



# City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD January 28, 2013

Project Number: 3013516

Address: 6404 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.

Applicant: Megan McKay, Johnston Architect PLLC, for Bill Parks, Ballard Lofts LLC

Board Members Present: Ellen Cecil  
Mike DeLilla  
David Neiman  
Ted Panton (Chair)

Board members absent: Jerry Coburn

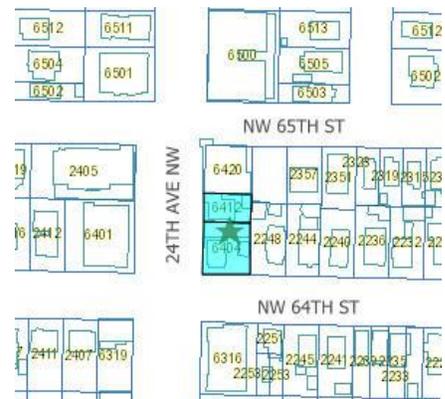
DPD Staff present: Beth Hartwick, senior Land Use Planner

### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1 (NC1-65')

Nearby Zones: North: NC1-40 and SF 5000  
South: LR3 RC and LR1  
East: NC1-65 and LR1  
West: NC1-65, NC1-40 and LR3 RC

Lot Area: 7,548 square feet,  
16,062 square feet including Phase I & II



Current Development: There are currently three structures located on the site, one single story structure houses a barber shop, another single story structure houses a tavern. A single story single family residence occupies the southern portion of the site.

Access: The site is bordered by 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW to the west and NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street to the south. The single family structure has a curb cut off of NW 64<sup>th</sup> street.

Surrounding Development: The abutting site to the east, developed with a single-family residence, is zoned NC1-65'. The rest of NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street, between the adjoining site and 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NW, is zoned Lowrise 1 (LR1) and developed with a mix of single family and multifamily structures. The site lies within the Ballard Hub Urban Village.

ECA's: None

Neighborhood Character: The neighborhood is predominately a mixture of single story commercial building and single family residences built in the early part of the 1900's, interspersed with apartment buildings dating from the 1960 to the present.

Background Information: The site abuts a corner lot that fronts on both 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW and NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street, under the same ownership as that of the subject site and for which a Master Use Permit (#3007108) has been issued by the Department of Planning and Development. It is the intention of the developer of the two properties to develop them as what in effect will be a single building but with distinctive characters and architectural definitions, the site abutting to the north being identified as the "Phase 1" site.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION at the EDG MEETING**

The proposed development is for a 6 - story mixed use building, with 45-60 residential units located above ground floor retail/commercial space. Sixty five to seventy parking spaces would be located in an underground garage shared with the "Phase 1" proposed mixed-use building. As proposed, the common parking garage would take access from NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street and exit onto NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street. Project work for the current proposal would include landscape and pedestrian improvements along both 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW and NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street. The existing mature street trees along 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW would remain.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION at the RECOMMENDATION MEETING**

The project presented at the Recommendation Meeting had changed internally as far as number of floors, apartment layout and count, and the amount of below grade parking. The proposed development showed a 5 story structure with 72 apartment units on 4 floors, over approximately 6,499 square feet of ground level retail uses. Two levels of below grade parking will provide 79 parking stalls.

The project was presented as one building including the permitted Phase I and Phase II, both of which will be constructed at the same time.

**EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 23, 2012**

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

Three alternate massing models for the site were briefly presented to the Board. The first, “Scheme A,” showed a full-height build out of most of the entire site. Development would attach to the proposed Phase 1 structure and extend to the west and south property lines, creating continuous street walls along the two adjacent streets. The development would also extend to the east property line. The project was described as allowed by zoning and code-compliant, requiring no departures from development standards (although it was not clear how such a proposed build out could be accomplished within FAR restrictions). Scheme A would accommodate vehicles that would need to both enter and exit off 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW. The applicants identified alignment of floor plates with the Phase 1 structure as a substantial challenge inherent in the scheme.

The second scheme (“B”), was a sort of Scheme A manqué. A central lightwell removed a chunk from the structure along the east-facing façade. The proposal would allow for an alignment of floors with Phase 1 development and would accommodate an exit-only shared-garage opening onto NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street.

