



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Project Number: 3013058

Address: 306 Queen Anne Avenue North

Applicant: Radim Blazej for David Pruin with Gramor Development LLC.

Meeting Date: September 19, 2012

Board members present: David Delfs (Chair)
Mindy Black
Jill Kurfirst

Board members absent: Jacob Connell
Lipika Mukerji

DPD staff present: Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner
Beth Hartwick, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3 (NC3-65')

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65'
(South) NC3-65'
(East) NC3-65'
(West) NC3-65'

Lot Area: 7,200 square feet



Current Development: Residential.

Access: Pedestrian access from Queen Anne Avenue North and vehicle access from the alley to the east of the site.

Surrounding Development: Commercial and residential structures of various bulk, scale and use.

ECAs: None

Neighborhood Character: The neighborhood is filled with low to mid-rise apartments of various vintages, older single-story commercial buildings, and medium-sized office buildings built within the past 40 years. Large old buildings are built right to the street, with mature urban canopy and narrow streets all contribute to the established feeling of the neighborhood. There are very few street level commercial uses along the adjacent three block stretch of Queen Anne Ave N, contributing to low volume of pedestrian traffic. Seattle Center is one block to the east.

East and west properties of the blocks across the alleys are predominantly surface parking lots.

Frequent bus service from downtown to lower Queen Anne make the Uptown Urban neighborhood an easily accessible place to live and visit.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

At Early Design Guidance (EDG)

The proposed development will create a mixed use apartment building with street front commercial uses and enhanced pedestrian experience in the urban village neighborhood. The ground level of the preferred scheme consists of a residential lobby, 3 commercial live/work units in loft configuration facing the street. The commercial live/work units will have direct, individual street access. The mezzanine level will have parking, accessible from the alley and building services behind the mezzanine levels of live work units. The second thru sixth floors have a mix of studios and one bedroom units, for a total of 10 units per floor. The roof of the building will be accessible and act as an amenity space for tenants with opportunities for entertaining, gardening and relaxation. Parking is not required for this site, although 13 stalls will be provided in the structure, with direct access from the alley.

At the Recommendation Meeting

The scope and scale of the project had not changed much from what was proposed at the EDG. The proposed structure will have 50 studio type units and three live-work units at grade.

The partially underground garage accessed from the alley will have 11 parking spaces. There will be a roof deck amenity area and four private decks along the alley. The residential entry along Queen Anne Ave N will be recessed, providing a covered transition space from the public sidewalk to the private lobby.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: APRIL 4, 2012

DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include vehicle access from the alley for parking within the structure, a primary residential entry at the northwest corner of the building, street level live/work units, upper level residential units, and rooftop amenity space.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a rectangular building mass with the upper eastern façade setback from the property line for residential open space.

The second scheme (Option B) showed an L-shaped building mass with the upper southeastern area setback for residential open space.

The third preferred scheme (Option C) showed a C-shaped building mass with the upper central southern façade and eastern facades setback from the property lines.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

- Noted that events at the Seattle Center results in the alleys and streets being used for 'disruptive behavior and illegal drinking/drugging'.
- Stated that the alleys vehicle access needs to be gated and lighted.
- Objected to the loss of the existing 'garden'.
- Encouraged the reuse of the existing residential materials on the proposed building or for recycled use on other buildings.
- Concerned with the loss of the existing residential structure.

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, the following departure was requested:

To allow residential uses to occupy 31% of the street-level street-facing façade when facing an arterial. (SMC 23.47A.005 Street-Level Uses): The Code requires that residential uses may not exceed 20% of the street-level street-facing façade when facing an arterial.

The Board indicated they would be inclined to consider the departure as long as the lobby has glass and transparency.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATION: SEPTEMBER 19, 2012

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The preferred option from the EDG meeting, with a C- shaped massing, was presented at the recommendation meeting.

At the meeting, the presentation focused on the building elevations and materials, specifically the street facing west elevation and the two side walls, and their relationship to the abutting right-of-way and adjacent properties. As the “temporary walls” of the north and south facades will be very prominent and may be there for a long time they generated public comment and Board critique.

