



FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020828

Address: 515 Minor Avenue

Applicant: Jason McCleary for Collins Woerman Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair
Dan Foltz
Amy Taylor
Barbara Busetti
Curtis Bigelow

Board Members Absent: Christina Orr-Cahill

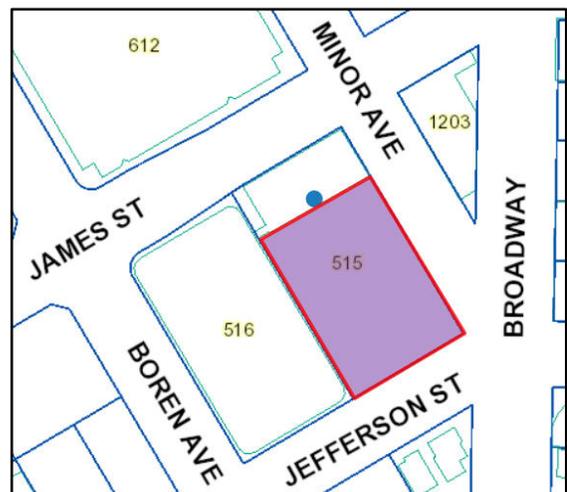
DPD Staff Present: Holly J. Godard

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial 3, 85 foot height limit NC3-85

Nearby Zones: (North) Swedish Medical Center MIO-105
(South) Neighborhood Commercial 3, 65 foot height limit NC3-65
(East) Neighborhood Commercial 3, 85 foot height limit NC3-85
(West) Neighborhood Commercial 3, 85 foot height limit NC3-85

Lot Area: 60,600 square feet. Includes the existing Minor and James medical center.



Current Development:

Currently there is a one story medical clinic and surface parking and the existing four story Minor and James Medical Clinic.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

Surrounding development includes medical offices, apartments and parking structures.

Access:

Vehicle and pedestrian access is available from all surrounding streets.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

No Environmentally Critical Areas are mapped on site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to provide a new six story medical office building on the east one half of the site with underground parking, patient drop off area, and retail uses.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3020828) 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

Several comments were offered to the Board regarding the proposal.

- James street is a much traveled pedestrian right of way and should have engaging uses like retail stores, offices etc. The proposed solid walls and open parking creates a hostile environment.
- Alternative drop off sequences should be explored to better fit the site opportunities.

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](#).

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-1. Sun and Wind: Take advantage of solar exposure and natural ventilation. Use local wind patterns and solar gain to reduce the need for mechanical ventilation and heating where possible.

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.

CS1-C Topography

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

CS1-E-2. Adding Interest with Project Drainage: Use project drainage systems as opportunities to add interest to the site through water-related design elements.

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

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

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.

The Board contemplated the different proposal options as they relate to the urban context and the ½ block site. (The application will be reviewed as a full block development for zoning purposes.) The Board focused many comments on the nature of the site and its relationship to the city grid and use patterns. The Board focused on the availability of daylight on the entry and courtyard experience. The ½ block site is a sloping site and the Board directed the applicant to respond to the slope in organizing the entry sequence, circulation on the site, and pick up /drop off functions. The Board questioned the preferred drop off function as it appeared to relate poorly to Minor and questioned the parking –on-a-plinth relationship to James and Jefferson. The Board strongly opposed these conditions and asked that the applicant revisit the entry locations and relationships to the neighboring rights-of-way. The Board noted that the open breezeway space was an interesting idea for linkage, but was wary of its character in a rainy climate, breezy conditions and shading constraints. The breezeway concept will need to be more fully developed to show the Board how it will provide comfort for visitors and office personnel. The Board noted that the development must relate to the existing building and the full block access, façade sculpting, modulation, and topography opportunities and constraints more fully. Height, bulk and scale relationships must relate to the existing development on site, neighboring buildings and adjacent sites.

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-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

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.