A third option, identified by the design team as the preferred option, provided a distinctive “gasket” between Phase 1 and the current proposed structure and aligned floor plates and set back a extensive portion of the east-facing façade, allowing for both fenestration and balconies on the east (and a kinder face to the neighboring structure). The resulting form was of a more integrated Phase1-phase 2 solution, providing a “L”-shaped development on the two sites. Since this design held a certain thickness to the property line along the entire NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street street-front, the “L” at the southeast corner becomes a kind of “L” *avec serif*. It was suggested by the design/ development team that the ground floor units along the excised or set-back portion of the east façade could be developed as live/work spaces. Scheme C would allow for a separation of the entry and exiting functions of the parking garage (with exiting at NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street). The scheme would require no departures.

The preferred third option was by far the most intriguing architecturally, especially as the atrium offered opportunities to integrate the internal spaces of the building and at the same time relate more sensitively to the existing urban context.

After asking a number of clarifying questions following the architect’s presentation, the Board elicited comments from members of the public attending the meeting. Forty six members of the public (of perhaps 70 attending) signed in requesting to become parties of record for the project).

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments solicited from the public included the following:

- Impacts (both visual and noise) of HVAC equipment of importance for this location and project;
- Worried about increased units and impacts on sewer capacities;
- Wider setback from property line along NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street needed to better align with setbacks of existing structure;
- Project needs a traffic study, in particular one that addresses impacts of parking entrance and exit for both NW 65<sup>th</sup> and NW 64<sup>th</sup> streets; intersection at NW65th Street and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW already dangerous;
- Shadow impacts of such a large and tall structure will severely impact neighbors to the east;
- Take into account the historic values embodied in structures and neighborhood fabric; aren't there ways to incorporate these historic references and values into the proposed architecture;
- There is no other place in the city that combines a NC1 zoning designation with a 65-foot height allowance; this is anomalous and the anomaly ought to be addressed architecturally;
- Concerns about security issues connected to proposed east courtyard;
- Concerned with the broader issue of the "fit" of the height, bulk and scale of the proposed structure within the established "neighborhood character."
- Concerned about truck loading required to service the retail spaces in such a development.

## BOARD'S DELIBERATIONS

The Board began its deliberations with members noting that the Phase 1 development appeared to show more sensitivity and a greater respect for the immediate neighborhood context by setting back the upper stories on the two street sides and the east side to mitigate the bulk of the structure. A discussion ensued whether the phase 2 development should more closely emulate the phase 1 development in this regard. Two other considerations were offered. First, bringing the west and south facades uniformly to the street wall allowed for generous and much needed open space as well as an openness of the façade itself along the east side of the structure. Second, the uniform box of the south "structure" contrasted nicely with the two-tiered stacked boxes look of the north "structure" and "broke down" the overall impact of the block-long building while imparting variety and interest to it. It was generally agreed among members of the Board that the treatment of the "gasket" or "knuckle" between portions of the building, re-enforced by the setback and entry courtyard, was a good move and vital element of the design.

The Board's discussion identified a couple of related issues that need to be satisfactorily addressed by the development team as the project proceeds from this conceptual phase through full design development:

- Allow the indicated setback along the eastern facade to energize the structure, but,

- Don't allow the focus on the east courtyard of the preferred scheme and the energizing of this space to serve as an excuse for neglecting the architectural expression at the perimeter of the building and the need there to manifest a sensibility to height, bulk and scale impacts.

## FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: JANURARY 28, 2013

### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The project was presented as one building combining the permitted Phase I and Phase II to be constructed at the same time.

The proposed development showed a 5-story structure with 72 apartment units on 4 floors, over approximately 6,499 square feet of ground level retail uses. Two levels of below grade parking will provide 79 parking stalls with entry access off of NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street and exiting onto NW 64<sup>th</sup> street. A ground level entry courtyard with a water feature and seating will provide an amenity space for residents and during the day, be open to the public. The main residential entry will be off the courtyard, a secondary entry will be off NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street. A private amenity area for the residents and a green house will be located on the roof deck. The residential units will be a mix of one and two bedroom loft units and traditional apartments.

