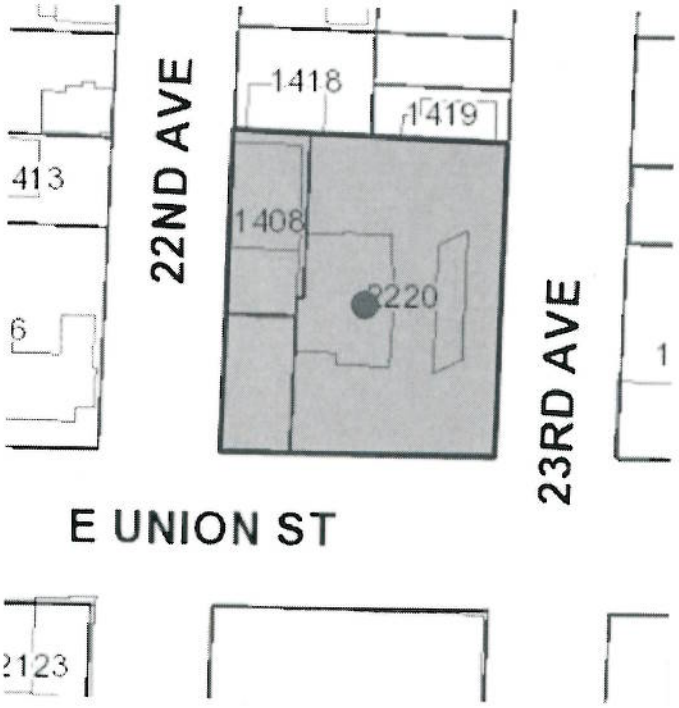
City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION OF THE
EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number:	3019001
Address:	2220 E. Union Street
Applicant:	Ed Weinstein, Weinstein A+U Architects+ Urban Designers, for Lake Union Partners
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, February 17, 2016
Board Members Present:	Natalie Gualy, Chair Curtis Bigelow Barbara Busetti Christina Orr-Cahall Dan Foltz Amy Taylor
DPD Staff Present:	Michael Dorcy
Site Zone:	NC2P-40 (NC2P-65)
Nearby Zones:	(North) SF 5000 and NC2P-40 (South) NC2P-65 (East) NC2P-40 (West) NC2P-30
Lot Area:	29,000 SF



Current Development
A single-story gas station and minimart, a single-story building housing a boxing and martial arts gym, a small urban farm.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The project site lies within Seattle's Central Area neighborhood and is located in the 23rd & Union-Jackson Residential Urban Village and is part of the northernmost Union Core of the three community nodes along 23rd Avenue identified in the 23rd Avenue Action Plan Urban Design Framework. Immediately to the north of the proposal site a zoning line divides the west half of the block zoned single-family from the eastern half which, like the subject site, is zoned neighborhood commercial. The block to the east of the site contains a carwash, Mt. Calvary Church, the Neighborhood Lady (a bar) and Uncle Ike's (a retail marijuana shop). Directly to the south, across E. Union Street is a mixed-use building, primarily of residential units, still under construction. That structure is being erected under benefit of a Contract Rezone which allows a height of 65 feet at that site. The planning node, the northernmost of the three extending along the spine of 23rd Avenue and comprising the Residential Urban Village, extends narrowly at various widths along either side of 23rd Avenue and E. Union Street. The node lies within a wide swath of single-family residences, extending out from the tight commercial core at the center.

The topography of the site is marked by elevation changes of just over two feet along both the 22nd and 23rd Avenue frontages and less than a foot along the E. Union Street frontage. 23rd Avenue is a major arterial connecting to Mt. Baker to the south and the University District to the north. E. Union street is a minor arterial connecting west to Capitol Hill and Downtown. The site is served by two King County Metro bus lines, #48 which runs north and south, and #2 which runs west and east.

Access:

Access to parking would be from 22nd Avenue which abuts the subject property along its west property line. The residential lobby is proposed along E. Union Street, from the sidewalk that abuts the south property line of the site.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no ECAs on the site; as noted, the site is relatively flat.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes construction of a 6-story building with 140-150 residential units, retail/commercial at ground level, and parking for approximately 110 vehicles. This development would be proposed as part of a Contract rezone that would replace the NC3P-40 zoning now in place on site with NC3P-65. (The P represents an existing pedestrian overlay which would persist with the change in allowable height from 40 to 65 feet.)

