



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN REVIEW

Project Number: 3016479

Address: 2508 North 50th Street

Applicant: Caron Architecture

Date: October 2, 2015

DPD Staff: Carly Guillory

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 1 – 30-foot Height Limit (NC1-30)

Nearby Zones: (North) Single Family 5000 (SF 5000)
 (South) NC1-30
 (East) NC1-30
 (West) NC1-30

Lot Area: 5,225 square feet

Current Development:

The subject site is currently occupied by a one-story commercial structure containing the 50th Street Deli Market and a two car garage.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development consists primarily of residential development with commercial uses at the 50th and 1st Ave NE intersection. Notable sites in the neighborhood include: Keystone Congregational Church, Good Shepherd Center, and Meridian Park.



Access:

Pedestrian access to the site is proposed via N 50th St with a shared entrance to the residential units above and access to an individual unit at grade. Access to the commercial space is provided from 1st Ave NE. Vehicular access to the site is proposed via 1st Ave NE.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Administrative Design Review for a 3-story mixed use structure containing 17 dwelling units and approximately 600-feet of retail at ground level. Parking for 10 vehicles will be located within the structure. Existing structure to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials submitted, and is available online by entering the project number (3016479) at this website:

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

The packet is also available to view in the file, 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 COMMENT

The following public comments were received:

- Concerned about impacts to existing street parking.
- Concerned about increased density.
- Encouraged more commercial square footage at this corner.
- Noted that residential units at this site are not compatible with the neighborhood.
- Requested an adequate setback from adjacent structure with no balconies facing existing residents.
- Requested that the height be less than the structure abutting to the west.
- Requested adequate solid waste and recycling facilities that are screened, and located on the street side of the building.

- Requests the location of HVAC equipment be placed away from existing residents.
- Concerned about privacy impacts from the balconies proposed on the north elevation.
- Requested that the landscape buffer between the parking and the property to the north be dense to provide privacy and block glare from headlights.
- Supported a setback along N. 50th St.
- Concerned amenity space along N. 50th St. is not feasible given the existing traffic flow..

PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the DPD staff provided the following siting and design guidance.

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1. Site Planning and Public Realm:

- a. The surface parking is separated from the north property line by a five-foot landscape buffer. It is imperative that light and glare from vehicle headlights are screened from adjacent residential development. Submit a strong landscape design to provide sufficient landscaping, fencing, and/or other screening to reduce impacts to the north. Vehicles should also be screened along 1st Ave NE. (DC1-II)
- b. A 20-foot curb cut is proposed on 1st Ave NE. Use the smallest curb cut dimension necessary/permitted to access the on-site parking. Reduce the visual impacts of the parking lot and entrances as much as possible. (DC1-B, DC1-C)
- c. It is not clear where bicycle facilities are located. Locate facilities such as bike racks and storage to maximize convenience, security, and safety (PL4-B).
- d. It appears the location of the trash area is adjacent 1st Ave NE in the parking area. This location increases the visual impact of the surface parking area and reduces the project's connection to the street. Ensure adequate screening and/or landscaping to adequately screen parking and the trash area from the street (DC1-B, DC1-C).
- e. The commercial space is oriented toward the intersection of N 50th and 1st Ave NE, with an entrance on 1st. Maintain the commercial use at this location ensuring accessible access for all (PL2-A).
- f. One residential unit is proposed at the ground level on N. 50th St. Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change this residential space to commercial space as needed. (DC1-A).

2. Architectural Concept: The strong street edge and upper level setbacks of Option A is preferred. The strong street edge and upper level setback relate well to the neighborhood context, create a strong connection to the street and public realm, and encourage safety through eyes on the street. (CS2-B, PL2-B)

- a. The primary shared residential entry is proposed on 1st, north of the commercial entrance. Maintain the residential entry on 1st and use design elements to ensure this entry is obvious and identifiable for residents and guests and is differentiated from the commercial entrance (PL3-A).

- b. Upper level balconies are proposed on the north elevation to provide outdoor amenity area for eight residential units. There is concern that balconies on the north elevation will cause negative privacy impacts to adjacent development and do not result in an appropriate transition to the single family zone. Remove the balconies from the north elevation and explore setting back the upper levels of the south elevation, similar to the structure to the west and Option A in the packet, or adding balconies on the east elevation (C2-D).
- c. Overhead weather protection is proposed at the corner, highlighting the commercial entrance. Maintain the overhead weather protection to provide street-level scale and detail (DC2-C).
- d. It is understood that the existing power lines on N. 50th St. require a minimum setback. In response, the building is setback at the ground and upper levels. This ground level setback is proposed as a pedestrian plaza, separated from the sidewalk by a landscape buffer. Because the existing characters of N. 50th St. and 1st Ave. NE are commercial and residential, respectively, explore moving the plaza to 1st Ave NE and eliminating the ground level set back on N. 50th. A strong street edge along N. 50th St. provides a compatible response to the existing context and adjacent development, while a pedestrian open space on 1st Ave NE responds to the existing residential neighborhood to the north. (CS2-B, PL1-A, DC2-A, DC2-D)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together: Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods: In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

PL2-C-2. Design Integration: Integrate weather protection, gutters and downspouts into the design of the structure as a whole, and ensure that it also relates well to neighboring buildings in design, coverage, or other features.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-2. Common Entries: Multi-story residential buildings need to provide privacy and security for residents but also be welcoming and identifiable to visitors.

