



**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE
NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**

Project Number: 3012924

Address: 4557 11th Ave NE

Applicant: Craig Kolbitz

Date of Meeting: Monday, February 27, 2012

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

Board Members Absent: Salone Habibuddin

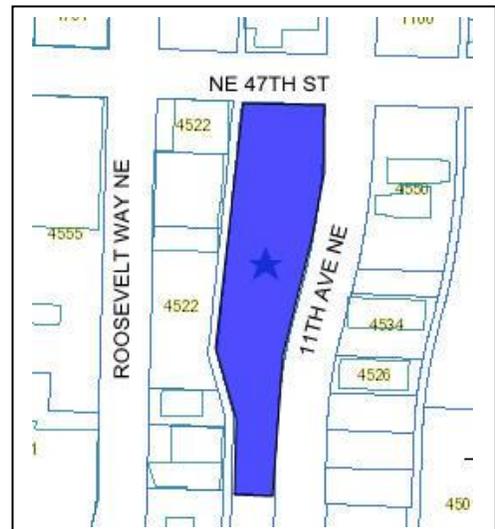
DPD Staff Present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-85'

Nearby Zones: North: NC3-65'
South: NC3-85'
East: NC3-85'
West: NC3-85'

Lot Area: 40,224 square feet



Current Development: Outdoor Storage for Automotive Retail Sales and Services.

Access: Several access points to 11th Ave NE

Surrounding Development: Automotive Retail Sales and Services to the north and east. Multi-family Apartments and Hotel to the west.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: There is a variety of general uses represented within the surrounding blocks including housing, retail, grocer, restaurant and church. There are three newly planned developments that are expected to be in construction within the next year; the Avalon Bay housing development across the street with 300 units, the Marriott Hotel on the corner of 12th Ave NE and NE 45th St, and a private parking garage for the University Audi dealership to the north of the site across NE 47th St.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is 180 apartment units — 14, 3 bedroom; 58, 2 bedroom; 59, 1 bedroom; 49 studios — with 2,000 square feet of ground level retail and underground parking for 134 vehicles that is access from the alley and 11th Ave NE.

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include 180 apartment units, 2000 square feet of ground level retail and underground parking for 134 vehicles.

The first scheme (Option A) showed one building envelope as a monolithic mass.

The second scheme (Option B) showed two building envelopes separated by a through block connection.

The third **preferred** scheme (Option C) showed three building envelopes of reducing height from north to south separated by two mews. This was the preferred option by the applicant.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Noted that the preferred scheme ‘Looks really good. A real addition to the neighborhood.’
- Stated that they were concern about vehicle access being limited to the alley. They would prefer access from the alley and the street.
- Encouraged the applicant to retain the 30’ spruce tree.
- Concerned — ‘curious where the [northern] cut-through [mews] goes? What does it meet? The building behind.’

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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the length of the block and the three options. The three building option was considered the better response to the site characteristics.

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 discussed that the main entrances need to be clearly identifiable and visible from the street for the users. See A-4 below.

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 discussed that the mews [commercial/residential areas] need to be well designed for the pedestrian experience and to encourage pedestrian human activity.

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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed their need to see more details gating/hedges considered.

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

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the residential and commercial areas at grade must be usable, attractive, and well-integrated.

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 discussed that their recommendation on the street vehicle access would be made based on the design that avoids pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.

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.*

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.*

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.*

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 discussed needing more details on the floor plates and elevation to further address 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 Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed needing more detail on the materials to address this guideline.

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.*

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

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

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.*

This was not identified as a guideline by the Board. DPD staff recommends this information is made available to the Board for their consideration.

D-10 Commercial/[Residential Exterior] 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.*

This was not identified as a guideline by the Board. DPD staffs recommends this information is made available to the Board for their consideration.

D-11 Commercial/[Residential] Transparency. *Commercial storefronts [and residential street facing facades] 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.*

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.*

E. Landscaping

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.*

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 meeting no departures were requested:

Board Deliberations:

Colin noted that John Shaw, of DPD, had expressed reservations about the curb cut requested. Noted the ultimate decision lies with the Director.

Vehicle Access/Curb Cut (see guidelines A-4, A-6, A-8, and D-7)

Peter:

- There are a lot of moving parts to this design.
- Level of information low, but it makes sense given the complexity.
- Advocated for the curb cut, since it solves for the intensity of use in the alley
- Like the preferred options
- Most admirable, that the project meets the grade in a variety of locations, especially in comparison to the parking garage we saw a few weeks ago.

Martine:

- The curb cut obviously alleviates pressure on the alley.
- What will the pedestrian experience be with 130 cars leaving the garage? Can it be pedestrian friendly? [Ted discussed the idea of a woonerf.]
- Point is, [this board] required Avalon to force the traffic down the alley. Also, understand that neighbor next door has a lot of traffic in the alley.

Christina:

- Like to see an option where there is still access in the alley and this is a pressure release point. Wouldn't it be everyone's short-cut? Also "get it" that this is the low point of the site.
- Feel having this break in middle of nice development, even if it is a trickle of cars . . . pedestrians will just cross the street. Need to be convinced.

Joe Hurley:

- I like the curb cut, since 11th is one-way. Feels more manageable. If developed as a woonerf, with good markers, could be workable.

Peter:

- Paving separate and distinct in woonerf, and elevated lighting, all factors. Could it be an "in" only, so no stationary cars would be waiting in woonerf?

Joe:

- It is possible this could work really well. Can't tell at this level.

Peter:

- If curb cut is approved, I want to see how traffic was determined.

Mews (see guidelines A-3, A-4, A-6, A-7, A-8, C-2, C-3, C-4, D-1, D-7, D-10, D-12, E-1 and E-2)

Peter:

- Being slightly elevated is a nice touch. It spans Private/Public realms. Less concerned that it ends at the alley.

Martine:

- The fact it terminates at a blank wall can be handled by design. It would be helpful to have each experiential location have an elevation [drawing]

Christina:

- Like to see what is at other end of mews. What anchors it? How is end of Mews activated.

Peter:

- Why do you want it activated? Might be better not activated.

Christina:

- Maybe it could narrow down?

Joe:

- Maybe the landscaping handles it.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended the project should move forwards to MUP Application in response to the guidance provided at this meeting.