

RECOMMENDATION MEETING OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3014898

Address: 3651 Interlake Ave N

Applicant: Gary Oppenheimer, nk Architects

Date of Meeting: March 17, 2014

Board Members Present: Salone Habibuddin
Joe Hurley (Chair)
Christina Pizana
Martine Zettle

Board Members Absent: Ivana Begley

DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick

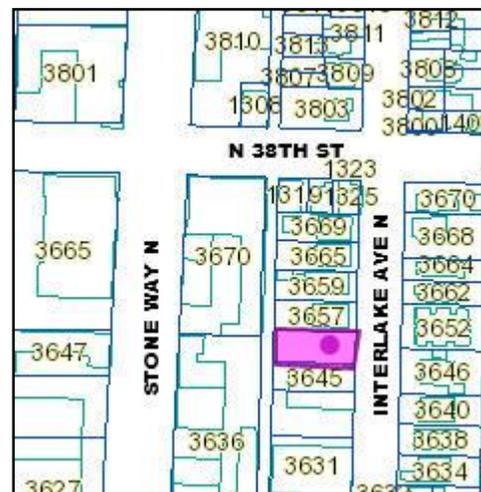
SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: C1-30

Nearby Zones: North: LR2, LR1
South: IC-45
East: LR2
West: C2-40

Lot Area: 4,551 sq.ft.

Current Development: The lot is currently vacant. The paved lot used to provide storage area for a commercial use across the alley to the west. The lot slopes down approx. 6' from the street lot line.



Access: Access is off of Interlake Ave N. and the paved 16' wide alley to the west. There is an existing curb cut on Interlake Ave N. A 2' dedication at the alley is required and will be provided as part of the development.

Surrounding Development: The lot directly to the north contains a four-plex in a converted Seattle "four square" residence built in 1901. Further to the north are single family residences remaining from when the area was first developed in the early 1900's. To the south is a one story warehouse structure built in 1981. Across Interlake Ave N to the east is a three story apartment building constructed in 1988 and a single family residence built in 1911. West of the alley a large mixed use development is under construction. Also across the alley is a two story office building that Bastyr recently occupied.

ECAs: None.

Neighborhood Character: The surrounding neighborhood along Interlake Ave N and to the east has a predominately residential character even with the commercial warehouse structures south of the subject site. Newer townhouses are replacing the older single family residences but there is still a good mixture of both. Stone Way N to the west is a busy arterial which had many commercial uses focusing on the building trades but is being transitioned to larger mixed use developments.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposed a 4 story mixed use development with 17 residential units and 1 live/work unit. No parking is being proposed.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE MEETING on August 14, 2013

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The EDG packet includes materials presented at the EDG meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3014898 at this website:

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

The EDG packet is also available to view in the project file (project number 3014898), 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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following comments, issues and concerns were raised during the public comment portion of the Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Stated that they are not opposed to a modern look but encouraged a structure that fits in with the neighborhood.
- Encouraged materials that will transition from a modern look to the existing craftsman style structures.
- Encouraged the south facing wall that will rise above the existing structure provide visual interest, not a blank wall.
- Stated that the proposed structure appears more office-like than residential with the large amounts of glass proposed.
- Concerned about the loss of the current neighborhood character and encouraged the proposed design not to be too industrial looking.
- Concerned that blank walls at ground level will attract graffiti.

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 Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE:

1. **Design Character:** The Board expressed concern that the proposal is not presenting a clear architectural concept. The modern industrial look presented in the character sketches is interesting but does not read as residential. The Board debated giving specific advice on style but determined they were comfortable with the design team generating an interesting concept and detailing. The Board stated they were open to various options being presented at the Recommendation meeting.
 - a. The idea of transition from commercial to residential use should be expressed. (B-1)
 - b. The building should not have a strictly commercial vocabulary. Balance the commercial live/work unit at grade with the residential use of the structure and neighborhood. (A-5, C-1, C-2)
 - c. Consider providing modulation on the south elevation above the existing structure to the south. (C-2)
2. **Privacy:** The Board expressed concern that privacy for the existing residential structure to the north and for the proposed ground floor units is not being adequately addressed.
 - a. Document the location of the windows of the existing residence to the north and provide for privacy of the residents. (A-5)
 - b. Landscaping should be provided in front of the glazing at the ground level units. (A-5, E-2)

3. **Pedestrian Experience:** The Board discussed the pedestrian experience at the ground level.
 - a. The proposal should provide for weather protection and lighting for residents at unit entries. (A-6, D-1)
 - b. Landscaping should be incorporated into the north setback pedestrian walkway. (A-5, E-2)
 - c. Entries to the units, especially the live/work unit should be visible and provide a human scale. (A-3, A-6)