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE March 25, 2015

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019001) 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 Address: **Public Resource Center**
700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant presented three alternative development schemes for the site (check the alternatives in the on-line packets). The first proposal arranged commercial street-level uses along 23rd Avenue and E. Union Street, with some of the residential units arrayed about a courtyard that faced west onto 22nd Avenue. A second proposal wrapped some of the units around a north-south running, podium level courtyard that was open to the north. The third and preferred alternative shared an organization similar to that proposed in the second alternative. But a primary difference in schemes was a separation in access points to commercial and residential parking on 22nd Avenue. This scheme also offered a slight difference in the arrangement, if not the quantity, of modulation on the three street-facing facades. While the west (residential side) of this scheme showed residential units at ground level along 22nd Avenue, the ground-level area all along 23rd Avenue (the commercial side) was characterized as an array of connected, commercial market places.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments touched upon a number of issues and observations, including the following:

- Surprise that the residential lobby was located on E. Union Street; would like to see the size of the residential lobby shrunk to allow more room for retail uses along the street.
- Appreciation that the orientation of the courtyard allowed more sunshine to reach neighbors to the north.
- Intrigue with the " market" concept shaping the retail/commercial development along 23rd Avenue.
- Support for the design, but thought the two vehicle entries along 22nd Avenue could hurt the pedestrian vitalization of that sidewalk.
- In favor of the town-home-like ground-level residential units proposed for 22nd Avenue.

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.

Among the issues identified by the Board were the following:

- Regarding the height, bulk and scale of each of the alternatives shown, there was concern that the proposed structure overpowered its site; it seemed especially top-heavy on the 22nd Avenue side, above the townhomes and overly bulky at the corner with E. Union in each of the schemes presented.
- There is a need for a four-season shadow study to assess impacts on adjacent residential buildings north of the site.
- The point of view of the presentation drawings was primarily from the southwest which did not give a clear perspective of transitions along the north property line of the proposal. A clearer depiction of this important transition area were needed. Some street-level perspective drawings would help to illustrate more clearly, the relationship between the proposed structure and the existing single-family residence at the property and zone edge at the northwest corner of the site.
- More details are needed regarding the commercial unloading to service the retail inside the paring area.
- Provide more details regarding the garbage/recycle storage and staging for both the residential and commercial uses.
- The residential lobby off E. Union street was characterized by the Board as "a design problem," and one that could be resolved without constricting or minimizing the importance of an active retail street front.
- The Board would expect to see a fuller and more detailed landscape plan at the time of the Recommendation Meeting as well as perspectives of the proposed courtyard that convey a more realistic sense of the space.
- The opportunity for more overhead weather protection than shown, both along 23rd Avenue and E. Union Street should be explored and shown.
- There was something of an awkwardness the way the commercial spaces shown along 23rd Avenue comported with the idea of a "market" which the Board generally thought was rich in potential.
- The Board expressed enthusiasm for the market concept and how it might enliven both the street and the interior parking space.
- The use of high quality materials, especially at the prominent corners of the project, were essential for setting precedents for other new development in the area.
- The Board looked forward to seeing more of the courtyard terrace.
- Provide clear visual guides to help in explaining the six requested departures.

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

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on 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-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

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

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

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-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-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

PUBLIC LIFE

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

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-2. Adding to Public Life: Seek opportunities to foster human interaction through an increase in the size and quality of project-related open space available for public life.

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.

PL3-C-3. Ancillary Activities: Allow space for activities such as sidewalk vending, seating, and restaurant dining to occur. Consider setting structures back from the street or incorporating space in the project design into which retail uses can extend.

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-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

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.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

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-1. Below-Grade Parking: Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.

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-3. Multiple Uses: Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.

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.

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-1. Site Characteristics and Uses: Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.

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

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

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting six departures were identified as potentially necessary to achieve the preferred design alternative. (See EDG packet, unnumbered p.6 following page 24). Departures listed were from the following Code requirements: SMC 23.47A.008.D, setbacks and height relationship to sidewalk grade for residential units; 23.47A.014.B.1, triangular setback from residential zone to the north; 23.47A.014.B.2, side setback above 13 feet for residential zone to north; 23.54.030.B.2, required distribution of size of parking spaces;23.54.030.D.2, driveway widths; 23.54.030.G, sight triangles for existing driveways.

The Board indicated a willingness to entertain the requests, but requested further information how the departures made for a better design and clear illustrations regarding the functionality and impacts of the departures as the design progressed.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended 5-0 that the applicant move forward to MUP application.

At the Recommendation Meeting the Board would expect to see clear responses to the issues stated on page 4, above, and :

- A study of adjacencies of windows on the north façade vis-à-vis those on the building to the north, as well as other adjacency impacts.
- A complete Landscape Plan and Green Factor worksheet.
- A four season pertinent hour shadow study.
- A Materials Board.
- A Lighting Plan.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING: February 17, 2016

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3019001) at this website:
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp

The design team presented their responses to the guidance given by the Board at the Early Design Guidance meeting held on March 25, 2015.