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

PL2-A Accessibility

PL2-A-1. Access for All: Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

PL2-A-2. Access Challenges: Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

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.

PL2-C-3. People-Friendly Spaces: Create an artful and people-friendly space beneath building.

PL2-D Wayfinding

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

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-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-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-A-2. Connections to All Modes: Site the primary entry in a location that logically relates to building uses and clearly connects all major points of access.

The Board gave the applicant direction to study the accessibility challenges at the site for the entry sequence for all users. Universal design principles should shape the access sequence. The Board pointed out that a sense of safety and security in lighting design, entry and exit, and street level transparency would help the project better connect functions within the site and connections to the public life of First Hill. The Board pointed out that wayfinding from the street to either building should be intuitive, clear and easily discerned as one approaches the site. The Board directed the applicant to provide retail uses along James and Jefferson which they note will be good options in this area where a lot of residential uses exist and are planned. The Board thought that entry relationships need to express axial connections between existing and planned development as well as offering up one organizing, big design idea for the site.

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-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

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-B-2. Facilities for Alternative Transportation: Locate facilities for alternative transportation in prominent locations that are convenient and readily accessible to expected users.

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-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-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building façades—including alleys and visible roofs—considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all façades 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 façades 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

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

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.

The Board studied the arrangement of uses on the site and determined that more study was needed by the applicant to present design relationships that support the existing building, new development access options, and appropriate relationships for visibility, gathering places, views and connections in and out of the development. The new building drop off, lobby, and access to the old Minor and James building should flow smoothly. The Board mentioned that an axial (or other) organizing feature should be shown at the next meeting to address the design challenges.

The Board thought that vehicular access, van access, and related circulation could occur off of the midblock breezeway at the entry level of Minor and James or at the open garage level with access to parking and van parking. The Board directed the applicant to study this idea as part of a concept approach. The Board thought that parking should be separated from the street by intervening uses i.e. not visible from the street. Curb cuts should be the minimum allowed by code in number and width.

The Board noted that there is a substantial amount of pedestrian traffic in the area and that retail uses along James and possibly Jefferson should be shown at the next meeting. The pedestrian experience should be comfortable and the paramount design concern for the pedestrian experience along the rights-of-way. Pedestrian access from the sidewalk should be easily recognizable and comfortable.

The Board is interested in seeing interesting façade modulation, high quality materials, and creative and human scaled facades. The Board thought that lighting and landscaping should work together to create a comfortable landscape with a sense of security.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

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

1. **Access to Parking. (SMC 23.47.032):** The Code allows access from one street. The applicant proposes three access points to the site from three different streets.

The Board indicated they will contemplate the departure with further information and comment that demonstrates that the departure helps the project better meet priority design guidance.

2. **Curb Cut. (SMC 23.54.030F2b):** The Code allows 22 feet minimum and 25 feet maximum. The applicant proposes 36 feet.

The Board indicated they oppose the departure request because it does not support a quality urban environment, building relationship to the street, and pedestrian experience.

3. **Location of Parking. (23.47A.032B 1 a):** The Code requires that within a structure parking must be separated from street level by an intervening use. The applicant proposes no intervening use.

The Board indicated they oppose the departure request as it does not meet retail needs and desires at the street level at this location nor does an intervening use screen parking.

4. **Location of Parking. (23.47A.032B 1 b and c):** The Code does not allow parking between a structure and street lot line. The applicant proposes parking between the structure and the street lot line.

The Board indicated that they oppose the departure request as it does not meet retail activation at the street level at this location.

5. **Street Level Transparency (SMC 23.47A 008 B2a):** The Code requires 60% transparency between 2 and 8 feet on the street facade. The applicant proposes 50% on Jefferson and 35% on James Street.

The Board indicated they oppose the departure request as it does not meet urban design standard needs and desires at the street level at this location.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended the project return for another meeting in response to the guidance provided. A second EDG meeting will be scheduled.