



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3013964

Address: 1121 NE 45th St

Applicant: Cindy Edens of Wright Runstad & Company for Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU)

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 26, 2012

Board Members Present: Joseph Hurley (Chair)
Peter Krech
Salone Habibudden
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana

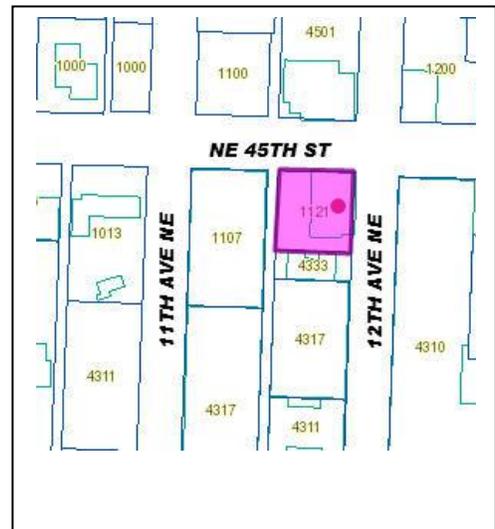
DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-85)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-85
(South) NC3-85
(East) NC3P-65
(West) NC3-85

Lot Area: 12,360 square feet



Current Development: One story commercial building constructed in 1927 and surface parking.

Access: Existing vehicular access is via one curb cut at 12th Ave NE and the alley.

A two story mid-century structure with a dentist's office is located adjacent to the south. Four story institutional and University of Washington office buildings are located across the alley to the west, across the street to the east, and further to the south.

Surrounding Development: One story commercial buildings are located across NE 45th St to the north and northeast. A 6-story newer office building (WSECU offices) is located across the street to the northwest.

The site immediately across NE 45th St also has an approved Master Use Permit and Construction permit for a multi-story hotel and retail structure (3006774 and 6319189).

Further to the north, a proposed multi-story mixed-use residential and retail development has received Master Use Permits (3011958 and 3011959) and Construction permits (6303895 and 6303903).

The University of Washington campus is located a few blocks to the east. The future light rail station (to open in approximately 2020) is located one block to the southeast. University Way ("The Ave") is located one block to the east.

Neighborhood Character: The site is located in the University Urban Center. Urban Centers are intended to be neighborhoods with higher density development, taller structures, and a variety of commercial uses and services near transit. The University Urban Center exhibits many of these characteristics, although some of the parcels are underdeveloped when compared to the zoned heights and intensity of uses. Most of the commercial uses and services are located on the main arterial streets.

The nearby neighborhood is fully developed with sidewalks, but often lacks planting strips and street trees. Transit service is frequent and includes a variety of routes. The future light rail station will further increase the frequency and choice of modes of transit. The nearby streets are heavily used by pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and other vehicles.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is for a 6 story mixed-use building for WSECU, with 25,000 square feet of office, 400 square feet of retail, a 5,000 square foot WSECU branch, and 28 parking stalls.

The parking would be both surface and below grade parking, and accessed from the alley. The preferred alternative would place some of the retail in a small one-story building at the northwest corner of the site.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: November 26, 2012

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3013964) 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 file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

The applicant clarified that there is a typo in the EDG packet, and 400 square feet of retail is proposed, not 4,000 square feet. The remainder of the ground floor would be a branch of the credit union.

The anticipated façade materials include brick and other permanent durable materials to reflect the nearby context, with wood panels at the street level. The architectural concept includes large amounts of glazing at the upper levels, with less floor area ratio than allowed by the Land Use Code. The applicant noted that the context to the west, south, and east includes large buildings; the proposed development would serve as a visual break in the street wall.

The preferred alternative includes a 'feature stair' at the north property line, which would be glazed and protrude from the façade. The applicant explained that a primary goal of the branch is to provide parking that is level with the credit union branch. A pedestrian walkway would connect the NE 45th St sidewalk with the parking area behind the buildings, and would be located between the office and retail buildings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were offered at the EDG meeting.

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 (November 26, 2012):

The Board expressed appreciation for the thorough context analysis in the EDG packet.

