



City of Seattle

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



FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014586

Address: 6718 8th Avenue NE

Applicant: Brian Runberg of Runberg Architects, for Harbor Urban

Date of Meeting: Monday, January 13, 2014

Board Members Present: Joseph Hurley (Chair)
Ivana Begley
Christina Pizana
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Salone Habibuddin

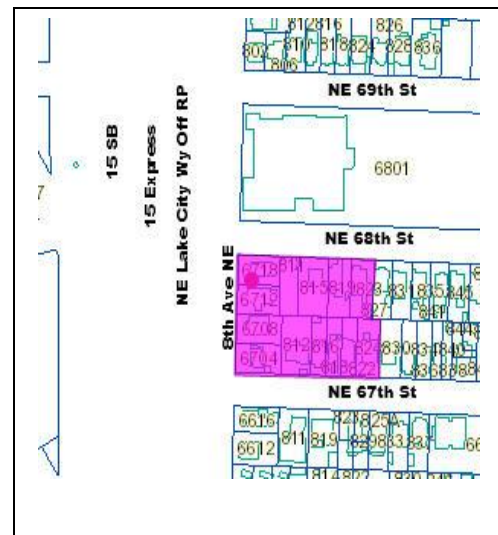
DPD Staff Present: Garry Papers, Senior Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: MR
Residential Urban Village Overlay
Light Rail Station Overlay

Nearby Zones: (North) SF 5000
(South) MR
(East) MR
(West) MR

Lot Area: 57,062 sf, rectangular, sloping about 35 ft down from northeast to southwest corners



Current Development: Approximate 206 ft x 277 ft parcel is made from 13 small lots, each occupied by an existing single family house. Site slopes approximately 35 feet from the northeast corner to southwest corner; steep rockeries and retaining walls on south and west edges.

Access: Vehicular access is possible from the existing 3 streets to the north (NE 68th), west (8th Ave NE) and south (NE 67th) sides.

Surrounding Development: 3 story church building across street to the north; single family houses to the east and across street to south; I-5 freeway is elevated and parallel across 8th Avenue to the west. Site is about two blocks west of the proposed Roosevelt Light Rail Station (completion 2021).

ECAs: Steep Slopes (ECA1) and Known Slides (ECA8)

Neighborhood Character: The site is one block west of transit/arterial Roosevelt Way NE and two blocks north of the busy commercial/transit corridor of NE 65th St. A mix of an established church, older apartments and houses of various scales is adjacent to the east and north, while taller residences and buildings are emerging to the south and east, responding to the recent rezone. This site is near the existing Roosevelt commercial, pedestrian core, with multiple existing bus lines within 2 blocks, and a future light rail station to the east.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Demolish the existing 13 houses and associated structures, and construct a 5 to 7 story residential structure (as seen from different points on the sloped site), of approximately 240-270 units and an amenity courtyard, plus 2 levels of underground parking for about 240 cars.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING: July 1, 2013
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DESIGN PROPOSAL

The EDG Design Proposal booklet 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 booklet is also available to view in the DPD file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately 10 members of the public attended the EDG meeting, and the following comments were raised:

- Encouraged the design to ‘anchor’ the northwest corner of the recently rezoned district, and acknowledge how it will be highly visible from the I-5 freeway.
- Supported the transparent and primary entry at the southwest corner.
- Suggested many project residents will flow to the southeast, toward the future light rail stop and commercial core, and to stay level across the sloping site.
- Suggested the sidewalk and any setback landscaping along 8th Avenue NE be lush and pedestrian friendly, yet provide safe sight lines at any vehicle curb cuts.
- Encouraged all trash facilities and dumpsters be fully accommodated on site, not in the street or any setback zone.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION MEETING: January 13, 2014

DESIGN PROPOSAL

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PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were raised by members of the public attending this Recommendation meeting:

- Supported the overall design resolution and encouraged the east block to be less monolithic, and to add scale and interest to the east elevation which faces the neighborhood and will be quite visible for the near future.
- Supported the overall design especially the landscaping along 8th Avenue, and encouraged the project to not diminish the material quality shown.
- Requested disabled access to be consistent and convenient to all units.

