



SECOND EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3015297

Address: 2100 North 45th Street

Applicant: Wayne Shores with the Velmeir Companies

Date of Meeting: Monday, November 04, 2013

Board Members Present: Joseph Hurley, Chair
Ivana Begley
Martine Zettle
Salone Habibuddin

Board Member Absent: Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Michael M. Dorcy, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: The south half of the lot is classified as Neighborhood Commercial Two with a pedestrian overlay and a 40' height limit (NC2P 40). The north half has the same zoning without the pedestrian overlay (NC2 40).



Neighborhood Zoning Pattern:	<p>Along Wallingford's N. 45th St. corridor the zoning is primarily NC2- 40 with a pedestrian overlay (NC2P-40). The height changes to 65' between Densmore Ave N. and Burke Ave N. along the north side of 45th St. Some NC2 zoning fronts onto N. 46th St. between Densmore and Meridian Ave N. Further to the north, the zoning transitions to multifamily Lowrise Two (LR2) and Single Family 5000 (SF5000). This pattern nearly repeats itself on the south side of the corridor.</p>
Lot Description:	<p>The three parcels that comprise the development site total 18,820 sq. ft. The site occupies the northeast corner of N. 45th St. and Meridian Ave N. intersection. Its eight foot declension occurs from north to southwest. Along N. 45th St., the parcel extends 114 linear feet. The Meridian Ave. N. side measures 155 feet.</p>
Current Development:	<p>A one-story commercial building (circa 1929) housing retail, restaurant and office uses occupies the south portion of the site. On the site's northern half sits a surface parking lot.</p>
Access:	<p>North 45th Street and Meridian Avenue North</p>
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character:	<p>A variety of commercial and mixed uses line the N. 45th St. pedestrian-oriented corridor. Older structures, typically one and two-stories, stand adjacent to newer mixed use buildings with three to four stories depending upon the location. Significant buildings lending character to this main street include the Wallingford Center, the Guild 45th Theater and the newer mixed use building at the southeast corner of N. 45th St. and Bagley Avenue N. The residential areas north and south of 45th St. contain an abundance of bungalows and craftsman style houses dating from the 1900s to the 1920s.</p>
ECAs:	<p>The site contains no mapped environmental critical area.</p>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a one and a half story commercial structure with a mezzanine, containing 11, 076 square feet of retail with surface parking for 25 vehicles.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

At the EDG meeting, held on August 5, 2013, the applicant had presented three schemes with similar floor plans---one and a half stories high with a mezzanine at the north end of the interior and a corner entry. The two street facades had storefront windows, metal or canvas canopies and varying heights at the parapets. The most obvious variations occurred at the corner of Meridian Ave and N. 45th St. Two schemes showed chamfered entries with curved lattice-like cornices projecting above the single entry. A third scheme, defined by its squared off corner, has large piers projecting from the mass to frame an engaged rectangular shaped entry volume.

In each scheme a surface parking lot occupied the area north of the existing structure, the location in which surface parking already exists.

At the Second EDG meeting, the applicant, represented by Grace Kim of Schemata Workshop, presented three schemes, each which saved and retrofitted the existing commercial building. The applicant's new proposals addressed the first of the public comments made at the previous EDG meeting: "Why tear the building down and replace it with something that doesn't belong there?" Scheme A offered the most conservative renovation of the existing building, leaving the existing cornice unaltered and restoring the decorative frieze to its original brick. Storefront fenestration, including the ribbon of transom windows, was restored in newer materials and configurations along each of the street-facing facades. A second-story volume, a rectangle anchored at the northeast corner of the building, was a plain boxlike addition that covered approximately one third of the existing roof.

Scheme B was described as "a contemporary approach to renovation," with preservation of some portions of the existing building (cornice and frieze restored) but with the transom ribbon and storefront window system recessed and more delicate. The second-story addition was square in shape and located within the northeast sector of the roof.

Scheme C showed the second floor addition commensurate with that on scheme B and located at the same roof location. The proposed renovation of the existing structure, however, was more faithful to what was revealed in old photos of the building. As in options A and B, the cornice would be unaltered, the brick frieze restored and the transom ribbon returned along both streetfronts. The restoration would preserve the older idiosyncrasy where the column grid was not aligned with the cornice medallions. The modern treatment of second-story addition would set up a distinctive contrast with the restored structure. Another distinctive move in this scheme would be preservation of the mural wall along Meridian Avenue N.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Approximately a dozen members of the public attended the Second EDG meeting. Speakers offered the following comments:

- Concerned with the proposed loading and unloading of the pharmacy and noise impacts on neighbors, of trucks, of loading gate openings;
- Did not think the exchange of existing for proposed entries into the building (4 to 1) a good one in what was considered a pedestrian zone;
- Liked post at the corner in Scheme A;
- Awning structure should enhance medallions in the cornice;
- The existing mural is not great art;
- The kickboards are an important part of the existing architectural character;
- Thanked developers for the time they had taken with the community so that the proposal had become a cooperative project, hugely improved since the first EDG meeting;
- Add street trees on Meridian;
- Project should add housing on back parking lot;
- Recess the entry further back;
- If a new mural should be proposed, it should be done, selected with adequate input from the community;
- Likes the third scheme (C) best, but with the corner treatment of the second (B) scheme; the squared corner more appropriate;
- If a new mural, should be located higher, as shown in scheme C;
- None of the schemes in keeping with the City's policy of greater density in areas such as this;
- No gray cement; restoration ought to be authentic, sensitive, historic;
- Signage shown on each of the schemes appeared garish; no garish signs of garish lighting;
- Development should be consistent with the Wallingford neighborhood plan;

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The applicant has not requested a departure from the land use code.

With the assent of the Board Chair, representatives of the developer were allowed to make the following statements at the end of the public comment period:

- CVS had a twenty five year lease on the property but constrained by the restrictions of the owners of the property not to allow housing or uses other than the single pharmacy use on the site;

PRIORITIES & BOARD DELIBERATIONS

At the first EDG meeting, 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 siting and design guidance, and identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project as noted in the report of the first Early Design Guidance meeting.

(For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).)

At the time of the first EDG Meeting, the Board had directed that the applicant return for a second EDG meeting. In particular, the Board wanted to see a proposal that showed greater density and mass, which the Board linked with the intentions of Guideline B-1. A successful project, the Board Chair noted, would embody a vigorous response to Guideline B-1 which called for projects to “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.*”

The Board’s major expressed concern was that the site, zoned NC2P-40 and located at the heart of the Wallingford residential urban village, both anticipated and deserved more density than shown in any of the development schemes presented. The Board indicated that they expected to see a design at the next meeting that would evidence addressing that major concern as well as other concerns regarding site planning and the character of the building as noted in the discussions regarding each of the guidelines selected as having highest priority for the project.

The developer’s design response at the Second EDG meeting, in each of the three schemes proposed, was dictated by the public comment, repeated in one fashion or another by some of the Wallingford neighbors at the first EDG meeting and in comments sent directly to the Department, “Why tear the building down and replace it with something that doesn’t belong there.” Each of the schemes presented at the Second EDG meeting was premised upon a decision to keep the existing building and modify it for the intended use, with a modest boost in density through the addition of slightly less than 4,000 square feet.

Rather than comment on the merits or short-comings of the three schemes presented, the Board stated that the applicant had failed to respond to its earlier directive to show a scheme that was of the scale of development and embodied the density they believed was called for under Guideline B-1. Failing that pre-requisite, the Board was unwilling to comment on the three schemes proposed or to recommend that the project should proceed to MUP intake.