



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3017663

Address: 1601 N 45th Street

Applicant: Bradley Khouri, b9 Architects, for N 45th St Apartments LLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 08, 2014

Board Members Present: Martine Zettle, Chair
Ivana Begley
Eric Blank
Julia Levitt

Board Members Absent: Christina Pizana

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC2-40, NC2P-40 & LR2

Nearby Zones: (North) NC2P-40
(South) LR2
(East) NC2P-40
(West) NC2P-40

Lot Area: c. 13,680 SF



Current Development:

There are 6 existing buildings on the site which will be demolished.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site lies within the Wallingford Urban Village and is predominantly zoned NC2-40, with the northernmost 30 feet zoned NC2P-40 and the southernmost 30 feet zoned LR2. It has a prominent corner at the intersection of N 45th Street and Woodlawn Avenue N. Neighboring development to the north, west, and east consists of commercial uses in medium sized to smaller buildings. Immediately to the west, across Woodlawn Avenue N., is the three story Solid Ground building, built in 1997. Immediately to the east is the 45th Street Medical and dental Clinic which occupies the former Wallingford police and fire station, constructed in 1913 and a City Landmark as well as listed as on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Access:

Pedestrian access to the commercial spaces would be mainly from the sidewalk running along N 45th Street. The main pedestrian entrance to the apartment units would be from Woodlawn Avenue N. No Vehicle parking is proposed.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no ECAs on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The development proposed will consist of three structures: 1) a 4-story apartment building with approximately 42 units set above a ground floor of approximately 4,200 SF of commercial spaces; 2) a three-story duplex townhouse; and 3) a three-story single-family structure.

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3017663) 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

PROJECT PRESENTATION

Three alternative massing proposals were presented by the applicant. The first, said to be “code compliant,” filled out the available building envelope on the commercially-zoned portion of the lot, with required setbacks from the two attached townhouses and the single-family residence proposed for the lowrise, southern portion of the development site. A second alternative placed a light well at the center of the apartment building but pumped up the structure so that it required a departure from the setback required above 13 feet between the townhouse units and the property line of the abutting lot to the south. The third and preferred alternative proposed an external gap near the middle of the apartment structure above the ground floor which separated units facing onto N. 45th Street from those that extended from the gap to the south façade. This alternative, like the second, would require a departure from the required distance of the setback for the townhouses from the property line to the south. (See the packet, pp. 30-35, for graphic details of the three alternatives.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments from the public include the following:

- The sidewalk along N 45th Street is too narrow and the project needs to widen the sidewalk;
- The development needs to provide continuous overhead weather protection with at least an 8-foot overhang;
- The design team should consider a chamfered corner at the intersection of N 45th and Woodlawn;
- The commercial entries along 45th Street should be inset at the sidewalk edge;
- Consider durable materials, such as masonry or stone at the base of the building, and carefully evaluate any use of wood products;
- Supportive of the gap along Woodlawn Avenue N. and of the departure request to enable it;
- The next presentation needs to provide a better read of the pedestrian experience along both streetfronts;
- The proposed apartment structure needs to be constructed of fine materials –stone, steel, glass –dealt with in a modernist way but one that fits with the Wallingford character;

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 agreed with the public comments calling for wider sidewalks abutting the retail spaces along N.45th Street and rounding the corner at Woodlawn Av N.

- The Board agreed that overhead weather protection was appropriate along the retail store fronts.
- The Board agreed that the east façade because of its visibility from N. 45th Street and the ground-level space between the proposed structure and the historic structure to the east needed special attention and design consideration.
- The structure should be thought of and architecturally addressed as having “two street corners” on N. 45th, the actual corner and the corner of the building opposite the landmarked police and fire station.
- Likewise, the Board noted that the façade facing the historic structure should clearly manifest a sensitivity to the neighboring structure.
- The Board agreed that a modernist approach to the design was appropriate and preferable to any fake craftsman applique, but also agreed that a successful design at this important location ultimately must embody a choice of quality materials and fine detailing.
- There were concerns expressed whether the “gap,” or “slot” at the center of the apartment building structure was too narrow and would need to be adjusted to provide descent glazing for the units on either side of it.
- The Board agreed that the street-level opening for the residential entry along Woodlawn Av. N. should align with the slit in the façade of the upper floors of the building.
- The demonstration of the gaps or pattern of interstices between the west facades of structures along the block on Woodlawn Av.N., as shown on p. 23 of the packet, was compelling as a design strategy for the proposal at the north end of the block but more compelling if the apartment entry and upper gap were aligned.
- The “zone transition” diagram on p.21 was likewise most instructive, but the height, massing, and rooflines of the proposed lower density structures on the development site were not “justified” by the diagram and the town house structures in particular would probably need both further elaboration and explanation in assuming their transitional roles, especially as their exact siting and massing were the subject of departure requests.
- The vignettes on pages 25, 36, and 38 did not well serve the purpose of conveying or foreshadowing the pedestrian experience along either N.45th or Woodlawn and the Board would be desirous of seeing sidewalk-level sketches in the next presentation that would better convey the intended character of that experience.
- The Board suggested that the proposed decks would benefit from being partially projected and partially recessed.
- Some members of the Board cautioned against relying too much on wood and wood products to impart an intended “warmth” to the street level design—“provide the desired warmth through the use of stone.”
- Be mindful of the Wallingford guideline calling for kick-plates as replicating more traditional storefronts of the neighborhood.
- The design development should envision a “modern” building; one that “keeps it simple,” even somewhat austere, but with room for some playfulness.