4. **At the Recommendation meeting, the applicant should provide the following additional information:**
 - a. Provide a sketch detailing the experience of being in the north pedestrian walkway.
 - b. Provide a sketch showing human scale detailing at the live/work units.
 - c. Provide sketches showing the setbacks and scale of the proposal in relationship to existing structures.
 - d. Document the location of the windows of the existing house to the north and the relationship to the proposed fenestration and circulation.
 - e. Provide a plan showing the location of lighting and weather protection for the pedestrian entries and pathways.
 - f. Provide a landscaping plan including landscaping along the north facing glazing of the lower level units.
 - g. Provide a materials board.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING on March 17th, 2014

DESIGN PRESENTATION

The Recommendation packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number 3014898 at this website:

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

The Recommendation packet is also available to view in the project file (project # 3014898), 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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments made at the Recommendation Meeting.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After considering the context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following design guidance.

RECOMMENDATION GUIDANCE:

1. **Design Character:** The Board complimented the applicant on a well put together presentation and design. It was noted that at the street facing east elevation, there were many façade elements for a 35' wide structure. The applicant responded that the elevation presented at EDG was 'cold' and they sought to avoid a façade with too much glazing and believed the proposed façade worked well.
 - a. The Board recommended that the east elevation, move back the lower level to create a shadow line. (C-3)
 - b. The east elevation is very cohesive with the open entry and the 'quiet' live/work entry. (C-2)
2. **Privacy:** The applicant presented a graphic showing the relationship of the proposed windows with the existing structure to the north. The Board did not speak directly about this issue but was pleased with the window study and design presented showing landscaping along the north property line.

The Board expressed concern about the viability of the landscaping on the north side of the building being able to survive but were assured that the plants will be shade tolerant.

3. **Pedestrian Experience:** The Board discussed the entry sequence from Interlake Ave N. into the development and had the following concerns and suggestions:
 - a. The exterior circulation on the site is currently designed so that access is open. The Board thought that the project seemed secure except for the lower level and recommended that the project be designed so that it can be retrofitted with gates if needed. (D-7)
 - b. The Board recommended that the south entry ramp should have a gate or door. (D-7)
 - c. Keep the north entry sequence subtle, similar to what would be found in a single-family residence. (A-6)
 - d. The additional ramp running parallel with the sidewalk in front of the live/work units detracts from the design. The Board gave direction to work with DPD's ordinance reviewers to see if the ramp can be avoided. (A-2, C-2)
3. **Signage:** The Board critiqued the proposed signage.
 - a. The proposed building signage at the north corner and the horizontal signage for the commercial space work well. (D-9)
 - b. The Board encouraged the applicant to consider putting the building signage on the stairwell glass at the north corner. (D-9)

The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines of highest priority for this project.

A. Site Planning

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

- A-3 **Entrances Visible from the Street.** Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.
- A-5 **Respect for Adjacent Sites.** Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.
- A-6 **Transition Between Residence and Street.** For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.
- A-7 **Residential Open Space.** Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

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.

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.
- 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.

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.

- D-2 **Blank Walls.** Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.
- D-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-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.
- D-12 **Residential Entries and Transitions.** For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

E. 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.
- 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.

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 Recommendation meeting (the final Board meeting), the following two departures were requested:

- 1. Setback requirements for Lots Abutting Residential Zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.3.a&b):** The Code requires structures along a rear or side lot line that abuts a residential zoned lot to be set back 15' for portions of the structure above 13' in height up to 40', and an additional 2' for every ten feet of height above 40'. The applicant proposed a setback from the north lot line that varies from 5'-9" to 9'-5".

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines A-5, A-7, C-1 and E-2. The design provides opportunities for ground level landscaping and open space abutting the neighboring site. The buildings street facing elevation, and relationship to the north lot line will be more in keeping with the elevations and siting of structures in the residential zoning to the north.

The Board voted unanimously to grant this departure.

- 2. Setback Requirements for Lots Abutting Residential Zones (SMC 23.47A.014.B.1):** The Code requires a 15' by 15' triangular area setback where a NC zoned lot abuts the intersection of a side and front lot line of a lot in a residential zone. The applicant is proposing a maximum 7' by 7' portion of the structure to intrude into the required setback area.

This departure would provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines C-1 and C-2 by providing a structure massing more in keeping with the existing neighborhood character and a front of the structure that better interacts with the streetscape. The square setback better reflects the configuration of the existing residential structures to the north than an angled structure would.

The Board voted unanimously to grant this departure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations summarized below was based on the design review packet dated March 17, 2014 and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the March 17, 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.

The following are the Boards Recommendations:

1. The north entry should be designed so that it can be retrofitted with gates if needed.
2. The south entry ramp should have a gate or door.