



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3020961

Address: 203 W Republican St

Applicant: Bryan Bellissimo, Encore Architects

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Board Members Present: Boyd Pickrell, Chair
Christine Harrington
Katie Idziorek
Homero Nishiwaki
Janet Stephenson

Board Members Absent: None

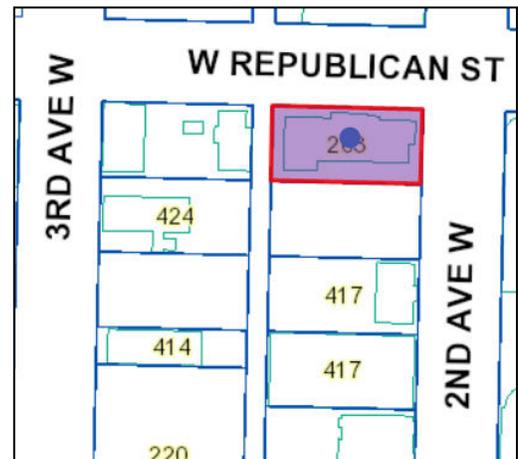
DPD Staff Present: Lisa Rutzick for BreAnne McConkie

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial with a 65' height limit (NC3-65')

Nearby Zones: Neighborhood Commercial with a 40' height limit (NC3-40)(North)
NC3-65'(South)
NC3-65' (East)
NC3-65' (West)

Lot Area: 14,400 square feet (sq. ft.)



Site & Current Development: The site is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of W Republic St and 2nd Ave W and contains a four story brick apartment building built in 1947 and a surface parking lot with parking for 28 vehicles.

The project site slopes from north/northeast down to the south/southwest with the high point at the NE corner near the W Republic St and 2nd Ave W intersection.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The project is located in the Uptown Urban Center and Uptown Park Character Area, as defined by the Uptown Design Guidelines. The area contains a mix of multi-family residential, primarily 1920s and 1930s era brick apartment structures, and more contemporary office buildings, with some new residential and office buildings.

Access: Vehicular access to the site is proposed from the adjacent alley to the west. Pedestrian access is from W Republican St and 2nd Ave W.

Environmentally Critical Areas: There are no Environmentally Critical Areas onsite.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is to allow a 7-story structure containing 90 residential units and 4 live-work units at (3,100 sq. ft.) ground level. Parking for 50 vehicles to be provided below grade. Existing structure to be demolished. Proposal includes contract rezone to NC3-85'.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at the following 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 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 members of the public were in attendance and offered the following comment.

- Would like new development to be pedestrian friendly.
- Preferred the “H” massing scheme.

- Did not care for the proposed live/work units as they offer little to enhance the street.
- Disagreed that 2nd Ave W is the most residential character, rather it is Republican. The design of the Republican elevation is less appealing to the residential neighborhood character.
- The Uptown Alliance Land Use Review Committee appreciate the outreach by the developer and offered the following comments:
 - The Urban Design Framework effort that is underway for this neighborhood is considering a rezone to an 85 foot height limit; this proposal should be considering a more flexible design that seeks to increase the building density.
 - Urged more attention to enhancing the pedestrian environment and sidewalk experience as this site is in a location that is rapidly growing and seeing increased pedestrian traffic.
 - Encourage the project to include affordable units.
- Not supportive of the 85 foot height as it will block views.
- One letter was received stating objection to the proposed building height as out of scale with the surrounding context and not in keeping with the neighborhood design and will block views. Also opposed to the low number of parking stalls proposed and traffic problems in the area.

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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1. Building Massing & Expression: The Board supported the preferred “H” shaped massing scheme, however they unanimously agreed that the proposed massing was too blocky and timid and that the recessed areas should be deeper and more expressive. Other guidance provided by the Board regarding providing more relief to break up of inflated massing included:

- a. Greater modulation is needed to break up the elevations. If decks are provided to achieve some of this needed modulation, they should not further diminish the massing recesses provided in response to the overarching concern described above. **(DC2.A.2, DC2.I.i, DC2.III.ii)**
- b. Varied rooflines to distinguish and reinforce the architectural concept, which also providing more visual interest. The Board noted that although a rezone for increased height is proposed, the proposed building height is far below that figure, so the design should take advantage of that height flexibility to create more dramatic architectural forms. **(DC2.B1, DC2.I.i)**
- c. The alley elevation, as shown, is overly severe and should provide some visual relief for the livability of the residents. In terms of architectural detailing, however, the Board noted that this elevation is less significant than the other three elevations. **(DC2.B1, DC2.I.i)**

2. Relationship to the Context: The Board noted that the design needs to better respond to the context and the Uptown Design Guidelines that promote a clearly expressed concept plan, strong corners and delineated entries. (DC2.I.i)

The Board pointed out that the reference imagery of courtyard buildings provided in the presentation materials bore little resemblance to the massing schemes shown; more meaningful reference to these character buildings is needed through the building proportions and materiality. The Board clarified that they do not expect to see a design that mimics a historical pastiche, rather the detailing and building proportions are the references to be considered in context to inform a contemporary design. (DC2.I.i, DC4.A1, DC4.II)

