



City of Seattle

Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

DESIGN
REVIEW

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020310

Address: 9701 Aurora Avenue North

Applicant: Kathryn Jerkovich of BCRA

Date of Meeting: Monday, September 28, 2015

Board Members Present: Ellen Cecil (Chair)
Christopher Bell
Joe Giampietro (substitute)

Board Members Absent: Dale Kutzera
Marc Angelilo
Keith Walzak

DPD Staff Present: Carly Guillory

SITE & VICINITY

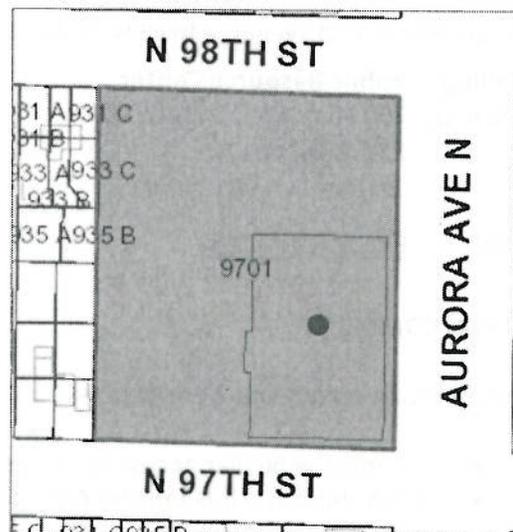
Site Zone: Commercial 2 – 65-Foot Height Limit (C2-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) C2-65
(South) C2-65
(East) Lowrise 3 (LR3)
(West) C2-65

Lot Area: 61,542 square feet

Current Development:

The subject site currently contains a 19,000-square foot commercial structure, occupied by *Gold's Gym*, and surface parking.



Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The development immediately surrounding the project site generally consists of one-story commercial structures with surface parking, and multiple-family residential to the west. An Exceptional tree is located on a property abutting to the west.

Access:

Access to the site is currently provided via two curb cuts on Aurora Ave N, one curb cut on N 97th St, and one curb cut on N 98th St. The preferred design concept proposes vehicular access via one curb cut on N 97th and one on N 98th St. The main pedestrian entrance is proposed on the west side of the building, accessed via the parking lot.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

None.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance Application proposal to allow a 6-story mini-warehouse structure (self-storage) containing one caretakers unit. Surface parking for 17 vehicles to be provided. Existing structure to be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3020310) 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 comments were expressed at the first Early Design Guidance meeting:

- Preferred vehicular access from Aurora.
- Noted there is a bus lane on Aurora.

- Concerned about a concrete wall or parking lot adjacent to the west property line.
- Concerned about noise from a gate at the parking lot entrance.
- Concerned about noise from large trucks entering the site.
- Concerned that the hours of operation (approximately 9AM – 6PM) will not facilitate a vibrant, thriving community.
- Concerned about the height of the structure.
- Preferred a different use at this location.
- Noted the neighborhood experiences crime, traffic, etc.
- Advocated for a better community.
- Concerned about losing the existing gym on site.
- Suggested commercial uses at ground level with units above. Encouraged uses such as cafes.
- Noted that N 97th and 98th Streets are parked at capacity.
- Noted difficulty in turning left onto N 98th from Aurora.
- Suggested a design that increases safety for pedestrians.
- Noted that a bus stop at this location will be dangerous with no pedestrian traffic from this site.

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.

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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](#).

1. **Site Planning and Public Realm.** This full block site is located within the Aurora-Licton Springs Residential Urban Village and has street frontage on three sides.
 - a. The Board agreed this is an important corner in the neighborhood, and should be designed to be outward looking. Transparency at the ground level is important, particularly along Aurora. The Board recommended maximizing visibility into the building interior along Aurora. (CS3-A, PL3-C)
 - b. Active uses at ground level along Aurora were strongly encouraged. The Board recommended exploration of including uses (other than storage units) at the ground level. (CS2-B, PL3-C)
 - c. The preferred option pulls the structure away from the residential development to the west. This site planning concept was supported by the Board; however, the surface parking adjacent the west property line was not preferable due to concerns about impacts to residents. The Board recommended exploration of placing parking within the structure. A drive-through circulation method was suggested. (CS2-D)

- d. The main pedestrian entry to the structure is proposed on the west elevation, accessed via the surface parking lot. The Board agreed the main pedestrian entry should instead be on Aurora with the intent of activating the street. (PL3-A)
- e. The Board noted the topography of the site, and recommended the building respond by stepping down with the topography. (CS1-C)
- f. The Board requested the presentation of different schemes that are sensitive to the residential development to the west, activate the streetscape, and include parking in the structure. (CS2-D, PL3-C, DC1-B, DC4-A)

