

Current Development:

The development sites are the areas at the northwest of the University Village property, located at the northeast intersection of 25th Avenue NE and NE 45th Street and currently developed as a surface parking “lot” and four other areas central to the property, also developed with surface parking” lots.” Combined, these smaller “lots” roughly total the extent of the northwest surface parking area. The University Village property is a single contiguous lot of some 23.5461 acres and comprised of approximately 750,000 square feet of parking for approximately 2,470 vehicles, and 500,000 square feet of retail and office space located within 16 separate buildings.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The University Village lies within the University Community Urban Center overlay and is located north-northeast of the University of Washington main campus. It is looped to the east, north and west by the Burke-Gilman pedestrian and bicycle trail. Twenty-fifth Avenue NE connects directly to Montlake Boulevard NE and the Montlake Bridge.

Access:

Vehicle access to the overall site is principally from three driveways along 25th Avenue NE, on the west, and two driveways along NE 45th Street. Although still identified as streets, for example “NE 49th Street” and “27th Ave NE,” these are vacated former rights-of-way and technically private roads.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

A substantial portion of the site is built over earthen fill and is designated as a Liquefaction Prone-area (ECA5) and a Peat Settlement Prone Area (ECA11).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The application is for a “Major Phased Development” per SMC 23.84A.025, a multi building project that will require construction over an extended period of time (up to 15 years). The first phase of the development will be a multistory parking structure which will contain approximately 350,000 square feet of parking and approximately 35,000 square feet of new retail and office space. Subsequent phases will see construction of a 2-story retail structure of approximately 5,000 square feet which will sit just to the east of the new parking garage. The third phase of development will be for two 1-story buildings, totaling approximately 20,000 total square feet. The fourth stage of development will be for a pair of 2 and 3-story buildings, totaling approximately 40,000 square feet.

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

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE December 19, 2016

PRESENTATION

The parking garage, located abutting 25th Avenue NE, and the only portion of the proposed development fronting on the public realm, is intended as the first phase of this Major Phased Development. As such, the Department has directed the Design Review Board to focus its attention on this portion of the site and this proposed structure. The other three (as the applicant does the count, but actually five) structures should receive less attention since:

- They would come later in sequencing;
- They would embody massing and heights well under allowable limits of the zone;
- They would not be generally perceptible from the public realm;
- They will undoubtedly be stylistically influenced by prevailing motifs of the UVillage campus; and
- They will be inevitably be strongly shaped and influenced by individual retail branding, undetermined at this point in time.

In evaluating these later proposed structures, the Board was encouraged to concentrate on more generic issues, such as siting, the relationships to existing buildings, established pathways, prevailing landscaping patterns. The choice in Guidelines and guidance should focus more broadly on those elements.

During the course of the presentation, only the preferred options for the interior buildings were presented and the project's landscape architect related them to the existing and future pedestrian experience within the interior of the campus.

The development of the west garage is part of an overall effort to locate parking at the periphery of the Village and open up its center as primarily a pedestrian zone. A north garage was built in 2003, followed most recently by the south garage in 2014. The west garage would allow for the removal of nearly all the internal surface parking lots, opening the interior of the Village to extensive new landscaping, the creation of pedestrian pathways and parklets, and the building of several new, low pavilion-like shops.

Three options were presented for the proposed west garage. The third, preferred option, was a 7-story structure, but would appear to be 6 stories along 25th Avenue NE because of the

differential of the existing change between the grade of 25th and that of the prevailing Village level. In the preferred option the west façade of the garage structure would be set back 10 feet from the property line. There is approximately 13 feet from the 25th curb to the property line, so that the façade would sit approximately 23 feet from the existing eastern curb of the arterial. Approximately 35,000 square feet of accretionary retail and office space would be integrated with the east façade of the garage. The existing vehicular entry off 25th Avenue NE would be modified, but only slightly reduced in width, to provide the main vehicular entry and exit for the garage. The south façade, above the vehicular entry would be terraced to relate to the recently completed Restoration Hardware (RH) building located to the south of the proposed garage. A through-garage pedestrian pathway would be located a short distance north of the vehicular entry/exit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Speaking on behalf of the Board of the Ravenna Bryant Community Association (RBCA), one member of the public stressed that while the South Garage buffers the traffic on the NE 45th Street viaduct and the North Garage serves as a barrier between the sometimes bumptious Village and UW housing, the proposed West Garage would put its face toward a growing pedestrian connection to the UW campus and the recently completed Link Light Rail station. The RBCA would like to see ground floor retail uses along the 25th Avenue NE edge of the garage. Retail would entice even greater numbers of pedestrians, which in turn might provide a calming effect on the traffic along 25th. Concern was also expressed regarding pedestrian safety at the 4-lane entry/exit to the garage.
- Another member of the RBCA Board expressed the opinion that retail along the west edge of the proposed garage would enhance a long path of public sidewalk and create a place that people would want to walk by.
- Another member of the public echoed the thoughts expressed regarding enhancing the pedestrian experience by providing retail along the west side of the garage and noted that the existing pedestrian experience along that stretch of sidewalk was a difficult one.

