



City of Seattle

Department of Construction and Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director



FIRST RECOMMENDATION OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020114

Address: 6726 Greenwood Avenue N

Applicant: Jay Janette, Skidmore Janette, for Johnson & Carr

Date of Meeting: Monday, August 01, 2016

Board Members Present: Dale Kutzera, Chair
Keith Walzak
Emily McNichols
Jerry Coburn (Substitute Board)

Board Members Absent: Marc Angelillo
Chris Bell

SDCI Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC2-40

Nearby Zones: (North) NC2-40
(South) NC2-40
(East) NC2-40/ SF5000
(West) NC2-40

Lot Area: 8,036 SF



Current Development:

Single-story commercial building (to be demolished)

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Single-family development to the east, northeast and southeast. Four story mixed-use (commercial/residential) structure is under construction directly to the north across N. 68th Street. Across Greenwood Avenue N., to the west and northwest, is a large, four-story mixed use building. The project is compatible with neighborhood development trends.

Access:

No parking for residential or commercial uses are proposed on site. Pedestrian access is proposed from both Greenwood Avenue N. and N. 68th Street.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no ECA's on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a four-story mixed-use building, with three stories of residential units (totaling 55) above a ground floor of 2,900 square feet of retail space and two live/work units. The existing one-story commercial building on site will be demolished.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

PRESENTATION

The meeting began promptly at 6:30 PM with an introduction of Board members. After remarks by the Chair and staff, a presentation of the current design was made by the project architect, lasting approximately 20 minutes. The general description of the scope of the proposal remained largely unchanged: a four-story building with 55 residential units, 2 live/work units, and 3,200 square feet of ground floor retail uses. No vehicle parking is proposed for the project, but a Code-required 23 bicycle spaces will be provided. Included in the Landscape plan are two new street trees to be planted along 68th Street. The proposed materials and colors were described as “earthy and restrained”; in particular, the proposed materials were characterized as “unified and durable.” The design team was still looking at options on the canopies and asking for Board’s guidance. Blade signage, beneath the canopies was proposed for the retail space(s). An “art panel” is being proposed at the residential entry, to be designed by a local artist but (none has been selected or contacted to date).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thirty people signed in at the meeting, although actual attendance was significantly greater than that number. The public comment period ran from approximately 7:00 pm until -8:03 pm.

Among the public comments were the following:

- Design has not responded completely to Board’s earlier guidance; moving stair at south end of the building was ok, but the move clerestory at south end of the roof should be removed as well; the “blank” south façade was troublesome;
- The overall design was not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood; the loading will be unsafe and will block the sidewalk;
- The lack of air conditioning is a mistake; design does not fit neighborhood; the canopies need further work;
- Regarding the “character of the building” –looks like it belongs in Ballard; Phinney is turning into Ballard;
- (Neighbor to south): get rid of the CMU, extending the cement board panels would be preferred; concerned about contaminants leeching from the construction site into her property;
- (Neighbor to east): design still ignores the Phinney/Greenwood guidelines regarding zone edges—the Board is not doing its job;
- Regarding the “Laundromat issue”—with clarification by architect, J. Janette: there are 2 sets of stacked washers/dryers on each floor near the elevator, shown in the packets and in the MUP plan sheets;
- Size of units? (Response: vary from 250 to 450 SF);
- Entries should not be bare and hostile;
- Resident on N.68th, abutting the property on the east side: 3-foot setback not enough;
- Water runoff concerns: swales, retention? Green infrastructure proposed?

- “Has no ambience,” too much for too small a site;
- Acknowledged “some improvements,” but the south façade highly visible and still an “enormous blank space”;
- Appreciates the full wrap of brick; the mezzanines are good, since they allow for additional unit space; higher canopy height at corner a good idea; the “gaskets” between the brick fields should allow for more contrast and differentiation from the brick, and should come down to the sidewalk; suggests site needs more bike parking; the gap between the proposed structure and building to south, should allow for reflected light;
- The back (east-facing) windows are too large and peer into the adjacent back yards; make adjustments in location and size;
- Elevator penthouse—does it need to be so high?
- Neighbors care deeply about their neighborhood and have asked for fewer units and some vehicle parking, but developer has not budged or given them what they want;
- Garbage staging on the sidewalk would be a serious problem; commercial venting at transom level from retail space a problem (clarification from applicant team: louvers for intake only—exhaust is at the roof level);
- Does the project qualify for additional height? since the additional height blocks views of the Cascade mountains from condos across Greenwood Avenue N.
- Concerned about the impact of shadows and the quality of daylight for homes to east of the project—would like to see a stair-step setback and general erosion of the eastside massing;
- “Inappropriate architecture” for the neighborhood; out-of-scale with existing development;
- There is an “unrealistic reliance on operational discipline” to make the garbage and loading actually work;
- Why not a “greener” building at this site? –seems to be a missed opportunity.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

Departure Requests

The applicant is requesting no departures from development standards

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.

Hot Button Issues:

1. Setbacks (from Single family rear yards to the east): Board agreed that the east setback should be a minimum of 5 feet as had been shown at the second EDG meeting, rather than the three feet currently shown on plans and in the packets;
2. South Wall, color and materiality: Keep it light to allow for better interior illumination of the neighboring building to south

3. Landscape Plan: Provide a complete and accurate landscape plan, one that calls out all plantings, location and sections to reveal actual depths of plantings;
4. Colors and Contrasts: Select colors of lighter values to provide more contrast between the brick sections and cement panel sections between them;
5. Canopies: From the north edge of the building, the rhythm should be “up, down and back up,” responding to “options” presented to the Board by the architect;
6. Store front composition: Adjust horizontal mullion heights along the storefronts as determined by a closer look at sitting heights from within the structure;
7. Windows: On the eastside, select window size and composition that maintain the basic styles of windows elsewhere on the building but better mitigate for any perceived loss of privacy in nearby rear yards; likewise, look to enlarging the windows shown on the south-facing façade, again, in keeping with the essential forms of other fenestration on the building;
8. Garbage/recycling storage and staging location: Don’t rely on on-site management to keep them from being annoyance on the Greenwood Avenue N. sidewalk, but search for methods of direct pickup and return of trash/compost/recycle receptacles;
9. Clerestories: Make the windows have a closer relationship to windows elsewhere on the front façade;
10. Bike Parking: coordinating with SDOT, add retail-related bike parking in the right-of-way of Greenwood Avenue N.;
11. Artist’s piece at residential entry: provide more information regarding both the scope of artwork and the commitment of the developer to provide the artwork.

BOARD DIRECTION

The above enumeration of unresolved issues was regarded by the Board members to be “too long a list” to finish up on, resolve, or condition at the current meeting, and, by a vote of 4-0, it was determined that the proposal should be brought back to the Board for a Second Recommendation meeting.