



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director



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

Project Number: 3014863

Address: 531 Queen Anne Avenue North

Applicant: Wayne Shores with The Velmeir Companies

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, July 17, 2013

Board Members Present: Mindy Black
Magdalena Hogness
Katie Idziorek
Boyd Pickrell
Janet Stephenson

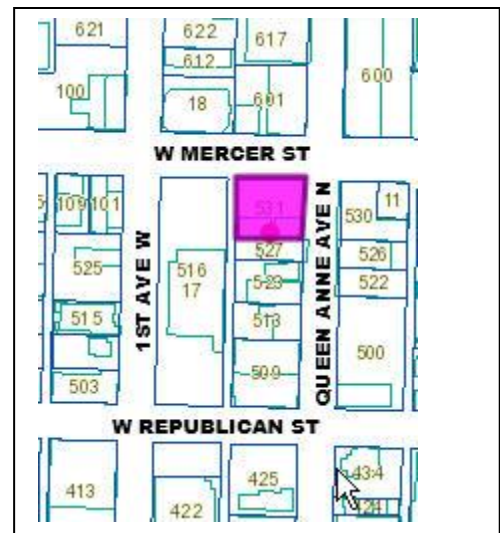
Board Members Absent: Jill Kurfirst

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Three with a pedestrian overlay and a 40' height limit (NC3P 40).

Zoning Pattern: Most of Uptown and Seattle Center possesses a NC3 zoning classification. Multifamily residential classification occurs generally north of W. Roy St. and west of 2nd Ave W. The area lies within the Uptown Urban Center.



Lot Area:	The lot totals 16,274 square feet. The site descends approximately ten feet from east to the alley bordering the site on the west.
Current Development:	A small, one-story auto oriented strip mall occupies the site's southern portion. A surface parking lot comprises the site's northern half. A Kidd Valley restaurant anchors the retail center.
Access:	Three rights of way bound the site on the east, north and west. The principal arterial, Queen Anne Ave, is classified as a SEPA scenic route. Mercer St also has a principal arterial designation. The alley runs two-way traffic north and south bound. A rapid ride bus stop for south bound transit sits adjacent to the site on Queen Anne Ave.
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	Uptown possesses a pedestrian orientation with a plethora of small commercial, multi-family and mixed use structures. Older commercial buildings tend to have one or two-stories housing restaurants and other local services. Numerous older three and four story brick residential buildings anchor the neighborhood. Newer mixed use buildings, such as the Tribeca directly across the alley from the site, have been constructed in the past 15 to 20 years.
ECAs:	Seattle Center lies two blocks to the east. Kinnear Park sits at the western edge of the Uptown neighborhood.
	No mapped environmental critical areas

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a one-story, 16,000 square foot drugstore with parking for 33 vehicles below grade.

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The applicant presented three variations of a one and a half story drugstore relatively square in plan. Commonalities include garage access from the alley, an articulated single point of entry at the corner of Queen Anne Ave and Mercer St., and a series of repeating bays along the two street fronts with windows set back from the dominant plane and embellished with planters and canopies.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sixteen members of the public affixed their names to the Early Design meeting sign-in sheet. Speakers raised the following issues:

Building Massing

- The chamfered corner will attract transients.
- Modulate the building elevations.
- Avoid the collision between the canopies and the bus stop. The project design must consider that 1,500 people use the bus stop every day. Integrate the bus stop into the design.
- Set the building back at the transit stop.
- The building should relate to the south bound rapid ride station.
- Consider a larger more appropriately sized corner.

Urban and Architectural Context

- The design problem has to do with shoehorning a suburban model of a drugstore into an urban setting.
- The exterior does not relate to its context.
- The arch at the corner is out of place. There is not a context for it. There is a lot of opportunity for creative identification. Don't use the arch.
- The detailing is inappropriate. Cast concrete detail is not an Uptown element.
- The grade on Mercer St. might justify a departure for transparency, but this is not true for the elevation on Queen Anne.
- The development team needs to design an urban store, not one based on a suburban model.
- The design does not fit the Uptown neighborhood.

Programming

- Integrate small uses into the bays on Queen Anne Ave. such as a walk-up espresso window.
- Eliminate the blank wall on the Queen Anne elevation. Use the 1st 30' as a community room.
- CVS stores in New York City have multiple entrances. This proposal ought to have more than one entrance. City Target in downtown has multiple entries.

Landscape Amenities/Streetscape

- Incorporate trees in the landscaping.
- Add seating that is both visible and durable.
- Include pedestrian lamppost lighting required by the Uptown Neighborhood Design Guidelines.
- Meeting the green factor by placing sedum on the roof is lame.
- Bring the green space to the community. The developer should check out the community P-patch.
- Provide open space at grade.
- Add trees to the roof and light them at night.

- Don't use planter boxes. This isn't an Uptown element. It undermines the need for transparency.
- Use the blank walls for green screens.
- Don't add seating areas.
- There is not enough landscaping.

Traffic & Access

- The intersection is a traffic hazard.
- The alley has lots of traffic. Consider the ingress and egress relative to the adjacent building's garage.