1. Preferred Massing Scheme and Architectural Concept

- a. The Board noted that the preferred massing scheme appears to be the most responsive design concept for this site and the proposed program. (A-1, A-2, A-10, B-1)
 - i. The proposed one-story retail building at NE 45th St will help to screen the surface parking on the southeast corner of the lot.
 - ii. The angled expression in the larger building responds well to corner location.
- b. The Board noted appreciation for the quality material palette and expressed support for the use of high quality durable materials such as brick. (C-2, C-3, C-4)
- c. The design of the building entries will be critical to enhancing the pedestrian streetscape, especially at the northeast corner. (A-2, A-3, A-4, D-1)
- d. The lighting, signage, and transparency should be designed to enhance human activity and visual interest at the street level. (C-4, D-9, D-10, D-11)
- e. Trash and recycling should be screened from view from the sides and above, and should be managed to coordinate with other alley activity (parking access, loading, etc.) (D-6)
- f. The streetscape design should reference the streetscape design efforts of the recently permitted projects on 12th Ave NE, north of NE 45th St. (A-2, C-3, D-1, E-2)
 - i. The streetscape should be designed to buffer pedestrians from traffic and enhance the pedestrian experience on both street frontages.

2. Pedestrian Safety

- a. The Board noted that the proposed pedestrian connection between the parking area and NE 45th St, the parking area, and the alley edges should all be designed to maximize safety and security, especially at night. (A-4, A-5, D-1, D-7, D-10)
 - i. Passive security is preferred (eyes on the street, clear sight lines, etc.).
 - ii. The pedestrian connection should be designed to encourage people to use the connection rather than the alley to access the parking area.

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-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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The pedestrian-oriented street streetscape is perhaps the most important characteristic to be emphasized in the neighborhood. The University Community identified certain streets as “Mixed Use Corridors”. These are streets where commercial and residential uses and activities interface and create a lively, attractive, and safe pedestrian environment. The Mixed Use Corridors are shown in Map 1. Another important site feature in the University Community is the presence of the Burke Gilman Trail. The primary goal is to minimize impacts to views, sunlight and mixed uses while increasing safety and access along the trail.

Guideline: For properties facing the Burke Gilman Trail, new buildings should be located to minimize impacts to views of Mount Rainier, Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington, and allow for sunlight along the trail and increase safety and access for trail users.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Reinforcing the pedestrian streetscape and protecting public view corridors are particularly important site planning issues. Stepping back upper floors allows more sunlight to reach the street, minimizes impact to views, and maintains the low- to medium rise character of the streetscape. Roof decks providing open space for mixed-use development can be located facing the street so that upper stories are, in effect, set back.

Guideline - Solar Orientation: Minimizing shadow impacts is important in the University neighborhood. The design of a structure and its massing on the site can enhance solar exposure for the project and minimize shadow impacts onto adjacent public areas between March 21st and September 21st. This is especially important on blocks with narrow rights-of-way relative to other neighborhood streets, including University Way, south of NE 50th Street.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Another way to emphasize human activity and pedestrian orientation, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors, is to provide clearly identifiable storefront entries. In residential projects, walkways and entries promote visual access and security.

Guidelines:

1. On Mixed Use Corridors, primary business and residential entrances should be oriented to the commercial street.
2. In residential projects, except townhouses, it is generally preferable to have one walkway from the street that can serve several building entrances.
3. When a courtyard is proposed for a residential project, the courtyard should have at least one entry from the street.
4. In residential projects, front yard fences over four (4) feet in height that reduce visual access and security should be avoided.

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

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: Pedestrian orientation and activity should be emphasized in the University Community, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors. While most streets feature narrow sidewalks relative to the volume of pedestrian traffic, wider sidewalks and more small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, and other activities would benefit these areas. Pedestrian-oriented open spaces, such as wider sidewalks and plazas, are encouraged as long as the setback does not detract from the “street wall.”

