ul>	Recommended approval
2. Setbacks SMC 23.47A.008A.3. & 23.71.008B.4	Street level, street facing facades shall be located within 10' of the street lot line unless wider sidewalks, plazas or other approved landscaped or open spaces are provided.	Northeast corner: 27'6" to elevator (17'6" increase) and 46'6" to stair tower (36'6" increase).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creates safe, weather protected plaza for pedestrians. (D-12)</li> <li>▪ Promotes an active streetscape. D-12)</li> </ul>	Recommended approval based on Board recommended conditions.
3. Planting Strips SMC 23.71.008E.3	Planting strips are prohibited along major pedestrian streets.	Proposes a continuous planting strip between driveway at northwest corner of property and east property edge along Northgate Way with a wide of 5'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides a safe pedestrian route along a busy vehicular route. (A-2, E-2)</li> <li>▪ Preserves existing street trees. (E-2)</li> </ul>	Recommended approval