- The Board had supported the residential character along 22nd Avenue but expressed concerns regarding building massing above the townhouse units and noted that the corner expression at 22nd Avenue and E. Union Street appeared "overly bulky."
- The Board emphasized the importance of maintaining a residential feel along 22nd Avenue and expressed concern regarding two curb cuts, serving parking loading/unloading along that frontage.
- The Board felt that the massing at the northwest corner of the site had not fully addressed the transition to single-family zoning that occurred there.
- The Board felt the width of the residential lobby along E. Union Street might detract from street activation there.
- The Board endorsed the second-level courtyard, but wanted a fuller clarification of the design, spatial arrangements, landscaping and potential impacts on neighbors to the north; clarification regarding the roof terrace plan was also requested.

Significant alterations in the overall design since the EDG meeting included the following:

- Two below-grade parking levels to accommodate both residential and commercial uses and a separate loading/unloading area within the building, both accessed from 22nd Avenue, replaced the at-grade parking area that had been located within the building behind the market area.
- Extensive transparency with multiple access points along both 23rd Avenue and E. Union Street ensure street-level activation while a sense of protection and comfort away from street traffic is afforded by continuous planting strips and numerous street trees.
- The residential character of 22nd Avenue is augmented by the presence of street-related units with porches and individual landscaped areas attending the units.
- The main residential entry, set at the center of the E. Union Street frontage, is inset with a glass vestibule offering views into an activated lobby (see pages 46-47 of the packet).
- The design of the project provides for a 30'+ setback at the north property line and the northerly upper floor is set back 4 feet on the north and west sides as a way of transitioning to the single-family zones located north of the site and west across 22nd Avenue.

- The exterior open space at the center of the building's massing is screened from properties to the north, ameliorates shadow impacts to those properties, and has incorporated additional steps to transition and ensure the privacy of adjacent neighbors.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eleven members of the public signed in at the meeting to be acknowledged as parties of record. Neighbors of the single-family dwelling immediately north of the site on 22nd Avenue and newly moved to the sight were concerned about light, air, noise and privacy issues since their house was located south on its own site and would be located near the parking garage entry. Their concerns were somewhat abated upon hearing of efforts that had been put forth to lessen impacts from the abrupt zone change. They were encouraged by the Board to engage with the developer regarding those impacts outside the context of the meeting.

One speaker expressed disappointment that the development did not take advantage of an opportunity to embrace and reflect the existing historical neighborhood culture, which would entail making some kind of overt gestures toward the African American aesthetic which had been a characteristic of this physical junction and area. Another member of the public acknowledged a "terrific design" for the site and one in keeping with what had been envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan Neighborhood Planning Element of the 23rd Avenue Action Plan. A nearby neighbor to the project sought clarification regarding the landscape plan and the intentionality of how pedestrians would engage with the surrounding sidewalks. Some concern was expressed regarding the loading bay on 22nd Avenue and impacts related to its operation on the pedestrian realm along the adjacent sidewalk.

REQUESTED DEPARTURES FROM DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Development of the project as proposed would require that the Board grant five departures from development standards. A list of the requested departures, with specific Code citations and the design rationale for each can be found on pages 41-49 of the packet prepared for the recommendation meeting. Granting the departure requests received unanimous support from the six Board members attending the meeting.

BOARD DELIBERATIONS

The Board expressed satisfaction with the overall design of the project and unanimously granted approval of the presented design. They did engage, however, in further discussion regarding the refinement of materials, primarily in the preferred pallet of colors of the materials proposed for the building. While there was some minor support for more zing in the pallet, voices in favor of the muted pallet which had been presented made up the prevailing consensus of the Board.

There was clear consensus also among the Board members that the wall above the parking entry need further attention. While one suggestion was to extend the depth of the window along the

top of the wall, the Board was unanimously agreed that the design team should specify "board-formed concrete" to impart a desired visual texture to the wall at the parking entry.

While noting that they would like to see more projects that were as thoughtful in dealing with zone transitions at the development's edges, the Board did request that the development team continue to work with the neighbor directly north of the parking entry to see if there might be mutually agreeable ways to address attenuation of impacts from the project that might be integrated into the final design.

Other suggestions from the Board were that the design team might look where there might be opportunities: for the infusion of a broader color pallet; for more actual "place making" and linking the new structure more obviously with the community culture. These might be implemented in conjunction with exploring the detailing of the retail spaces, the residential lobby, bike racks, street furniture, etc.

H:dorcym/docs/desrev/3019001 Rec.docx