



City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections
Nathan Torgelson, Director



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3024100

Address: 900 N 34th Street

Applicant: Myer Harrell, for Weber Thompson

Date of Meeting: Monday, August 08, 2016

Board Members Present: Ivana Begley, Chair
Eric Blank
James Marria
Blake Williams

Board Members Absent: None

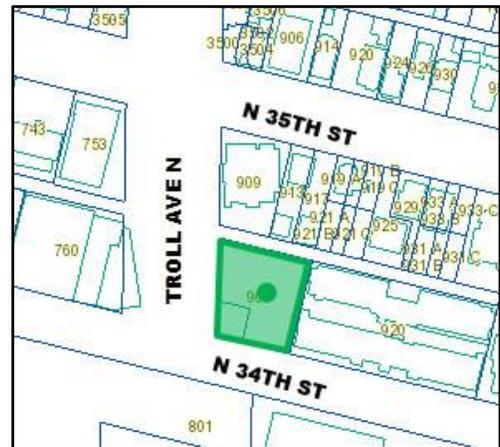
SDCI Staff Present: Crystal Torres, Land Use Planner

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Commercial (C1-65)

Nearby Zones: (North) LR3
(South) C2-30
(East) C1-65
(West) NC3P-65

Lot Area: 12,900 sq. ft.



Current Development:

There is currently a two story structure located on the project site, which will be demolished.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located within the Fremont Urban Center Village, with its address along N 34th Street, bounded by Troll Avenue N to the west and an alley to the north. The zoning is C1-65' with an adjacent property zoned C1-65. Across the alley to the north is an LR3 zone. The site is currently occupied by two small commercial retail tenants, a Turkish cafe and a coffee shop. The surrounding area includes the Burke Gilman Trail, Fremont Troll, Lenin Statue, Gasworks Park, Fremont commercial core, and a mix of multifamily and single family housing types. The neighborhood character is defined by the unique Fremont landmarks, the mix of older and contemporary housing types, and the views connecting the area with Lake Union and waterways.

Access:

Existing vehicular access is taken from N 34th Street. Propose vehicular access is taken from the alley at the rear of the building.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no mapped environmentally critical areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Review Early Design Guidance for a 7-story office building with retail at grade. Parking for 30 vehicles to be provided within the structure. Existing building to 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

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were offered:

- Concerned with impacts to light/air access to the east residential building.
- Concerned with parking and traffic impacts.
- Concerned with the proposed height, bulk, scale of the building and impacts.
- Concerned with the functionality of service uses along the alley.
- Supported the green building sustainability goals of the projects.

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/>

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.

1. Massing/Design Concept:

- a. The Board echoed public's support for a living building concept and pursuing the green building pilot program. **CS1-A, CS1-B-1**
- b. The Board expressed unanimous support for the preferred option with the following guidance:
 - i. The preferred option was the most interesting massing form which responded to the topography changes and surrounding site context. **CS1-B, CS1-C, CS2-B-1, DC2-A**
 - ii. Agreed with public comment and supported narrowing of the upper massing as this reduced the height, bulk, and scale, as well as, reducing shading. **CS1-B-2, CS2-D, DC2-A**
 - iii. Supported the proposed ground floor along both Troll Ave and N 34th Street, noting the opportunities to activate the open space along Troll Ave. **CS2-B**
 - iv. Agreed that the rotated setback along Troll Ave was positive and created further visual interest at the corner. **CS2-C**
 - v. Agreed with public comment and supported the building mass opening towards the adjacent courtyard to the east maintaining light and air access into the adjacent courtyard space. **CS2-D**
 - vi. Supported proposed massing noting the additional FAR was integrated into the overall design and created an appropriate height, bulk, and scale at this site; creating an interesting form which accommodated the living building construction. **CS1-A-1, CS2-D**
 - vii. With the next submittal, provide a window/privacy study and sections to clarify the relationship of the proposed building with adjacent buildings (east building adjacency). **CS2-D-5**

- viii. With the next submittal, provide information on how the east blank walls will be treated and further detail of the north wall at the alley. **DC2-B-2**

