



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE QUEEN ANNE/ MAGNOLIA DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013251

Address: 777 Thomas Street

Applicant: Jennifer Sobieraj for Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 11, 2012

Board Members Present: Mindy Black
Jill Kurfirst
Lipika Mukerji

Board Members Absent: David Delfs
Jacob Connell

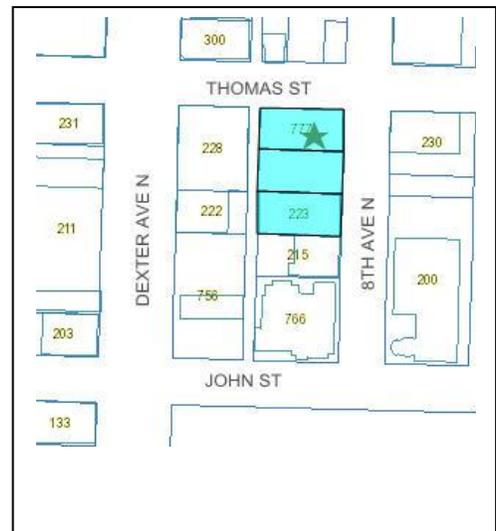
DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips, substituting for Shelley Bolser
Beth Hartwick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM-85

Nearby Zones: North: SM-85
South: SM-85
East: SM-85
West: SM-85

Lot Area: 21,600 square feet



Current Development: Two-story commercial structures and surface parking

Access: Vehicular access is via the alley and curb cuts on Thomas St and 8th Ave N.

Surrounding Development: One to two story commercial structures from early to mid-20th century are located to the west and south of this site, and to the north across the street. An alley separates the site from the structure to the west.

A newer six-story mixed-use residential and retail structure is located across the street to the east.

This site is located near the southwest edge of the larger South Lake Union neighborhood, and is referred to as the Denny Park area. The Denny Park area of South Lake Union provides a diverse mix of buildings and uses.

Neighborhood Character: Denny Park anchors the quiet non-arterial 8th Avenue at the south end of this block, with a playground area and off leash dog area. Dexter Ave N. is a busy arterial located one block to the west with a high level of cyclist, vehicle and transit traffic connecting downtown with areas north of the Ship Canal. A few blocks further to the north, the busy arterials of Mercer and Broad Streets provide a clear break with the rest of the South Lake Union neighborhood.

The Denny Park area consists of mostly older 1-2 story commercial uses with some newer mixed-use and multi-family structures. The epicenter of the neighborhood is the heavily wooded Denny Park, Seattle's oldest public park and the site of the Seattle Parks Department offices.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 7-story structure with 143 residential units, 2,300 square feet of commercial space, and below grade parking for 93 vehicles accessed from the alley. The preferred option includes residential units at the 8th Ave N street frontage, with commercial at the intersection of 8th Ave N and Thomas Street, a residential lobby at the northwest corner, and a courtyard facing the alley. The existing structures would be demolished.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 11, 2012

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the 3013251 file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- A speaker clarified that two buildings rather than one are on the other side of the alley.

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.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:

1. The proposed structure's adjacency to the Holly Press building is unresolved. The Board requested more explicit detail for the Recommendation meeting. (A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5)
2. The patios in front of the two-story apartments facing Eighth Ave. N. should be generous enough to create a commodious area for small gatherings. After considerable deliberation, the Board advised a minimum of six feet (and preferably eight feet) between the property line on Eighth Ave and the apartment facade. Consideration should be given to varying the setbacks along Thomas. (A-2, A-4, A-6)
3. The Board requested further consideration to widening the space in front of the leasing office by shifting the north wall away from the walkway. Moving the location of the steps may also help. (A-2, A-4, A-6)
4. The Board requested further design development of the Thomas St. façade, particularly the second level which projected outward from the dominant vertical plane (the "drawer"). (A-10, B-1, C-2)
5. The Board was troubled by the Thomas St. seventh floor balconies integrated with the roof overhang and extended wall, since it results in structures in the upper level setback (requiring a departure from the Land Use Code). The Board was also concerned by the lack of design resolution of this area. The opaque projecting side wall may inhibit upper level views toward the Space Needle. The Board directed the applicant to continue to develop the design of this facade. (A-10, B-1, C-2)
6. The alley façade should be designed with the same level of consideration and quality as the street frontages, given the Denny Park Lutheran Church's impressive alley façade, and a new