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 (the Board) provided the following site planning and design guidance. The Board identified the following Downtown Design Guidelines of **highest priority for this project**. Under each priority guideline, the EDG comments are followed by the **Final Recommendation comments in bold**.

The Priority Downtown guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text of all guidelines please visit the [Design Review website](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/designreview/designguidelines/default.htm):
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/designreview/designguidelines/default.htm>

Page references below are to the Recommendation booklet dated January 13, 2014.

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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

- *Solar Orientation - Minimizing shadow impacts along Roosevelt Way and NE 65th Street is especially important in the Roosevelt 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.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the concept Options successfully stepped the floor and unit plans with the steep slopes, to minimize blank walls or buried unit frontages. They also agreed with the Option C courtyard orientation to capture southwest afternoon sun, yet use a building mass to block freeway noise. The Board agreed vehicle access is best off 8th Avenue, not the other two streets.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the two vehicle access points on 8th, the courtyard shape and orientation, and the stepped stoops on all three sides, including the intricate landscape design.

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 supported the proposed primary lobby entrance at the southwest and lowest corner, and the inviting transparency depicted at

this location, plus the adjacent cascade of steps up to the courtyard. The Board supported a secondary resident entrance at the upper level off 68th Street, to accommodate residents approaching from that direction. The Board applauded the stepped stoops for all ground level residences, which resolve the slope and provide visible entries welcoming to visitors.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the secondary entrance on 68th Street, and the stoops as shown. The cascade of steps at the southwest corner was revised to be a series of transparent metal stairs from 67th Street up to the courtyard, and the Board requested revisions described in detail under A-4.

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

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

Roosevelt is looking for opportunities to encourage pedestrian activity along sidewalks within the Commercial Core. This is especially important because sidewalks along Roosevelt and 65th are considered too narrow. If not required with new development, applicants are encouraged to increase the ground level setback in order to accommodate pedestrian traffic and amenity features.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the voluntary added setback along 8th Avenue NE (about 15 ft total) is valuable to mitigate traffic impacts, and to establish public-private and acoustical layering to units along that busy street. This layering is encouraged on all sides, and especially important along the shadowed north side, across from the existing church.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the setback patios, landscaping and paving as shown, and the ground plane design at the south courtyard entrance. The Board applauded the extent and friendliness of the decking material and associated seating plinths shown at the primary lobby entrance (pg 53). They required the first flight of metal stairs from the sidewalk be widened from about 5 ft to about 12 ft, to afford sociable seating opportunities for residents and neighbors to mix.

Any gates contemplated at or near this stair should be well-recessed from the street, preferably at the first landing and not too tall or obscuring. Ideally any gate should be held open and be visually un-obtrusive during the majority of the day, possibly flush with the east wall of the adjacent fitness room.

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 agreed a simple massing form could be appropriate in this zone, but some modulation, window placement and other screening strategies will be important to mitigate privacy issues with the existing single family yards adjacent to the east.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board appreciated the adjacency study drawings, and supported the east elevation design as shown on pg 56, with the understanding that all material joints will be strongly expressed and the windows will be recessed as much as possible.

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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

1. *Encourage the incorporation of separate ground-related entrances and private open spaces between the residence, adjacent properties, and street, especially for multifamily developments west of Roosevelt Way.*
2. *Ground level landscaping can be used between the structure(s) and sidewalk.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board endorsed the ground level patios, individual unit entrances, green treatments and generous setbacks shown on preliminary landscape plans.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the stoops, landscape and paving design as shown on pg 68/69, and the various perspectives.

