



## RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3017663

Address: 1601 N 45<sup>th</sup> Street

Applicant: Bradley Khouri, b9 Architects, for N 45<sup>th</sup> St Apartments LLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, June 01, 2015

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

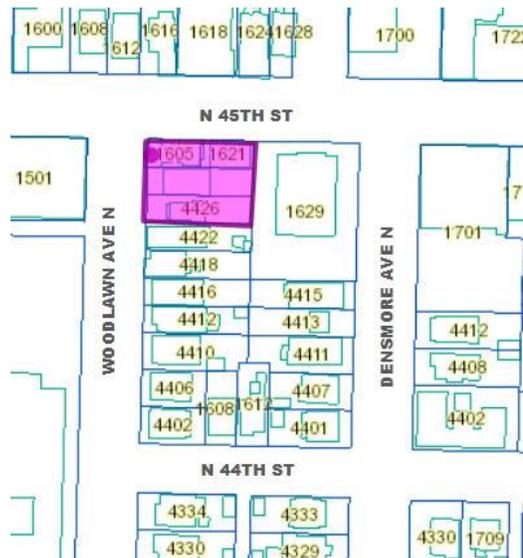
DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

### 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 45<sup>th</sup> 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 45<sup>th</sup> Street Medical and dental Clinic which occupies the former Wallingford police and fire station, constructed in 1913. It is both a designated City of Seattle Landmark and 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 45<sup>th</sup> Street. The main pedestrian entrance to the apartment units would be from Woodlawn Avenue N. Parking below grade for 20 vehicles is proposed.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

There are no ECAs on site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

At the Early Design Guidance Meeting, held on September 8, 2014, the development proposed was for 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.

In response to the Board's direction given at the Early Design Guidance meeting, and in response to subsequent meetings with members of the Wallingford neighborhood community, several changes had been made to the proposal. Changes in the proposed cladding, with brick the predominant feature of the 45<sup>th</sup> Street façade, the applicants noted, were prompted by the discussions with Wallingford Community Council. The applicant had also added 20 parking spaces to the project where formerly there were none proposed.

Packets for each of the meetings are available online by entering the project number 3017663at this website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Review\\_Program/Project\\_Reviews/Reports/default.asp](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](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

## **PROJECT PRESENTATION**

The proposal, substantially redesigned since the Early Design Guidance meeting, consisted of essentially two structures, a four story mixed-use building establishing a strong retail base along N. 45<sup>th</sup> Street and wrapping the corner on Woodlawn Avenue N., and a smaller and lower 8-unit apartment structure within the Lowrise 2 portion of the site to the south, attached to the larger structure by means of open bridges above an intervening courtyard. A common open space accessible to all residential units will be located at the center of the larger mixed-use building at the second level. This raised courtyard space, open to the west and allowing light to penetrate into the three levels of units facing onto it, had been widened in response to the Board's earlier guidance. This gesture of breaking the mass of the larger building along Woodlawn Avenue N. in order to reinforce the existing urban form along that street had been presented at the Early Design Guidance meeting, but was even more evident, and appreciated, in its widened form.

The Board had agreed with public comments at the Early Design Guidance meeting calling for wider sidewalks and the proposal was pulled back from the northwest corner of the site by 3 feet in both directions. A raised platform accessed by stairs from the sidewalk has been located outside the retail space facing onto Woodlawn Avenue N. and the northwest corner.

Along the street front of N. 45<sup>th</sup> Street, a vertical notch with a change in brick color succeeded in breaking down the scale of the street front and was in keeping with the established scale of commercial street fronts along 45<sup>th</sup>. The storefront elements had been reinforced with continuous overhead weather protection that established a strong horizontal line tying the commercial elements of the ground floor together.

At the earlier meeting the design team had been encouraged to envision a thoroughly "modern" building, one that keeps it simple and restrained, even austere, but one that allowed room for some playfulness.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Three members of the public offered comments at the Recommendation meeting. Comments from the public include the following:

- The pedestrian experience both along N. 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodlawn Avenue N. had been notably strengthened; the overhead weather protection was not only a utilitarian improvement but added a strong design element to the project;
- The overall design had come a long way to establish a calm, consistent and contextually respectful feel;
- The addition of some vehicle parking to the project was an important move and one appreciated by the community;
- The design team and development team should be commended for making such a tremendous effort to produce a development that does fit into the context and neighborhood;
- The proposal is an example of one of the best in-fill projects that have been proposed; compositionally the proposal exudes quality and vitality.

## 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 comments and guidance.

- The board was pleased with the wider sidewalks abutting the retail spaces along N.45<sup>th</sup> Street and rounding the corner at Woodlawn Av N.
- The Board agreed that overhead weather protection added not only to pedestrian comfort but to the overall attractiveness of the street-level design.
- At the Early Design Guidance meeting the Board had agreed that the structure should be thought of and architecturally addressed as having “two street corners” on N. 45<sup>th</sup>, the actual corner and the corner of the building opposite the landmarked building to the east, the former Wallingford Fire and Police Station, now serving as the 45<sup>th</sup> Street Medical and Dental Clinic. The Board agreed that the design development and treatment of the northeast corner of the main structure as almost-another- corner- of- the- block situation had had been treated with requisite attention and design consideration. Some concern was raised by some of the Board members and a member of the public, however, regarding the high visibility and reflectivity of the proposed white appearance of the southern portion of the east façade when viewed from N. 45<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The demonstration of the gaps or pattern of interstices between the west facades of structures along the block on Woodlawn Avenue N. at the Early Design Guidance meeting had been compelling as a design strategy and was seen as even more compelling as the width of the gap had been widened.
- By replacing the 3 townhouses originally proposed with a small 8-unit apartment structure within the LR3 portion of the south edge of the site, the design team was able to provide an increased separation from the neighbor to the south, design a better utilized open space to the rear of the site and enable a widened gap at the center of the project, obviating the need for setback departure requests.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE**

At the time of FINAL Recommendation meeting the following departure was requested:

1. **SMT 23.54.030.B.2 (Parking Space Requirements):** The Code requires that a maximum of 65 percent of the proposed 20 parking spaces (13) be striped for small vehicles, with the remaining 35 percent (7) striped for large vehicles. In order to maximize the number of parking stalls on this small development site, the applicant is requesting a departure to stripe all 20 spaces for small vehicles. The applicant has pointed to these Wallingford Neighborhood –specific guidelines in support of the request: CS2iii, DC1 I, DC1 II, and DC1 III.

The Board voted 5-0 in favor of granting the requested departure.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board recommended (5-0) approval of the design as proposed and presented to the Board at the June 1, 2015 meeting and of the requested departure. The Board’s approval was accompanied by a single condition to be resolved before issuance of the MUP, namely that the reflectivity and/or sheen of the “white” portion of the east façade be toned down in deference to the historic structure located adjacent to the east. Approval of the material and coating shall be made by the Land Use Planner.

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