



City of Seattle

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



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015117

Address: 3601 Greenwood Avenue N

Applicant: Amanda Mauzey, CARON Architecture

Date of Meeting: Monday, July 22, 2013

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

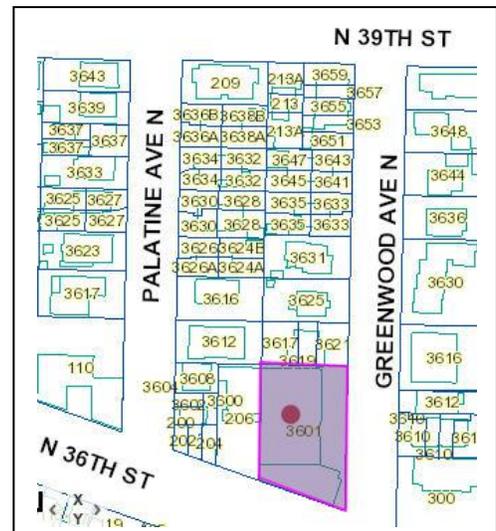
DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Commercial 1-40 (C1-40'), Fremont Urban Village

Nearby Zones: North: Lowrise 2 (LR-2)
South: Industrial Buffer U/45
East: C1-40
West: C1-40

Lot Area: 15,189 sf



Current Development: Single-story commercial building

Access: Street access

Surrounding Development: The site abuts a townhouse development to the north and a sports bar to the west. A single story commercial structure and three residential structures sit across Greenwood Avenue N. from the development site.

ECAs: The site slopes approximately 10 feet from north to south and is relatively flat from east to west. There are no ECAs on site.

Neighborhood Character: The site is located along a commercial / industrial street in the Fremont Neighborhood, N. 36th Street which is a principal arterial. There are a variety of commercial buildings located along the arterial. Primarily to the north are located a mixture of older and newer residential buildings, with many of the newer buildings possessing a Seattle-townhouse character.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is for a mixed-use building with residential units above ground floor of commercial, live/work, and residential spaces. Sixty seven residential units are proposed. The project is not required to provide parking since is located within a residential urban village, but 16 stalls are proposed for the ground floor, with access from Greenwood Avenue N.

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DESIGN PRESENTATION

Three alternative design schemes were presented. All of the options include street level commercial space fronting onto both streets and located at the south end of the site, with residential units or a mix of residential and live/work units and residential lobby facing onto Greenwood Avenue N.

The first scheme (Option A) showed a mass set back from the west property line above the first level and with the top floor set back from N. 36th Street. This scheme provided a uniform face pulled to the property line along Greenwood Avenue N. and with vehicular access midway along the Greenwood façade.

The second scheme (Option B) showed a similar massing, except that the upper floors were not pulled back from the west property line except for the northwest corner where there was a substantial notch carved into the top three floors. Vehicular access, as in the first scheme, was located at the midpoint along the Greenwood Ave. N. façade.

The third scheme (Option C) showed the bottom floor pulled back at the corner of Greenwood Ave. N. and the topmost floors pulled back from N. 36th Street its entire length. There was a thin vertical notch extending from the ground through the top floor approximately three-quarters of the distance from the intersection corner which appeared as a larger slice or wedge removed from the massing, partially in-filled but allowing for an amenity space above the podium level that was open to the west. This, the preferred scheme, also showed vehicular access at approximately the midpoint along Greenwood Ave. N.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately a dozen members of the public attended this Early Design Review meeting. The following comments, issues and concerns were raised:

- It was noted that there was already a difficulty for residents and customers of businesses in the area to find street parking and the scant number of parking spaces proposed for this project would exacerbate the problem.
- Residents in the town houses directly north of the proposed project voiced concerns about their privacy and about being overshadowed by the new structure.
- A representative of the George & Dragon establishment located directly to the west of the proposal voiced concerns about competition for parking and the impacts on a business that relied upon using their outdoor space during the summer months and whose customers, including soccer fans who would expect to watch the world cup finals over the course of a month, could be adversely affected by the close proximity to the proposed new residences.

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.

The Board was particularly concerned about two relationships, that of the proposed structure to the townhouses to the north and that of the proposed amenity space to the outside courtyard of George & the Dragon. In developing the design the applicants should take steps to enhance the compatibility of these physical and social relationships.

- A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.**
- A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on 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.**

See the comments under A-1 above. The Board noted that they would like to have the applicants explore what tweaks to the massing might minimize any disruptions of privacy for the townhouses and to the outdoor activities anticipated in the George & Dragon courtyard.

- 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.**

The Board anticipated more detail on commercial entries and the treatment of the street frontages, especially as the presentation packet offered suggestions of some bold moves to enhance the vibrancy of the streetscape.

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.**

The Board was particularly interested in how the design development would address the residential zone to the north and how the applicant might explore ways in which the proposal could interface amicably with the existing neighbors.

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.**

Although there was some discussion among the Board members about opening a courtyard along the east face of the building, it was generally agreed to and affirmed by the Board that the preferred Scheme C, with an architectural slice partially removed along the west massing showed the most promise. The applicant was encouraged to proceed in that direction with refinements as needed.

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

This was affirmed by the Board as being of highest priority, but without more detail.

D. Pedestrian Environment

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.

This guideline was selected by the Board in particular with regards the possibility of providing vegetative walls along the north and west lower wall levels.

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.

This was noted as of particular concern regarding the portion of the proposed structure that would address the George & Dragon outdoor courtyard.

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.

The public comment had raised some questions regarding location of dumpsters, related noise, etc. The applicant had noted that the commercial dumpster would be located facing Greenwood Ave. N. and would be screened by an attractively designed gate.

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.

The applicants noted that they would be requesting a departure from the requirement that entries to ground level residential units must be located above or below grade and the Board indicated that they believed that to be a “reasonable” request and that they were open to it. It should be noted, however, that the actual recommendation by the Board of the granting of specific departures must await the return of the proposal to the Board at the time of a recommendation meeting and would depend upon the applicant’s responses to the identified guidelines and Board’s guidance.

E. Landscaping

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.

As noted under Guideline D-2 above, the Board was concerned about the possible need for vegetated walls along the periphery of adjoining properties and noted they would have a particular interest in a refined landscape proposals intended for the setback area abutting the north property line.

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 following departure was requested:

- 1. SMC 23,47A.008.D.2 (The floor of a dwelling unit located along the street-level street-facing façade shall be at least 4 feet above or 4 feet below sidewalk grade or be set back at least 10 feet from the sidewalk.)** The applicant proposes the entry to a residential unit(s) less than 4 feet below grade.

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.