proposed development across the alley that includes alley-facing residential units and landscaping (EDG application #3012408). (C-3, C-4, D-1, D-2, D-8, E-1)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Board identified the following Citywide Design Guidelines & the South Lake Union neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

The vision for street level uses in South Lake Union is a completed network of sidewalks that successfully accommodate pedestrians. Streetscape compatibility is a high priority of the neighborhood with redevelopment. Sidewalk-related spaces should appear safe, welcoming and open to the general public.

- Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, such as: tree grates; benches; lighting.
- Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Where appropriate, consider a reduction in the required amount of commercial and retail space at the ground level, such as in transition zones between commercial and residential areas. Place retail in areas that are conducive to the use and will be successful.
- Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

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

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

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Create graceful transitions at the streetscape level between the public and private uses.
- Keep neighborhood connections open, and discourage closed campuses.
- Design facades to encourage activity to spill out from business onto the sidewalk, and vice-versa.
- Reinforce pedestrian connections both within the neighborhood and to other adjacent neighborhoods. Transportation infrastructure should be designed with adjacent sidewalks, as development occurs to enhance pedestrian connectivity.
- Reinforce retail concentrations with compatible spaces that encourage pedestrian activity.

- Create businesses and community activity clusters through co-location of retail and pedestrian uses as well as other high pedestrian traffic opportunities.
- Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.

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.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape through the use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing.

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-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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Address both the pedestrian and auto experience through building placement, scale and details with specific attention to regional transportation corridors such as Mercer, Aurora, Fairview and Westlake. These locations, pending changes in traffic patterns, may evolve with transportation improvements.
- Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.
- Relate proportions of buildings to the width and scale of the street.
- Articulate the building facades vertically or horizontally in intervals that relate to the existing structures or existing pattern of development in the vicinity.
- Consider using architectural features to reduce building scale such as: landscaping; trellis; complementary materials; detailing; accent trim.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

Design the “fifth elevation” — the roofscape — in addition to the streetscape. As this area topographically is a valley, the roofs may be viewed from locations outside the neighborhood such as the freeway and Space Needle. Therefore, views from outside the area as well as from within the neighborhood should be considered, and roof-top elements should be organized to minimize view impacts from the freeway and elevated areas.

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

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.

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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as: curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow; pedestrian-oriented street lighting; street furniture.

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

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-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.

SLU-specific supplemental guidance:

- Support the creation of a hierarchy of passive and active open space within South Lake Union. This may include pooling open space requirements on-site to create larger spaces.
- Encourage landscaping that meets LEED criteria. This is a priority in the Cascade neighborhood.
- Where appropriate, install indigenous trees and plants to improve aesthetics, capture water and create habitat.
- Retain existing, non-intrusive mature trees or replace with large caliper trees.
- Water features are encouraged including natural marsh-like installations.
- Reference the City of Seattle Right Tree Book and the City Light Streetscape Light Standards Manual for appropriate landscaping and lighting options for the area.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure 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. 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:

1. **Upper Level Setbacks (23.48.012):** The Code requires building structure above 45' tall to be set back 15' from the property line on Class II Pedestrian Streets. Thomas St is a Class II Pedestrian Street. The applicant proposes to set back the building 9' from the property line for all portions of the structure above the second level on Thomas St.

The Board indicated its initial receptiveness to the departure request. The applicant will need to demonstrate how the departure would better meet the intent of the city-wide and South Lake Union guidelines.

Staff note: It would be helpful to show at the Recommendation meeting whether the granting of the departure would block views of the Space Needle from existing properties and future developments along Thomas Street.

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.