2. Architectural Concept.

- a. With street activation as the goal, the Board recommended overhead weather protection along the length of the Aurora frontage (PL2-C).
- b. Powerlines exist along Aurora, and the proposed massing is setback in response. The Board recommended a strong street edge at the ground level with upper level setbacks to accommodate the power lines, rather than setting the entire building back from the sidewalk.
- c. The design should express its form and use. The Board agreed it is not necessary for the structure to be designed to appear as a residential structure. (DC4-A, DC4-A)
- d. The Board requested additional context be added to the packet to carefully illustrate the relationship to adjacent residential uses to the west. A window study was also requested. (CS2-D CS3-A)

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

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS1-D Plants and Habitat

CS1-D-1. On-Site Features: Incorporate on-site natural habitats and landscape elements into project design and connect those features to existing networks of open spaces and natural habitats wherever possible. Consider relocating significant trees and vegetation if retention is not feasible.

CS1-D-2. Off-Site Features: Provide opportunities through design to connect to off-site habitats such as riparian corridors or existing urban forest corridors. Promote continuous habitat, where possible, and increase interconnected corridors of urban forest and habitat where possible.

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-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-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-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

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-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-B Walkways and Connections

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.

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 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-C Retail Edges

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.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

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.

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-C Secondary Architectural Features

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

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-1. Functions: Use lighting both to increase site safety in all locations used by pedestrians and to highlight architectural or landscape details and features such as entries, signs, canopies, plantings, and art.

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.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

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

1. **Street Level Development Standards – Transparency. (SMC 23.47A.008.B.2.):** The Code requires 60% of the street-facing façade between two and eight-feet be transparent. The applicant proposes a reduction in the required amount of transparency, and for the use of spandrel glass windows.

The Board indicated concern that this departure would not better meet the intent of the design guidelines. The Board instead recommended that the ground level be transparent, allowing views into and out of the space. The streetscape along Aurora should be activated, and building transparency will contribute to this goal.

2. **Street Level Development Standards - Floor to Floor Height. (SMC 23.47A.008.B.4.):** The Code requires non-residential uses at the street level to have a floor to floor height of 13-feet. The applicant proposes a reduction to 10-feet eight-inches.

The Board indicated concern that lowering the floor to floor height at the ground level along Aurora would prohibit future conversion to another commercial use. The Board found the departure did not better meet the intent of the design guidelines.

3. **Street Level Development Standards – Overhead Weather Protection. (SMC 23.47A.008.C.4.a.):** The Code requires continuous overhead weather protection along at least 60% of the street frontage along a principal pedestrian street. The applicant proposes a reduction

The Board indicated concern that the departure would not better meet the intent of the design guidelines. The Board agreed that street activation is important for this site, and a reduction in overhead weather protection would support street level activation.

4. **Street Level Development Standards - Overhead Weather Protection. (SMC 23.47A.008.C.4.a.):** The Code requires overhead weather protection to be over the sidewalk or over a walking area within 10-feet immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. The applicant proposes an increase to 14-feet from the sidewalk.

The Board indicated concern that the proposed departure would not better meet the intent of the design guidelines. The Board agreed that street activation is important for this site, and a reduction in overhead weather protection would support street level activation.

5. **Street Level Development Standards - Overhead Weather Protection. (SMC 23.47A.008.C.4.a.):** The Code requires the lower edge of the overhead weather protection to be a minimum of eight-feet and a maximum of 12-feet above the sidewalk for projections extending a maximum of six-feet. For projections extending more than six-feet from the structure, the lower edge of the weather protection shall be a minimum of 10-feet and a maximum of 15-feet above the sidewalk. The applicant proposes an increase in height above the sidewalk to 17-feet.

The Board indicated concern that the departure would not better meet the intent of the design guidelines. The Board agreed that street activation is important for this site, and a reduction in overhead weather protection would support street level activation.

Overall, the Board found difficulty in responding to the departure requests and asked that the design and packet include information describing how the overall design and proposed departures better meet the intent of the design guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another Early Design Guidance meeting in response to the guidance provided.

The Board requested the presentation of different schemes that are sensitive to the residential development to the west, activate the streetscape, and include parking in the structure.

3020310

EDG Report sent 10-14-15 KM

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