Guidelines: On Mixed Use Corridors, where narrow sidewalks exist (less than 15’ wide), consider recessing entries to provide small open spaces for sitting, street musicians, bus waiting, or other pedestrian activities. Recessed entries should promote pedestrian movement and avoid blind corners.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: This Citywide Design Guideline is particularly important where a building’s back side, service areas or parking lots could impact adjacent residential uses. Map 2 (page 8) shows potential impact areas—these are where Lowrise zones abut commercial zones.

Guideline: Special attention should be paid to projects in the zone edge areas as depicted in Map 2 to ensure impacts to Lowrise zones are minimized as described in A-5 of the Citywide Design Guidelines.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The Citywide Design Guidelines encourage buildings on corner lots to orient to the corner and adjacent street fronts. Within the University Community there are several intersections that serve as “gateways” to the neighborhood.

Guideline: For new buildings located on a corner, including, but not limited to the corner locations identified in Map 3, consider providing special building elements distinguishable from the rest of the building such as a tower, corner articulation or bay windows. Consider a special site feature such as diagonal orientation and entry, a sculpture, a courtyard, or other device. Corner entries should be set back to allow pedestrian flow and good visibility at the intersection.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The residential areas are experiencing a change from houses to block-like apartments. Also, the proximity of lower intensive zones to higher intensive zones requires special attention to potential impacts of increased height, bulk and scale. These potential impact areas are shown in Map 4 . The design and siting of buildings is critical to maintaining stability and Lowrise character.

Guideline: Special attention should be paid to projects in the following areas to minimize impacts of increased height, bulk and scale as stated in the Citywide Design Guideline.

- 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.
- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Guidelines:

1. New buildings should emphasize durable, attractive, and well-detailed finish materials, including: Brick; Concrete; Cast stone, natural stone, tile; Stucco and stucco-like panels; Art tile; Wood.
2. Sculptural cast stone and decorative tile are particularly appropriate because they relate to campus architecture and Art Deco buildings. Wood and cast stone are appropriate for moldings and trim.

3. The materials listed below are discouraged and should only be used if they complement the building's architectural character and are architecturally treated for a specific reason that supports the building and streetscape character: Masonry units; Metal siding; Wood siding and shingles; Vinyl siding; Sprayed-on finish; Mirrored glass.
4. Where anodized metal is used for window and door trim, then care should be given to the proportion and breakup of glazing to reinforce the building concept and proportions.
5. Fencing adjacent to the sidewalk should be sited and designed in an attractive and pedestrian oriented manner.
6. Awnings made of translucent material may be backlit, but should not overpower neighboring light schemes. Lights, which direct light downward, mounted from the awning frame are acceptable. Lights that shine from the exterior down on the awning are acceptable.
7. Light standards should be compatible with other site design and building elements.

Signs

Context: The Citywide Design Guidelines do not provide guidance for new signs. New guidelines encourage signs that reinforce the character of the building and the neighborhood.

Guidelines:

1. The following sign types are encouraged, particularly along Mixed Use Corridors – Pedestrian oriented shingle or blade signs extending from the building front just above pedestrians; Marquee signs and signs on pedestrian canopies; Neon signs; Carefully executed window signs; such as etched glass or hand painted signs; Small signs on awnings or canopies.
2. Post mounted signs are discouraged.
3. The location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.
4. Monument signs should be integrated into the development, such as on a screen wall.

- 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.

University-specific supplemental guidance:

Context: The University Community would like to encourage, especially on Mixed Use Corridors, the provision of usable, small open spaces, such as gardens, courtyards, or plazas that are visible and/or accessible to the public. Therefore, providing ground-level open space is an important public objective and will improve the quality of both the pedestrian and residential environment.

Guidelines:

1. On Mixed Use Corridors, consider setting back a portion of the building to provide small pedestrian open spaces with seating amenities. The building façades along the open space must still be pedestrian-oriented.
 2. On Mixed Use Corridors, entries to upper floor residential uses should be accessed from, but not dominate, the street frontage. On corner locations, the main residential entry should be on the side street with a small courtyard that provides a transition between the entry and the street.
- 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.
- D-7 **Personal Safety and Security.** Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.
- 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.
- D-10 **Commercial 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.
- 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 a building. Blank walls should be avoided.
- 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

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, no departures were requested.

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.