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

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

- *The Roosevelt Neighborhood values places for residents to gather. For mixed use developments, provision of ground-related common open space areas in exchange for departures especially to the maximum residential coverage limit is encouraged, in addition to other allowable departures. Open space areas can also be achieved in a variety of ways including:*

1. *Terraces on sloping land to create level yard space*

2. Courtyards
3. Front and/or rear yards
4. Roof tops

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board applauded how the proposal includes 3 of the 4 Roosevelt-specific open spaces listed above. The courtyard creates a level shared space on a sloped site, with dramatic steps at each portal (universal access will be an issue). The Board encouraged the courtyard to be welcoming to the public, even if closed at night by discrete gates. The amenity roofdeck/clubroom at the southwest corner provides dramatic views and valuable shared social space, and the voluntary step-back there is an important massing variation and place-making opportunity.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the two roof decks and courtyard design as shown on pg 70/71, with the revisions to the courtyard stairs described under A-4.

- 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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

Minimize the number of curb cuts and width of driveways and curb cuts along Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th Street by locating vehicle access onto alleys and/or side streets when feasible.

- *Locate surface parking at rear or side of lot. Where feasible, parking areas for properties that lie outside pedestrian overlay zones should be located to the rear of buildings that face Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th Street.*
- *Encourage creation of multi-purpose parking areas. These areas can provide for parking as well as public open space areas.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the existing traffic and sidewalk condition of 8th Avenue NE at length, agreeing it is the best location for parking and service curb cuts, but cautioning the design and street improvement plan to provide superior safety sightlines for pedestrians and vehicles.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the two driveway locations, widths and other dimensions as shown. Also see departures comments.

- 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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

Gateways: Gateway features could include a variety of design elements that enhance these prominent neighborhood intersections identified below. The following design elements are encouraged: 1. special paving or surface treatments; 2. art; 3. water features; 4. landscaping;;5. seating; 6. kiosks, etc.

Five gateway locations have been identified:

- 1. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE Ravenna Blvd.*
- 2. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 75th.*
- 3. The area surrounding the intersection of NE 65th and 8th Avenue NE.**
- 4. The area surrounding the intersection of NE 65th and 15th Avenue NE.*
- 5. The area surrounding the intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 65th.*

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the corner lobby response shown, and discussed how the site is only 2 blocks north of a designated Roosevelt-specific gateway (#3 Bold above), and the structure will be highly visible as a marker of the Roosevelt core from the I-5 freeway. The Board suggested the southwest corner may include a vertical expression up the entire building, to mark the main entry and lobby from a distance such as the freeway and 65th gateway. This works with roofdeck comments under guideline A-7, and vertical proportions and/or material variation would also offer a counterpoint to the expected horizontal emphasis elsewhere.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the expression of the southwest lobby fenestration, the corner landscaping and the ‘dock’, and the corner composition up through the roofdeck as shown on pg 49.

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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

The architectural features below are especially important for new commercial and mixed use developments in Roosevelt’s commercial core:· Multiple building entries, Courtyards, Building base, Attractively designed alley-facing building façades including architectural treatments, fenestration, murals, etc.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed the inter-locking L's of the preferred Option C was the strongest parti for this site. The Board suggested the courtyard should be a dramatically designed and lush, green space, to offset the relatively close building walls and ground floor privacy layering. The Board also supported the basically cubic massing, as a clear expression of the "new Roosevelt".

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board agreed the detailed architectural design was consistent with the Board endorsed parti, and supported the courtyard landscape design as shown.

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 how this guideline works in concert with A-4, to create active, lively stoops or lobbies at all ground floor locations.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board agreed the design has many elements of human scale, particularly at the lower levels and stoops.

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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

Signs: Developments should accommodate places for signage that are in keeping with the building's architecture and overall sign program. Preferred sign types include:

- 1. Small signs incorporated into the building's architecture, along a sign band, on awnings or marquees, located in windows, or hung perpendicular to the building facade are preferred within the Commercial Core Area.*
- 2. Neon signs are also encouraged, while large illuminated box signs are discouraged.*
- 3. Blade signs hung from beneath awnings or marquees are especially favored in the Commercial Core Area.*

Large box signs, large-scale super graphics and back-lit awnings or canopies are less desirable, especially within the Commercial Core. Where awnings are illuminated, the light source should be screened to minimize glare impacts to pedestrians and vehicles.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed how the very clear forms are desirable, that fussy modulations and scale breaks are not needed in this context, and this simplicity requires very high-quality materials and excellent detailing, especially at the ground levels, lobbies, courtyard and roofdeck.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the exterior materials as presented, especially the wood-look soffits and accents, the brick base, the projecting metal sun shades on the west and south elevations, and the projecting, brake form metal ‘ribbons’ which provide valuable scale and shadow play on the east block. The Board agreed the balcony railings are a key element of residential scale, and recommend a condition that the perforated metal surfaces be sufficiently transparent, and have secondary framing elements to ensure human scale.