Other

- Security concerns are paramount. How safe and convenient will the drugstore be for the large elderly population in the area.
- The adjacent bus stop is very active. What are the impacts on it?

The Board and DPD received a letter representing the Uptown Alliance and two working committees. The letter delineated several objections: the development team has ignored design input from neighborhood groups, the proposal shares nothing in common contextually with the historical architectural vocabulary, and the development team ought to leverage its proximity to transit and a thriving urban neighborhood by partnering with a housing developer to create a mixed use building.

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 & 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. 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.

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood’s pedestrian character.

Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas encourage outdoor dining areas utilizing sidewalks and areas adjacent to sidewalks. Outdoor dining is especially encouraged for sites on block faces with southern exposure.

The Board drew attention to several site characteristics in which the applicant needs to respond to in a more positive and lucid way: the bus stop, the gateway noted in the Uptown neighborhood guidelines, and the slope on Mercer St. The applicants should coordinate with King County Metro and SDOT to create opportunities to integrate the building and the bus stop. (Staff note: At the Prescott mixed use development on Stone Way N. & 40th St, a canopy projects further into the right of way than others in order to shelter waiting transit riders. The creative seating solution encourages a sense of community for the waiting transit riders.) Acknowledge the Mercer St. slope by placing amenities and landscaping in areas along the street in which meeting transparency is a challenge. See gateway discussion in A-2.

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

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown developments that respond outward to the public realm are preferred.

- **Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses.**
- **Locate plazas intended for public use at or near grade to promote both a physical and visual connection to the street.**
- **Define outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscaping, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.**

Throughout Uptown site identity features such as art, signage or major public open space at gateway locations as identified on the map. Seek opportunities for welcoming signage that is specific to the Uptown Urban Center at gateway locations. Architecture should also reinforce gateway locations.

Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include where feasible a consistent park-like landscaped strip in the planting strip, as consistent with the historic pattern in the area.

In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas, encourage streetscapes that respond to unique conditions created by Seattle Center.

In the Heart of Uptown character area new development should provide when possible: a widened sidewalk through additional building setback at street level; or retail façade design with panels, sliding doors or other features that allow generous openings to the street.

In the Uptown Park character area, when retail and offices are located within the neighborhood, they should be designed to acknowledge and blend with the predominantly residential environment.

The Uptown neighborhood guidelines designate the intersection of Queen Anne Ave and Mercer St. as a gateway location. The site also lies within the “Heart of Uptown” character area. A chamfered corner may represent a valid response to the gateway location. However, the use of corporate imagery such as the curved, lattice-like cornice should not substitute for a corner design that fits the larger Uptown urban context. None of the three treatments of the corner presented at the initial review met the expectations described in the Uptown guidelines or by the Board.

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.

Provide more than one entry into the building. Explore locations other than the corner.

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

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

A top priority within the Heart of Uptown character area is to promote active, customer-oriented retail storefronts at street level.

Major retail spaces are encouraged on streets designated Large Scale Commercial Corridor as shown on the map.

Throughout Uptown encourage outdoor dining.

Respecting the pedestrian character of the Uptown district is paramount. Imbue the storefronts with a fine grain scale and ensure that the streetscapes contribute to the pleasurable qualities of a cohesive, walkable community.

- 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.**

See the discussion of the alley façade and the garage entrance in the guidance for D-8.

- 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.

- 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.**

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Corner Lots in Uptown

Generally, buildings within Uptown should meet the corner and not be set back. Building designs and treatments as well as any open space areas should address the corner and promote activity. Corner entrances are strongly encouraged, where feasible.

Consider the eminence of the corner, recognized as a neighborhood gateway in the Uptown guidelines, as an opportunity to anchor the development site and to create a presence compatible with its context. A monumental or elaborate corner treatment would not likely meet the intention of the guidelines. See complementary A-2 guidance.

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:

Throughout Uptown, a departure would be supported for 3' of additional height for projects that step back the top floor of the structure a minimum of 6' from the street.

In the Heart of Uptown character area, break facades into smaller massing units.

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

Although a taller, mixed-use building would likely be enthusiastically welcomed at this significant corner, the Board requested to see a greater variety of massing concepts. The structure, for example, could be taller on the Queen Anne Ave side and step down, reflecting the grade change, as it approaches the alley. This terracing could also provide a garden or green space visually accessible to the public.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

In the Uptown Park character area, extensive landscaping, the use of brick and inlaid tile as building materials and designs with an appearance of substance and quality are recommended to promote Uptown Park's desired character.

The Uptown Park character area emphasizes the notion of historic continuity—the relationship of built structures over time.

The Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character districts prefer an architecture that emphasizes human scale and quality, detailing and materials, and that remains compatible with the existing community.

Supplemental Guidance Scope

The Uptown Urban character area embraces high quality urban infill and responds to special relationships with nearby civic institutions.