One departure was requested for consideration — to allow the live/work mezzanine area to have a ceiling height of less than 13’.

At the EDG meeting a departure request was made to allow a greater percentage of residential use at the street facing façade.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Three members of the public spoke at the Final Recommendation meeting. The following comments were offered:

- Would like the north and south “temporary’ walls to be more neutral.
- Approves what the applicant has proposed for the north and south elevations. Would like some color so that walls don’t look like concrete.
- Encouraged the applicant to use some of the brick from the house on the site somewhere in the design or make reference to the history of the site.
- Encouraged the applicant to survey the existing landscaping and have it salvaged and reused off site.

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 & Uptown Guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

A. *Site Planning*

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

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed that the residential entry's needs to be well defined and clearly visible from the street.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board agreed that clarification of the residential entry is needed to differentiate it from the live-work units, perhaps use a frame with vertical louvers, an orange canopy different from the live-work units, and/or a different size door.

The emergency egress door should be seamlessly integrated into the façade.

- 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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the exterior treatment of the facades. Materials and colors should be used to minimize the appearance of the façades — especially the north blank façade.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed concern about the brightness and potential glare from the south wall.

- 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 the need for a well design rooftop amenity 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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown the preferred location for surface parking lots is in the rear of the building or away from or otherwise screened from the street and sidewalk.

Preferred Alley Access

Access to new development is preferred via alleyways, if feasible. Throughout Uptown encourage all parking for residential uses to be located below grade.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed their concerns with the recessed garage entrance being an inviting location 'drinking or drugging' activity.

The Board as a majority recommended that the vehicle access area be gated at the outer wall of the structure. And that the outer wall entrance corners are designed to add site triangles for drivers/pedestrians using the alley.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed approval of the angled walls leading to the garage entry door.

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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

In the Uptown Urban character area larger massing units and less modulation are appropriate, provided they are carefully designed, with quality materials.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed their concerns with the 'box' to the south. 'Try to open it up.'

At the Recommendation Meeting, this was not addressed except for praise for the breakup of the front façade and treatment of the 'difficult' blank walls.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Within the Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character areas, the use of historic-looking brick and tile facades are strongly encouraged to create a more consistent, unified, and historic appearance throughout the district.

Throughout Uptown, decorative exterior treatments using brick, tile, and/or other interesting exterior finish materials are strongly preferred. Quality exterior finish materials should be incorporated at all levels and on all exterior walls.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board noted they would like the south and north walls to be a little darker in color than what was presented. Use more gray and keep the texture flat and the façade well detailed. Make sure that the concrete at grade level is treated with graffiti proof materials.

The Board liked the increased amount of glazing, the orange frame and sandblasted concrete on the west elevation.

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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown entries should be designed to be pedestrian friendly (via position, scale, architectural detailing, and materials) and should be clearly discernible to the pedestrian.

Throughout Uptown special attention to the pedestrian experience and street right-of-way should be given along pedestrian corridors as identified on the map (pg. VI).

Throughout Uptown the use of a pedestrian-scaled streetlamp within all character areas is encouraged. In addition, streetscape features such as street clocks and benches are encouraged in Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas.

In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas, encourage Seattle Center campus redevelopment along its boundaries to either open vistas from Uptown into Seattle Center or to provide activation for the street.

Including amenities for transit riders in a building's design rather than the traditional use of curbside bus shelters generates a safer and more active street. In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas the elimination of curbside bus shelters is encouraged in retail areas as appropriate.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board asked that the mezzanine portion of the live/work space extend over the top of the lobby.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed support for the recessed residential entry. They liked the bench outside the entry and want to see it become more animated and interesting. Perhaps it could be framed or more vertical.

If lighting is provided use the Uptown Guideline specified lighting.

- 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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Within the Uptown Park character area landscaping (e.g., trellised climbing plants and other urban greenery) is the preferred treatment for walls.