Materials proposed to be used are boxed rib metal and cement board siding, the base will be ribbed concrete and aluminum storefront. The residential units will most likely be dark brown fiberglass framed. The canopies will be galvanized steel and the underside will be wood. Proposed signage will be industrial looking with back lighting. The entry gate will be metal and provide transparency.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 10 members of the community attended the Design Review Meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- Commented that the Nordic buildings are being eradicated. Would like Scandinavian design for Ballard.
- Stated that proposed angled blade signage on the corner of 65<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> is okay but not on the corner of 24<sup>th</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup>.
- Encouraged the east façade treatment of having no windows where the façade is close to the property line.
- Encouraged the user areas of the roof deck to be pulled away from the east side to maintain privacy for the residence to the east. Asked that any lighting provided on the roof be low and oriented towards 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.
- Liked the project change back to larger units.
- Encouraged 'pulling down' the siding to the top of canopy along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW to be similar to what is being proposed along NW 65<sup>th</sup> St.

- Encouraged reducing the scale of the glazing and lowering the canopy along the south portion of 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and NW 64<sup>th</sup> St.
- Encouraged changing the building scale along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.
- Encouraged clustering of dryer vents.
- Concerned about how canopies along street will drain. Noted that drainage from canopies along with peeing dogs kills plantings.
- Concerned about retail entry at corner of 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street, noted that this is a dangerous corner, and thinks a corner entry is not a good idea.
- Questioned how the garage entry location was determined. The applicant responded that SDOT made the decision to have the entry along NW 65<sup>th</sup> St. to preserve the trees along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW.

## 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 recommendations. The Board identified the *Design Review Guidelines for Multifamily and Commercial Buildings* of highest priority to this project.

### A. SITE PLANNING

**A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics The siting of buildings should respond to specific site condition and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.**

At The EDG meeting the Board stated that the larger development site includes the site of this proposal and the site to the north for which a MUP, one that underwent Design Review, has already been issued. See comments above in the Board's deliberations that relate to the integration of Phase 1 and current proposal elements.

At the Recommendation Meeting the design of Phase II was the focal point of the presentation and discussion but the structure was presented as a whole as both phases will be constructed at the same time.

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

At the EDG this guideline was selected as a confirmation by the Board of the desirability of replicating a section of sidewalk along 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW that is already vibrant and active, a place of pedestrian activity, and adorned with attractive and established street trees. A special care should be in place to bring the attractiveness and activity of the pedestrian way around the corner at NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street. Particular effort needs to be given to attractively intertwine the midblock residential entry and the public pedestrian way.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board questioned how residents and non-residents would use the entry courtyard and how residents would enter the building. The proposed design of the courtyard will have a metal swinging gate or fence that will be open during the day and closed at night. A key card activated door will allow residents to enter when the gate is closed.

**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 Recommendation Meeting the Board stated that the east side of the roof facing into the lowrise residential zone should not be accessible to users of the amenity areas on the roof deck. It is important that residents not be able to peer into the backyards of the properties to the east.

The Board recommended that ground level courtyard should be screened from the adjacent property by landscaping and a water feature.

**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 EDG: This guideline reflects the Board's support of the overall alignment of the preferred scheme with the Phase 1 scheme and the importance of the setback from the property line on the east side of the proposed structure. As noted in the Board's deliberations, however, further design development cannot neglect the architectural expression at the perimeter of the building, specifically the west and south facades, and the need to manifest a sensibility to height, bulk and scale impacts in the building's overall expression.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board discussed height, bulk and scale and the relationship of the façade as it transitions from siding of the upper floors to the ground level storefront. They would like to see the storefront height minimized, see C-3 and D-11. The Board recommended that at the south corner of the west façade, the solid parapet not bow upward, so as to shorten the height of the façade along that elevation.

## 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 EDG it was suggested that the applicant develop a well-portioned building that exhibits a coherent architectural concept. Design the architectural elements and finish details to create a unified building, so that all components appear integral to the whole. This guideline expresses the Board's concern that the external articulation of the building should give distinctiveness to each (Phase 1 and Current phase) portions of the building but not hide the concept that gives the building its strength and coherency.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board liked the most recent changes to the Phase I elevations. It was suggested that the elevations of the two phases work well but still need more knitting together. The upper stories of Phase II should be lightened up. See also B- and C-3.

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

From the EDG: There is an historical desirable human scale along this block whose memory after the existing buildings which provide for this interface are gone needs to be successfully architecturally transferred into the new interface of building and pedestrians. That is a challenging task. The activation of each of the entrances, both retail and residential, important to the success of the project. A further challenge will be to provide for a residential entry that is in harmony with retail entrances along the sidewalk.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board discussed minimizing the height of the storefronts at the south portion of 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and NW64th St. They recommended lowering the height of the storefront canopy and "pulling the siding down" to the top of the canopy to mimic the NW 65<sup>th</sup> Street façade.