3. Street Level Experience: While the Board recognized that the site presented topographical challenges, they were very concerned that the proposed street level design resulted in units and uses that are disconnected from the sidewalk would result in a lacking street level experience. The Board recommended several design modifications that would address these concerns. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3, DC2.I.i, DC2.E)

- a. The Board strongly objected to the sunken and disengaged ground level entrances and lack of relationship to grade. The live work units should include ADA entrance from the street level. This would create direct relationship and circulation between these units and the street, while also expanding the prospects of future conversion of these live/work units to commercial uses. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3, DC2.E)
- b. The Board was primarily interested in the building meeting grade such that the ground floor uses can be design to be welcoming and support a vibrant pedestrian realm. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)
- c. The Board was supportive of the main residential entry not being located at the corner as in keeping with the H-form and courtyard apartment entries. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv)
- d. The Board suggested considering entering the ground level units up and not down to support the likelihood of interactive uses and future commercial possibility. Another suggestion would be to step the slab to respond to the topographical change. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)
- e. The Board expressed support for a departure to have more residential frontage at street level if associated with a strong, responsive design with a clear relationship between the ground floor and the pedestrian experience. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv, PL3.B3)
- f. The Board was supportive of the early design concepts for specialty paving at the entryway, street trees, seating and light fixtures noted in the Uptown Design Guidelines. (CS2.B2, CS2I.i, CS2II.ii, PL2I.i,ii, PL2.II.i,ii,iii,iv)
- g. At the next meeting, the Board would like to review street level views for all elevations.

4. Architectural Concept: The Board agreed that the Uptown Park design guidelines should be closely consulted to inform the material palette. (DC2.I.i)

- a. The Board liked the angled entry, but felt that gesture is lost when tucked under the large block. Such gestures should be more dynamic and be supported by the overall design concept and parti. **(DC2.I.i)**
- b. The Board supported the proposed corner treatment and recessed base to differentiate the uses from the residential floors above. **(CS2.C1, CS2.III.i)**
- c. The material palette should be high quality and responsive to the neighborhood design guidelines. **(DC4.A1, DC4.II)**
- d. At the next meeting, the Board would like to review a detailed landscape design, exterior lighting plan and signage plan. **(PL1.II.i, PL1.II.ii, DC4.B, DC4.C, DC4.III, DC4.IV)**

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

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-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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-i. Pedestrian Character: Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood’s pedestrian character.

CS2-II Streetscape Compatibility

CS2-II-ii. Uptown Park: Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include where feasible a consistent park-like landscaped strip in the planting strip, as consistent with the historic pattern in the area. New developments may elect to take inspiration from the Uptown Park District Landscaped Streets Element as endorsed by the Uptown Alliance, for the format of the streetscape. However, adherence to the landscaped streets element is voluntary.

CS2-III Corner Lots

CS2-III-i. Addressing the Corner: Generally, buildings within Uptown should meet the corner and not be set back. Building designs and treatments as well as any open space

areas should address the corner and promote activity. Corner entrances are strongly encouraged, where feasible.

PUBLIC LIFE

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

Uptown Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-II Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites

PL1-II-i. Uptown Park Area: Within the Uptown Park character area, streetscape improvements should include a consistent landscaped planting strip between the sidewalk and the street as consistent with the historic pattern in the area. New developments may take guidance from the Uptown Park District Landscaped Streets Element as endorsed by the Uptown Alliance, for the format of streetscape improvements.

PL1-II-ii. Streetscape Landscaping: Throughout Uptown, streetscape landscaping as per the guidelines CS2.II, PL1, PL2 and PL4 is encouraged.

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

Uptown Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Entrances Visible from the Street

PL2-I-i. Prominent Entrances: Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

PL2-I-ii. Street Life: Streets throughout Uptown should be sociable places that offer a sense of security, and residential building projects should make a positive contribution to life on the street.

PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL2-II-i. Pedestrian-Friendly Entrances: Throughout Uptown entries should be designed to be pedestrian friendly (via position, scale, architectural detailing, and materials) and should be clearly discernible to the pedestrian.

PL2-II-ii. Defensible Space: Individual or unit entrances in buildings that are accessed from the sidewalk or other public spaces should consider appropriate designs for defensible space as well as safety features (e.g., decorative fencing and gating). Landscaping should be consistent with these features.

PL2-II-iii. Pedestrian Experience: Throughout Uptown special attention to the pedestrian experience and street right-of-way should be given along pedestrian corridors as identified on the map (pg. v).

PL2-II-iv. Lighting: Throughout Uptown the use of a pedestrian-scaled street lamp within all character areas is encouraged. In addition, streetscape features such as street clocks and benches are encouraged in Heart of Uptown and Uptown Urban character areas.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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.

Uptown Supplemental Guidance:

DC2-I Architectural Context

DC2-I-i. Human-Scale Design: The Uptown Park and Heart of Uptown character districts prefer an architecture that emphasizes human scale and quality, detailing and materials, and that remains compatible with the existing community.

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-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

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

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 Early Design Guidance meeting, no departures were requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.