In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas artwork and decorative surfacing may provide an alternative wall treatment to landscaping in some locations.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the need for a well-designed façades. 'Can the concrete walls be enhanced/treated? Perhaps some further expression at the south facing concrete wall too.'

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board expressed support for the vertical and horizontal reveals on the north and south elevations. They also the sandblasted concrete treatment at grade level. Also see C-4.

- 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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown designs that lessen the visibility of parking structures are preferred. Garages and parking structures should, where feasible, incorporate landscaping to reduce their visual impact.

Parking structures are discouraged in the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the need for a secure and safe vehicle access.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board liked the way the garage entry had changed. See A-8.

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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed their need to see details on this. ‘How does garbage collection work?’

At the Recommendation Meeting, it was noted that the applicant had worked with SPU at getting a departure for the size of the service area.

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 discussed the need for a secure and safe alley vehicle access.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board liked the lighting and angled walls providing site triangles leading to the garage entry in the alley.

D-9 **Commercial [Residential entry and Live Work Unit] Signage.** *Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown tasteful signs designed for pedestrians (as opposed to passing vehicles) are preferred. Backlit signs, animated reader boards and similar signs are discouraged. Blade signs, wall-mounted signs, signs below awnings, and similar signs are preferred.

If the applicant is considering signage for the residential entry and the live/work units — then examples should be provide at the next design review board meeting.

At the Recommendation Meeting, this issue was not addressed.

D-10 **Commercial [Exterior/Interior] 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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Uptown accommodates shopping and eating experiences during the dark hours of the Northwest's late fall, winter, and early spring. Pedestrian area lighting is an important feature of each block in the Uptown Urban character area, and the Heart of Uptown character area.

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board recommended using lighting specified within the Uptown Neighborhood Guidelines in the planting area proposed near the entry.

- D-11 Commercial [Live/Work] Transparency.** *Commercial [live/work] 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 discussed their need to see details on this. The emergency entrance door should be made 'fun, not just a throw away.'

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board liked the transparency and openness of the live/work units.

- 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.*

At the Recommendation Meeting, the Board liked that the residential entry was set back from the live/work entries. They also liked the bench outside the entry and want to see this become more playful. See D-1.

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.*

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown, but especially within the Uptown Park character area, landscaping should be substantial and include a variety of textures and colors, to the extent possible. Landscaping should be used to enhance each site, including buildings, setbacks, entrances, open space areas, and to screen parking and other less visually attractive areas. Encourage planted containers at building entries.

E-3 **Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions.** *The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.*

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

Three departures from development standards were proposed.

1. **Street Level Uses (SMC23.47A.005 C3)** Residential uses may not exceed in the aggregate 20% of the street-level street-facing façade when facing an arterial.

The project is proposing to have 30.6% (18'-4" of a 59'-8") of the ground level street facing façade be residential, including the lobby and emergency exit stairway. The only way to meet code would be for the lobby to shrink which the Board did not want to happen. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the departure.

2. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC23.47A.008 B3)** Nonresidential uses shall extend an average of at least 30 feet and a minimum of 15 feet in depth from the street-level street-facing façade. Nonresidential uses at street level shall have a floor-to-floor height of at least 13 feet.

The project is proposing live-work units with a floor to floor height of 19' for the first 14', and a 10' height at the mezzanine. The Board granted the departure.

3. A departure from the size of the solid waste area from the required 416 square feet to a proposed 272 square foot area has been approved by Liz Kaine at SPU.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet and the presentation by the applicant at the September 19th, 2012 Design recommendation meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, three (all those present) of the Design Review Board recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. The Board stated the following areas need to be worked on further in conjunction with DPD staff:

- **The pedestrian entry along Queen Anne Avenue.**
- **The egress entry on Queen Anne Avenue should appear seamless and well integrated into the façade.**
- **Tone down the color of the exterior material on the north and south walls to be less white more neutral.**
- **If providing lighting along the street use the Uptown Guideline recommended lighting.**
- **It is outside the purview of the Board but perhaps neighborhood historical photos could be shown in the lobby.**