2. Pedestrian/Public Realm. The Board discussed the proposed improvements to the ROW and widened sidewalk with unanimous support for the innovative and thoughtful design providing the following feedback:

- a. Supported the integration of the right-of-way improvements (landscaping, seating, textured pavement) and widened sidewalk into the overall project concept and design. **CS1-D, PL1-A, PL1-B, DC3-A**
- b. Encouraged the applicant to continue the thoughtful design of this space as the project evolved and with the next submittal provide:
 - i. Detailed information on how the storytelling of the Stormwater treatment would be further integrated as an educational element through designed signage. **PL2-D, DC4-B**
 - ii. At the next meeting, provide information regarding site lighting design. **DC4-C**
 - iii. At the next meeting, provide detail on landscaping and hardscaping materials. **DC4-D**
 - iv. The next submittal should include perspectives from the pedestrian viewpoint to provide a clear picture of the experience of the pedestrian as they move up/down along both Troll Ave. and N. 34th street. **PL1-A, PL1-B**
- c. The Board supported the innovative strategies of incorporating Stormwater treatment into the site design, however, echoed the public's concerns related to the viability and functionality of the proposed Stormwater design and landscaping. **CS1-E, DC4-D-3**

3. Entry

- a. The Board supported the overall concept of the entry and asked to see further detail on how this space would be activated and draw people to this space. **PL2-D**
- b. The Board commented that the gate should be thoughtfully designed and remain open during business hours. **CS2-B-2, DC4-A-1**
- c. The Board encouraged the applicant to explore how materials and design details could create further connection to Fremont's unique neighborhood character. **CS3-B, DC4-A**

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 the following departures were requested:

- 1. **Floor Area Ratio (SMC 23.47A013.B):** The Code allows for a 15% increase to the allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for participation in the Living Building Challenge Pilot

Program per 23.40.060. The Code allows a maximum FAR of 4.25 and applicant proposes a FAR of 4.89.

The Board indicated preliminary support for the departure granted the additional FAR continues to be utilized to accommodate the living building systems, which inform the overall building design. **CS1-A , CS1-B-2**

2. **Structure Height (SMC 23.47A.012):** The Code allows projects participating in the Living Building Challenge Pilot Program to seek a departure for an additional 20' of height per 23.40.060. The Code allows 65' and the applicant proposes 76'.

The Board indicated preliminary support as the additional height provided higher floor-to-floor heights which will increase the daylighting opportunities and decrease energy needs. In addition, the Board provided preliminary support granted the upper stories provided a setback to reduce the perceived height, bulk, and scale. **CS1-A, CS1-B-2, CS2-D**

3. **Loading Berth (SMC 23.54.035.A):** The Code allows projects participating in the Living Building Challenge Pilot Program to seek a departure from parking requirements under 23.42.012.D.2(f) .The Code requires 1 loading berth for buildings with 40,000 to 60,000 gross floor area. The applicant is proposing to eliminate the loading berth..

The Board indicated preliminary support for this departure as the proposed rear setback provides a more beneficial transition to the adjacent LR3 zone to the north. **CS2-D-5**

4. **Street-Level Transparency (SMC 23.47A.008.B.2):** The Code requires 60% of the street-facing façade between 2' and 8' above the sidewalk to be transparent. The applicant is proposing a minor reduced transparency along Troll Ave, to be further calculated at the next meeting.

The Board indicated preliminary support for this departure based on the discussion that the design will maximize transparency along this edge as much as possible and the Board will further evaluate this departure at the next meeting. In addition, the Board supported this departure granted the proposed design made the public realm and right of way improvements a priority along this reduced transparent façade, which would activate this edge and serve as a gateway. **CS2-B, PL1-A, PL2-B-3, PL2-C-3**

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified 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-A Energy Use

CS1-A-1. Energy Choices: At the earliest phase of project development, examine how energy choices may influence building form, siting, and orientation, and factor in the findings when making siting and design decisions.

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-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

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.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

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-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-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-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-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

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-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

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.

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-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-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-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-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.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

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

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 facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades 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 facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

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-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle’s climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

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.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.