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. Theme: Enlivening and Enhancing 25th Avenue NE

- a. Ground level retail uses and enhancement of the pedestrian experience along 25th Avenue NE are the primary issues concerning the proposal.

- b. UVillage has a proven track record in creating pedestrian experiences within the village and should be able to successfully create a viable pedestrian edge experience along 25th Avenue NE as well.
- c. Traditional retail along the entire length of the west façade would likely not be viable, but some kinds of micro-retail could be—and the Board would be supportive of granting departures (e.g., shortened required depth) to help make it work.
- d. Landscaping alone does not seem to be enough to overcome a less than enlivening pedestrian experience along this stretch of sidewalk.
- e. One, two or three strategically designed retail spaces (connected to the bus stop and pedestrian entry/exit, and at the for instance) might do the job; landscaping would not appear to be enough to enliven this long stretch of sidewalk.
- f. Although, if the ground level is amazing, a boring upper can be forgiven, the design team was encouraged to explore further the architectural expression of the upper levels as they related to the modern form of the building.

2. Theme: An Inviting Pedestrian Walkway through the Garage

- a. This was a critical element for a successful overall design.
- b. As shown, the elevators at the end of the pedestrian entry from 25th appeared to provide a wall rather than an invitation through the space. There needs to be something more exciting (and maybe more light and transparency) at the end of the
- c. Provide clear wayfaring directions at the end of the passage.

3. Theme: Don't Ignore Treatments of the North and South Faces of Garage

- a. The cantilever along the north face a “missed opportunity” as shown.
- b. The northwest corner needs more attention due to its visibility.
- c. The “terracing” of the south face, as an acknowledgement to the new RH building, needs to be more explicit and convincing.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting the applicants requested a departure from development standards related to the width of the curbcut for vehicles entering and exiting the garage along 25th Avenue NE were requested. The Board’s recommendation on any 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).

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-C Topography

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

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

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.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

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-B Safety and Security

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-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-3. Individual Entries: Ground-related housing should be scaled and detailed appropriately to provide for a more intimate type of entry.

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.

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.

PL4-C Planning Ahead For Transit

PL4-C-1. Influence on Project Design: Identify how a transit stop (planned or built) adjacent to or near the site may influence project design, provide opportunities for placemaking.

PL4-C-2. On-site Transit Stops: If a transit stop is located onsite, design project-related pedestrian improvements and amenities so that they complement any amenities provided for transit riders.

PL4-C-3. Transit Connections: Where no transit stops are on or adjacent to the site, identify where the nearest transit stops and pedestrian routes are and include design features and connections within the project design as appropriate.

DESIGN CONCEPT

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

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

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-2. Visual Impacts: Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.

University Supplemental Guidance:

DC1-II Design of Parking Lots Near Sidewalks

DC1-II-i. Views to Businesses: Screening of surface parking lots should allow views of businesses.

DC2-III Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

DC2-III-i. Ground-Level Commercial Use: The preferred solution for parking structures is to incorporate commercial uses at the ground level. Below-grade parking is the next best solution.

DC2-III-ii. Access to Street Network: There should be careful consideration of the surrounding street system when locating auto access. When the choice is between an arterial and a lower volume, residential street, access should be placed on the arterial.

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-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-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.

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

DC3-B-3. Connections to Other Open Space: Site and design project-related open spaces to connect with, or enhance, the uses and activities of other nearby public open space where appropriate.

DC3-C Design

DC3-C-1. Reinforce Existing Open Space: Where a strong open space concept exists in the neighborhood, reinforce existing character and patterns of street tree planting, buffers or treatment of topographic changes. Where no strong patterns exist, initiate a strong open space concept that other projects can build upon in the future.

University Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-I Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

DC3-I-i. Plaza Location: Plazas should be centrally located, on major avenues, close to bus stops, or where there are strong pedestrian flows on neighboring sidewalks.

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

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-II-iii. Sign Location: The location and installation of signage should be integrated with the building's architecture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board members commended the applicants for preparing a very complete and clear packet. The Board members noted that the proposed interior buildings were nicely scaled to the existing campus and structures and were well integrated within the existing landscape and pathways. The irregular placement of the proposed structures created a pleasant dynamic between buildings, reflective of the successful siting already created within the "Village."

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the Early Design Guidance Meeting the Board recommended 4-0 that the proposal proceed to MUP application. In expressing their approval, the Board noted that they would expect the applicants would return to the Board with a design that would be fully responsive to their guidance and to the Guidelines singled out as especially applicable to the project. In addition to their directives noted above, the Board would expect to see a good deal more information related to both traffic functionality and pedestrian safety at the proposed curbcuts.