The drawings, beginning with a lack of a good survey, did not accurately convey the site conditions. As the guideline above states, the Heart of Uptown character district prefers an architecture that emphasizes human scale and quality, and detailing and materials compatible with the existing context. The next design iteration must reflect the intimacy and fine-grain texture of the surrounding urban setting.

- 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.**

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown buildings and landscaping should strive to create projects with an overall neat and cohesive appearance.

See Board guidance for A-2, A-4, A-10, B-1, C-3 and C-4.

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

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown human-scaled architecture is strongly preferred. Proportion should be provided by such components as the detail of windows, doorways, and entries. Appropriate scale and proportion may also be influenced by the selection of building materials.

Architectural designs that create an impression of reduced size consistent with a pedestrian-oriented environment should be encouraged, especially in the Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character areas.

Throughout Uptown size signs, exterior light fixtures, canopies and awnings to the scale of the building and the pedestrian. Signs that add creativity and individual expression to the design of storefronts are encouraged.

The guideline's emphasis on creating "an impression of reduced size consistent with a pedestrian-oriented environment" should be incorporated into the next design iteration. See Board guidance for C-4.

- 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.

In part, the heavy appearance of the pre-cast concrete detailing of the three design options did not meet the Board's or the Uptown guideline's expectation of a modestly scaled retail building. The detailing and composition of the facades, resembling archetypes for commercial structures in vehicle dominant locations reliant on visibility, are ponderous in a pedestrian area of more intimate storefronts and for the small size of the proposed structure. The bays and horizontal regulating or datum lines rightly create the first layering to achieve scale; however, the heavy cornice, thick piers and banding, and an over dependence on corner iconography imbue the structure with a post-modern sensibility ---a design approach that never found much acceptance in Seattle.

- 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.**

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.

The guidelines strongly encourage community-oriented streetscape amenities. Incorporate these features with the rapid ride stop and along the two pedestrian oriented streets. Consider emphasizing the corner gateway with a change of paving and elements that provide a sense of place (e.g. embedding street names in the paving or on the building corners).

- 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.

The Board opposed creating any kind of blank wall along the Queen Anne Ave. frontage, a significant pedestrian oriented street.

- D-3 Retaining Walls. Retaining walls near a public sidewalk that extend higher than eye level should be avoided where possible. Where higher retaining walls are unavoidable, they should be designed to reduce their impact on pedestrian comfort and to increase the visual interest along the streetscapes.**

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown retaining walls should be constructed of materials that will provide substantial pattern and texture. Rockery, stone, stacked stone or concrete, or brick are preferred. Poured concrete or other smooth treatments/materials are strongly discouraged, unless treated to provide textural or design interest.

- 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.

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

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Throughout Uptown ensure alleys are designed to be clean, maintained spaces. Recessed areas for recyclables and disposables should be provided.

In Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas encourage alleys to be activated with subordinate retail spaces at the mouth of the alley. Encourage retail to “turn the corner” at alley entrances.

Garage access appears too close to the intersection of the alley and Mercer St. A transportation expert should study the proximity of the garage door both to the alley and

to the Tribeca garage access across the alley and their impacts on one another. Ensure vehicular and pedestrian safety.

The Board questioned the blank wall facing the alley. If the mezzanine, housing offices and storage, extends along the alley then the insertion of windows offers suitable relief and a means of daylight for the offices.

- 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.**

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.

Present a signage concept plan detailing the size and location of the tenant's signage at the Recommendation meeting.

- 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.**

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.

- 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.**

Lack of transparency on Queen Anne, such as the blank wall shown on the southern most bay and "graphic screens" to obscure shelving, will not likely receive Board endorsement. Glazing should be located closer to the principal vertical plane (remove the planters) although some depth between the window and the façade is welcome.

On Mercer St., the incline in the grade creates a condition in which the floor no longer remains at grade. "Graphic screens" would not be acceptable here but a small,

landscape area providing community amenities in keeping with the pedestrian character of Uptown would begin to ameliorate concerns about the lack of transparency.

E. Landscaping

- 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.**

Uptown-specific supplemental guidance:

Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include a consistent landscaped planting strip between the sidewalk and the street as consistent with the historic pattern in the area.

Throughout Uptown, streetscape landscaping as per guidelines A-2 and D-1 is encouraged.

- 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.

Partially blanketing an inaccessible roof with a non-visible green plantings received an unenthusiastic reception. The Board prefers an urban building set close to the street. This does not preclude, however, finding ways of landscaping the building and the rights of ways. As one member stated, “respond to the spirit of the green factor not to its calculation.” Meeting the green factor regulations requires creativity and ingenuity for this specific project.

- 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.**

Envision the incline on Mercer St as well as the alley and Queen Anne Ave rights of way as opportunities for creative landscaping.

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 applicant requested a departure from street level standards (SMC23.47A.008) for meeting transparency requirements between two and eight feet above the sidewalk. The Board indicates its inclination to deny the request for the Queen Anne Ave façade and wait until the proposal met more of the guidance provided for the Mercer St. elevation and streetscape. A departure from the land use code would need to show how it benefits the pedestrian environment.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board recommended that the project should return to the Board for an additional EDG meeting.

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