- 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 Recommendation Meeting the Board stated that they want to see the ribbed concrete at the lower level of Phase I continued at the lower level of Phase II. They would prefer to see a more natural weathered color to the concrete than the red. If color is used try to make it integral to the concrete.

- 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 Recommendation Meeting the Board stated they wanted the design to better address the garage portal on NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street to minimize its impact.

<b>D. PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT</b>
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- 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.**

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board debated the best way to treat the blank wall along the east property line with the adjacent site. The abutting property is also zoned NC-1 but is currently developed with a single family structure. The proposed wall sits back 2' from the lot line to allow for maintenance and some landscaping. The Board debated having windows in the wall and/or moving the wall. Due to building code requirements, potential future development and the wishes of the neighbors, keeping the wall blank in its current location was determined to be suitable. Treatment of the wall should provide visual interest through subtle color variations of the cement board siding. Art treatment of the wall could be considered.

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities and Service. 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.**

From the EDG: Utilities and service spaces needed to find their rightful hierarchical space in the scheme of things.

At the Recommendation Meeting this guideline was not specifically addressed.

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

This was expressed as a priority concern by the Board, as in their view it always is, but without particular content or direction.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board wanted to know how the entries work and will be secured. See A-4.

- 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.**

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board discussed that any commercial signage at the corner of or along NW 64<sup>th</sup> St. should not be visible from the residential zone to the east.

- 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 the building. Blank walls should be avoided.**

There is a desirable commercial transparency and commercial presence already established along this block front. This should be maintained. The proposed building entry at the southwest corner and the contiguous retail space at the southeast corner need to engage the pedestrian environment forcibly, as this corner of the structure will be highly visible up and down 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW..

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board questioned the size of the storefront glazing. They would like to see the verticality of the storefront system lessened at the SW corner along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW and NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **D. 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.**

At EDG: The design team should provide studies of the proposed pedestrian environment on all sides of the proposed development.. The applicant should be prepared to present details for a variety of streetscape and pedestrian pathway amenities, including lighting, overhead weather protection, signage and other elements calculated to generate a friendly and lively environment at the perimeter of the site.

Landscaping should be designed with the goal of realizing the prioritized guidelines, should soften the edge conditions where appropriate, and should contribute to an attractive and usable interior open space, courtyard area. The design should incorporate specific treatments to provide for attractiveness and an allure to the pedestrian through-site pathway and establish a genuine neighborhood amenity. The Board would expect to see a comprehensive Landscape Plan, one that treats not only on-site open space and pathways but the streets' edges as well.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board stated they would like to see a green screen around the garage entry at NW 64<sup>th</sup> Street. They also supported the idea of a

greenhouse on the roof and encouraged the applicant to verify this would meet code and pursue the idea. Provide landscaping at the base of the east façade blank wall.

#### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

There were no requests for design departures at the EDG meeting.

At the Recommendation meeting there was discussion about the possibility of asking for a departure from signage requirements, which the Board does not normally provide. In further discussion with the applicant they have decide not to pursue a sign. departure.

#### **BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated January 28, 2013 and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the January, 28, 2013 Design Recommendation Meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials the four Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design. The BOARD made the following recommendations (Authority referred in the letter and number in parenthesis):

1. The portal around the garage entry should be further developed to provide a better human scale and more landscaping. Guidelines A-5, C-5, E-2.
2. The east edge of the roof will not be accessible to users to preserve privacy of properties to the east. Guideline A-5.
3. The solid base material around the building should be ribbed concrete. A natural concrete color is preferred over red. Guidelines C-2, C-4.
4. Screen the courtyard from the abutting property with the water feature and landscaping. Design both so they will work if future development of the abutting property is to the lot line. Guideline A-5.
5. Reduce the solid parapet at the south corner of the west façade. Guideline B-1.
6. Minimize the height of the storefronts at the southern portion of the 24<sup>th</sup> Ave NW façade and along NW 64<sup>th</sup> St. Pull the siding material down to the top of the canopy. Guidelines C-3, D-11.
7. Keep the east facade blank wall 2'-3' back from the property line. Provide visual interest with subtle color variations of the cement board siding. Provide vertical type landscaping at the base. Guidelines A-5,D-2 and E-2.