PL3-A-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-2. Ground-level Residential: Privacy and security issues are particularly important in buildings with ground-level housing, both at entries and where windows are located overlooking the street.

PL3-C Retail Edges

PL3-C-1. Porous Edge: Engage passersby with opportunities to interact visually with the building interior using glazing and transparency. Create multiple entries where possible and make a physical and visual connection between people on the sidewalk and retail activities in the building.

PL3-C-2. Visibility: Maximize visibility into the building interior and merchandise displays. Consider fully operational glazed wall-sized doors that can be completely opened to the street, increased height in lobbies, and/or special lighting for displays.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-A Entry Locations and Relationships

PL4-A-1. Serving all Modes of Travel: Provide safe and convenient access points for all modes of travel.

PL4-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-B Vehicular Access and Circulation

DC1-B-1. Access Location and Design: Choose locations for vehicular access, service uses, and delivery areas that minimize conflict between vehicles and non-motorists wherever possible. Emphasize use of the sidewalk for pedestrians, and create safe and attractive conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

DC1-C-4. Service Uses: Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

Greenlake Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-II Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

DC1-II-iii. Surface Lots: When adjacent to residential zones, surface parking lots adjacent to sidewalks should be screened with shrubs and double rows of street trees for a more sheltered, residential feel.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. 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.

DC4-C Lighting

DC4-C-2. Avoiding Glare: Design project lighting based upon the uses on and off site, taking care to provide illumination to serve building needs while avoiding off-site night glare and light pollution.

Greenlake Supplemental Guidance:

DC4-I Exterior Finish Materials

DC4-I.vii. Light Standards: Light standards should be compatible with other site design and building elements.

DC4-II-iii. Sign Location: The location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project 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 the following departures were requested:

1. **Street Level Uses (SMC 23.47A.055.C.1.):** The Code allows for a maximum of 20% of the street frontage to be occupied by a residential use. The applicant proposes an increase in this allowance to 37.17% along N 50th St and 22.15% along 1st Ave NE.

Staff indicated preliminary support for the departure request along 1st Ave NE, finding this to be an appropriate location for the shared residential entry as the character of the street is residential in nature. The departure request on N. 50th St. could be supported if the residential space is designed to be flexible so the space and building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change to a commercial space as needed.

2. **Commercial Depth (SMC 23.47A.008.B.3.):** The Code requires an average 30-foot depth for commercial uses at ground level. The applicant proposes a reduction in this requirement to 19-feet 10.5-inches.

Staff indicated concern that a reduced commercial depth does not better meet the intent of the design guidelines and provides future adaptability of this space to become commercial (as discussed as part of the rationale in departure request #1. North 50th St. is a highly traveled corridor with narrow sidewalks. While the upper levels require a setback from existing power lines, it appears the ground level could be developed to the property line. Ground floor commercial with a strong street edge responds well to the existing neighborhood context. A larger setback (open space) along 1st Ave NE or a reduction in amenity area could be considered if found necessary.

3. **Landscaping and Screening (SMC 23.47A.016.D.1.c.2.):** The Code requires a five-foot landscape buffer between surface parking and an adjacent residential zone. The applicant proposes an elimination of this requirement for a length of approximately 17-feet.

Staff indicated concern with this departure, as one parking stall is unscreened from the abutting residential development to the north. Privacy and a successful zone transition are important in this location. Vehicle headlights could be screened from adjacent residential development. A strong landscape, fencing, and/or other method of screening should be designed thoughtfully and included in the MUP proposal. A reduction of the curb cut width, as recommended above, may result in opportunity to provide the required five-foot landscape buffer.

4. **Amenity Area (SMC 23.47A.024.B.4.):** The Code requires common amenity area to be no smaller than 250 square feet in size. The applicant proposes a 52% reduction to 130 square feet.

Staff indicated preliminary support for the departure with further exploration of moving the ground level open space from N. 50th St. to 1st Ave NE. Public pedestrian spaces along 1st Ave NE could provide a successful transition from the commercial intersection of N. 50th St. to the residential neighborhood to the north. The amenity space requirement is a requirement for the residential use and it may be better served along 1st Ave NE at the shared pedestrian entry to maximize the space and enhance the street experience.

5. **Parking Location and Access (SMC 23.47A.032.B.1.b.):** The Code requires street level parking to be separated from the street by an intervening use. The applicant proposes the elimination of this requirement for the length of the surface parking along 1st Ave NE (45-feet of the 104.5-foot frontage).

Staff indicated preliminary support for the departure if the parking is thoughtfully designed with sufficient screening of shrubs, a green wall, and/or ornamental fencing, and row of street trees for a more sheltered, residential feel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, staff recommended moving forward to MUP application.