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.

Roosevelt-specific supplemental guidance:

Pedestrian amenities are encouraged where appropriate along sidewalks within the Core Commercial Area. Providing for sufficient pedestrian movement is necessary in order to provide pedestrian amenities. One way to accomplish this is by extending curbs to create opportunities for outdoor cafes and/or vending areas. Amenities could also be placed within small and larger setbacks along commercial streets. Curb extensions and any amenity feature proposed within the public right-of-way should be explored with SEATRAN (Seattle Transportation) very early in the design process.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board agreed a complete and sophisticated lighting plan is required to ensure safe and adequate lighting at the courtyard and all the sloped conditions, yet not spill over into private rooms or neighbors.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the entry designs and the lighting plan and fixtures as shown on pg 72/73.

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 how such a large site with extensive parking area should contain all trash, dumpsters and service functions (including trash pick-up) inside the building, and requested a detailed plan at the next meeting.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the trash locations and pick up strategy.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board supported the concept landscape plan and precedent images shown, but requested a very complete presentation of the following crucial design aspects at the next meeting: all sloping stoop and lobby transitions to sidewalk; the courtyard ‘urban oasis’ including unit patio transitions and amenity features; roofdeck features, plantings and any green roof elements.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board applauded the very complete and detailed landscape design as shown, including the water features and sustainability elements which provide different rest atmospheres for residents.

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.

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, the Board discussed the site-specific sloped edges mentioned above, and mitigations to address freeway noise/impacts, and the issue of maintaining westerly views from the roofdeck but mitigating freeway noise, perhaps with glass screens.

At the Final Recommendation Meeting, the Board supported the perimeter landscape design and the roofdeck design as shown on pg 77.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure’s potential to **better meet** these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). At the time of the Final Recommendation meeting, the following departures from current code requirements were requested:

1. **Screening by Garage Doors (SMC 23.45.536.D.3.a):** In brief, the code requires garage doors facing the street to be no more than 75 sq ft in area. The applicant proposes two doors facing 8th Avenue, each to be 164 sq ft in area; these doors serve the two way, 20 ft wide driveways required by code.

This departure would provide an overall design that better meets the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-6 and A-8, by consolidating the doors, driveways and curb cuts so there is less interruption to the pedestrian realm, and less façade impact.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant this departure.

2. **Sight Triangle (SMC 23.54.030.G.3):** In brief, the code requires the driver sight triangle at driveways to sidewalks to be clear from obstructions in the vertical space between 32" and 82" above the ground. The applicant proposes a 1 ft wide portion of the retaining wall, on the up-slope side of each driveway, to be above the 32" height, at the inboard tip of the required sight triangle.

This departure would provide an overall design that better meets the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-6 and A-8, by allowing the retaining wall and its' associated landscaping to better conceal the sloping foundation wall.

The Board unanimously recommended that DPD grant this departure.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation summarized below was based on the design review packet dated January 13, 2014, and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the January 13, 2014 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 and departures, with the following conditions (Guidelines referenced):

1. **South Stair to Courtyard:** Widen the first flight of metal stairs from about 5 ft to about 12 ft, to afford sociable seating opportunities for residents and neighbors to mix. Any gates contemplated at or near this stair should be well-recessed from the street, preferably at the first landing and not too tall or obscuring. (See A-4)
2. **Balcony Railing Enclosures:** Revise the perforated metal surfaces to be sufficiently transparent, and have secondary framing elements to ensure human scale. (See C-4)