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-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.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-i. Upper-level Setbacks: Upper level building setbacks and setbacks along the building base are encouraged to help minimize shadow impacts on public sidewalks.

CS2-II Streetscape Compatibility

CS2-II-i. Reinforce Streetfront Elements: Visually reinforce the existing street storefronts by placing horizontal or vertical elements in a line corresponding with the setbacks and façade elements of adjacent building fronts. These could include trees, columns, windows, planters, benches, overhead weather protection, cornices or other building features.

CS2-III Corner Lots

CS2-III-i. Corner Orientation: Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to the corner. Parking and vehicle access should be located away from the corner.

CS2-III-iv. Sidewalk Setbacks: Developers are encouraged to propose larger setbacks to provide for wider sidewalks or plazas and to enhance view corridors at gateway intersections in consideration for departures from lot coverage or landscaping requirements.

CS2-III-v. Corner Design Elements: Typical corner developments should provide:

- a. a main building entrance located at corner;
- b. an entrance set back to soften corner and enhance pedestrian environment
- c. use of a hinge, bevel, notch, open bay or setback in the massing to reflect the special nature of the corner and draw attention to it. (Example: Julia's open bay with bevel.)

CS2-IV Height, Bulk and Scale Compatibility

CS2-IV-iii. Upper-Level Setbacks: To protect single-family zones, consider providing upper level setbacks to limit the visibility of floors that are above 30 feet.

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-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-I Architectural Context

CS3-I-i. Complement positive existing character: Complement or respond to nearby pre-World War II structures. Traditional early 20th Century commercial structures are primarily one story.

CS3-I-iii. Building Base Design:

- a. Ground floors or bases immediately next to pedestrians should reflect a higher level of detail refinement and high quality materials.
- b. Encourage transparent, open facades for commercial uses at street level (as an example, windows that cover between 50-80 percent of the ground floor façade

area and begin approximately 24 to 30 inches above the sidewalk rather than continuing down to street level).

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL1-C Outdoor Uses and Activities

PL1-C-1. Selecting Activity Areas: Concentrate activity areas in places with sunny exposure, views across spaces, and in direct line with pedestrian routes.

PL1-C-2. Informal Community Uses: In addition to places for walking and sitting, consider including space for informal community use such as performances, farmer's markets, kiosks and community bulletin boards, cafes, or street vending.

PL1-C-3. Year-Round Activity: Where possible, include features in open spaces for activities beyond daylight hours and throughout the seasons of the year, especially in neighborhood centers where active open space will contribute vibrancy, economic health, and public safety.

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

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.

PL2-D Wayfinding

PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding: Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I-ii. Overhead Weather Protection: Continuous, well-lighted, overhead weather protection is strongly encouraged to improve pedestrian comfort and to promote a sense of security.

PL2-II Blank Walls

PL2-II-ii. Blank Wall Treatments: In situations where blank walls are necessary, encourage their enhancement with decorative patterns, murals or other treatment.

d. Installation of pedestrian light fixtures as part of a development’s sidewalk improvements is strongly encouraged. The style of light fixture should be consistent with the preference identified by Wallingford through Seattle City Light’s pedestrian lighting program.

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

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

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

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-A Massing

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

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-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable,

include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

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

Wallingford Supplemental Guidance:

DC2-I Architectural Concept and Consistency

DC2-I-iii. Architectural Lighting: Illuminate distinctive features of the building, including entries, signage, canopies, and areas of architectural detail and interest. Encourage pedestrian scale pole lights along streets and walks.

DC2-I-iv. Signage:

- a. Signage should reflect the pedestrian scale of the neighborhood.
- b. Generally, individualized, externally illuminated signs are preferred over internally illuminated, rectangular box signs.
- c. Signage should be integrated with the architectural concept of the development in scale, detailing, use of color and materials, and placement.
- d. Creative, detailed, artistic and unique signage is encouraged.
- e. The use of icons, symbols, graphic logos or designs that represent a service or occupation are preferable to standardized corporate logos.
- f. Pole signs of any type are discouraged.

DC2-II Human Scale

DC2-II-iii. Durable Materials: Use durable and well-detailed finish materials:

- a. Finish materials that are susceptible to staining, fading or other discoloration are strongly discouraged.
- b. Encourage the use of brick.
- c. Discourage aluminum and vinyl siding, and siding with narrow trim.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

b. Make use of the building setbacks to create public open space at grade. Open spaces at grade that are 20 x 20 feet or larger and include significant trees are encouraged in exchange for landscape departures.

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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of FIRST Early Design Guidance the following departures were requested:

1. **SMT 23.47A.014.B.1 (Setback requirement):** The Code requires that a triangular 15-foot setback where a lot abuts the intersection of a lot line and the front lot line of a residential zone. The applicant proposes to maintain the established rhythm of separations along the block at the ground level.

The Board indicated they would entertain granting of the departure but would like to see more illustration and explanation of the benefit to be attained.

2. **SMT 23.47A.014.B.2 (Setback Requirement):** The Code requires a setback of 10-feet for portions of the structure above 13-feet in height where the side lot line abuts a lot in a residential zone. The applicant proposes a continuous 10-foot setback for the south façade.

The Board indicated they would entertain the departure as the design development proceeds.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended (4-0) moving forward to MUP application, addressing those concerns and recommendations of the Board noted above.

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